




2018

# The Other Stares Back: Why “Visual Rupture” Is Essential to Gendered and Raced Bodies in Networked Knowledge Communities

Anita August

*Sacred Heart University*, [augusta@sacredheart.edu](mailto:augusta@sacredheart.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/eng\\_fac](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/eng_fac)

 Part of the [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Instructional Media Design Commons](#), [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#), and the [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

August, Anita. "The Other Stares Back: Why “Visual Rupture” Is Essential to Gendered and Raced Bodies in Networked Knowledge Communities." *Visual Imagery, Metadata, and Multimodal Literacies Across the Curriculum*. Ed. Anita August. IGI Global, 2018. 51-61.

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the English Department at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact [ferribyp@sacredheart.edu](mailto:ferribyp@sacredheart.edu).

# Visual Imagery, Metadata, and Multimodal Literacies Across the Curriculum

Anita August  
*Sacred Heart University, USA*

A volume in the Advances in Educational Technologies  
and Instructional Design (AETID) Book Series



Published in the United States of America by

IGI Global  
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)  
701 E. Chocolate Avenue  
Hershey PA, USA 17033  
Tel: 717-533-8845  
Fax: 717-533-8661  
E-mail: [cust@igi-global.com](mailto:cust@igi-global.com)  
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

Copyright © 2018 by IGI Global. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without written permission from the publisher. Product or company names used in this set are for identification purposes only. Inclusion of the names of the products or companies does not indicate a claim of ownership by IGI Global of the trademark or registered trademark.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: August, Anita, editor.

Title: Visual imagery, metadata, and multimodal literacies across the curriculum / Anita August, editor.

Description: Hershey PA : Information Science Reference, [2017] | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017010784 | ISBN 9781522528081 (h/c) | ISBN 9781522528098 (eISBN)

Subjects: LCSH: Visual literacy. | Educational technology.

Classification: LCC LB1065 .V57 2017 | DDC 371.33/5--dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017010784>

This book is published in the IGI Global book series Advances in Educational Technologies and Instructional Design (AE-TID) (ISSN: 2326-8905; eISSN: 2326-8913)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

For electronic access to this publication, please contact: [eresources@igi-global.com](mailto:eresources@igi-global.com).

## Chapter 3

# The Other Stares Back: Why “Visual Rupture” Is Essential to Gendered and Raced Bodies in Networked Knowledge Communities

**Anita August**  
*Sacred Heart University, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter addresses the Other’s Stare of gendered and raced bodies who visually rupture and resist their discursive formation in Networked Knowledge Communities (NKC). New multimodal texts described as “texts that exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound” (Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007, p. 1), contribute greatly to the situated nature of knowledge production by NKC in the postmodern “network society” (Castells, 1996). NKC are learning communities that “proactively participate in building and advancing knowledges” (Gurung, 2014, p. 2). While NKC are idealized as sites for progressive socio-political transformation, this chapter argues NKC are also antagonistic visual spheres where images of gendered and raced bodies are used as metadata to ideologically contain, construct, and constitute them. Using a rhetorical perspective, the chapter reveals the discursive formation of the gendered and raced Other and how they preserve their visual image-making with the oppositional stare.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover  
what we are, but to refuse what we are.*

*-Foucault, The Subject and Power (Foucault, 2000)*

Despite its consideration as an idealized and emancipatory “network society” (Castells, 1996), Networked Knowledge Communities (NKC) are dynamic sites where vision, the noblest of senses mediates meaning-making of difficult and different identities. As a social and participatory community where diverse

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2808-1.ch003

belief-systems characterize the social justice mission of NKC's, issues of symbolic representation are also a distinguishing feature of this network society. Because the epistemological boundaries between who can and cannot make and contribute to meaning-making are blurred in NKC's, they have the possibility to radically reconstitute the discursive formation of the gendered and raced Other in the visual sphere of NKC's. The visual sphere is described as "a multitude of relations between images, their agency, and politics, whereby meanings are created and negotiated" (Nathansohn and Zuev, 2013, p. 2). With such a perspective, this chapter argues NKC's are indeed a visual sphere given they are a visionary epistemic site where collaborative, creative, and critical thinking are placed in rhetorical tension often for social and political justice. Therefore, as the emblem of social and political efficacy where meaning-making is classified, negotiated, consumed, and produced, the gendered and raced Other still must challenge a consensus representation of their identity from within the visual sphere of NKC's. The visual sphere of NKC's is like a mall—albeit a networked visualization mall where socio-political magazines, paintings, music, videos, scholarly articles, etc. all intersect in a Kafkaesque hybrid space each with a story often narrated exclusively through an image. Once stripped of its utopianism, NKC's can have an inestimable influence on cultural democracy given its audiences are willing to have uncomfortable and complicated conversations on socio-political topics. Like all discourses from the Other that seek substantive and sustained social and political transformation, power and agency, therefore, lies at the center of the Other's counter-arguments. To destabilize marginalizing visual discourses with the Other's Stare may appear as a trivial form of resistance. However, articulated in the rhetorical space of NKC's, the Other's Stare can be instrumentalized as metadata to remediate homogenizing visualizing practices in NKC's.

This chapter is organized in four sections with the central thesis that the Other's Stare of gendered and raced bodies is both visually rupturing and resistant to Western visual discourses. In the first section, I begin by articulating key theories and concepts central to the visual analysis of the Other's Stare which I argue undergird and structure the visual sphere of NKC's. In the second section, I reference the image of a popular American artist to examine how the stare and stance of the gendered and raced body is both revolutionary and emancipatory. With the third section, I illuminate the Western visual discourse dialogically orbiting perhaps the most famous image in American magazine history. Finally, I conclude by considering the socio-political implications of a governing Western visual discourse which, I believe, can be abolished with the Other's Stare.

## **NO SAFE SPACE: VISUAL IMAGE-MAKING AND THE SOCIAL MOSAIC OF NKCS**

In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* Foucault argues that discourse and practices are not isolated forms of discursive formations but overlap and reinforce one another with power being the synergy between the two. For Foucault, a discursive formation is not just the instrumental use of language. Discourse is the medium through which, for example, relations between institutions, social codes, and the spatial become meaning-making systems for contextualizing knowledge. Whatever is hidden, Foucault posits, the discursive practices that underlie its rhetorical patterns are at some point revealed in both tacit and explicit ways. He argues that:

## ***The Other Stares Back***

*Discursive practices are not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, institutions, in patterns for general behavior, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them. (Foucault, 1977, p. 200)*

With this view, an image of the raced and/or gendered subject is not so much anchored in a historical context, but by discursive formations that naturalize, constitute, and generate its position and function within the social world. Discourse, then, animates and is reanimated through discursive practices. Thus, the “discursive formation of identity and difference” (Pinar, 1993, p. 61) is not the result of one author of a text, but rather a complex network of independent collaborators discursively institutionalizing notions of identity and difference within the visual sphere of NKC. Therefore, “identity is not a static term” (Pinar, 1993, p. 61) within discourse. This lack of complicity among collaborators debunks the united front of identity shaping and provides a powerful argument for how discourse is “produced in spheres generally ignored by schools” (Britzman et al. 1993) like the visual sphere of NKC.

Studies on the visual culture, such as W.J.T. Mitchell’s have charted and deepened our understanding of our visualizing practices as a mechanism of power and knowledge. Mitchell shows us that our visualizing practices in the visual culture are never dormant, but always actively performing by referencing and generating discursive formations. “Visual culture,” he argues “is not limited to the study of images or media, but extends to everyday practices of seeing and showing” (2002, p. 170), and always shifting in its discourse between transparency and opacity. Despite its utopian cast, the visual sphere of NKC is not insulated from discourse outside its spatial domain. As I have argued elsewhere, visual rupture in NKC are a great space for the difficult differences to be actively uprooted by subjects constituted by a fixed, static, and homogenous Western paternal standard that deemphasizes individuality (August, 2014). Therefore, when the gendered and raced Other unsettles and opposes such dominant orthodoxies of their difficult and different identities, new methods to remediate a discursive formation emerge. Given the subjugated status of the gendered and raced Other in the visual sphere of NKC, their political challenge to the imposed discursive formation of their image-making is often a subtle shift toward exercising agency. To some, the Other’s stare may register as a passive and benign mode of resistance. However, when juxtaposed against the essentializing gaze of Western visual discourses within the spatial politics of the visual sphere, the Other’s Stare can be read as repressed aggression against their image-making. To be silent must not be conflated with conformity. As noted in the introduction of this chapter, the visual sphere of NKC are like a networked visualization mall that intersect in a Kafkaesque hybrid space. Within this politics of space, narrators weave stories often singularly through an image about the gendered and raced Other subsumed in visual distortions discursively conjured by marginalizing Western discourses. Despite the absence of any accompanying written text, the discursive inventions do not travel in the visual sphere of NKC empty of prior discourses. Rather, they serve as testimony to the marginalizing image-making of the gendered and raced Other rooted in and replicated by essentialist othering discursive formations. This is particularly true within the supposed emancipatory visual sphere of NKC where image-making is often controlled by those from dominant groups and systems of institutionalized power.

The power and superiority of Western visual discourse is often triggered by the spatial and authorial status of who stands behind the “normalizing gaze” (Foucault, 1979, p. 184). In short, point of view is just as critical to the visual narrative as it is to the written narrative. For instance, in written narratives

first person point-of-view *prescribes* the narrative experience for the audience. This perspective privileges the author of the narrative point-of-view on theme, structure, ideology, style, and tone. In contrast, third person point-of-view *describes* the narrative experience for the audience. This perspective is the most narratively dangerous point-of-view because it is the discursive apparatus for exercising power by “emphasizing the normative “truthfulness” of a statement” (Bybee, 1990, p. 209). While both perspectives have their respective liberties and limitations, when an author chooses a point-of-view, they are also choosing a discursive formation and its attendant knowledge(s). Therefore, when an image of the gendered and raced Other is presented in the visual sphere of NKC’s, it is often produced through the essentializing gaze of the third person point-of-view perspective.

For the gendered and raced Other the visual sphere of NKC’s is an uneven balance of spatial politics. Still, it is dangerous to presume that the gendered and/or racial subject surrenders to this imbalance of *repressive* spatial politics. The Other’s Stare, then, becomes more than a potent remediating force against the discursive framing of them in the visual sphere of NKC’s—it takes an anarchist defense to rebuff the visual as metadata which naturalizes their marginality. In short, the Other’s Stare is more than just a symbolic move for inner self-worth. It is tacitly employed by signifying practices that erode the discursive distortions which mediate image-making in exploitative spatial theaters like the visual sphere of NKC’s. Given the silencing of the gendered and raced Other in *repressive* spatial politics, “the noblest of senses”—vision—becomes an effective signifier of anarchy rather than a passive gestural expression. Without question the Other’s Stare is not a grand form of resistance to the homogeneity and normalizing power of Western visual discourse(s). However, by analyzing the Other’s Stare we will see that as a small practice of resistance, it can suspend the discursive formation of the normative third person point-of-view perspective. This suspension is important because the Other’s Stare is often the only form of active resistance that the gendered and raced Other can express without any overt punitive action from the dominant “normalizing gaze” (Foucault, 1979, p.184). This demonstrates that the gendered and raced Other has a remarkable capacity to reclaim their image-making with the Other’s Stare by challenging the epistemic certainty of Western visual discourse(s). As a discursive tool, then, the Other’s Stare is a subversive mechanism for individual agency through a subtle form of resistance rather than overt agitation.

## THE REVOLUTIONARY STANCE OF EMMA

In 1965 as an aspiring thirty-one-year old portrait artist in New York City, Daniel Greene asked his maid Emma to pose for him. In the portrait, Emma, her last name is unknown—has a slightly broad nose and dark chocolate skin that is a stark contrast to the vibrant floral dress she is wearing which almost camouflages the small paunch in her middle. Red lipstick covers her pressed lips and she wears a simple, but fashionable, bob hairstyle that hangs just below her neckline. She is of average height and weight, and is perhaps in her early to mid-thirties. Emma is stiff but alert in a rebellious position with her dark chocolate arms tightly folded while her eyes—cold, stern, and direct—stare visibly irritated at Greene while he paints her.

Decades later as an acclaimed portrait artist, Greene reflected on Emma’s defensive stance in the painting aptly titled “Emma” and posited that she indeed may have been annoyed with him for using her as a human prop and disrupting her work—cleaning his apartment (Emma, 2012). It is clear in the painting that Emma’s gender and race—black and female—are visually inscribed. Emma bears the social,

### ***The Other Stares Back***

cultural, and political weight of being black and female in 1960s America. Although she is oppressed and marginalized, Emma is paradoxically targeted and rendered invisible and irrelevant in the larger social mosaic (Young, 2009). It is also apparent by Emma's resistant stare that she is also exasperated with Greene for the invasion of her time to do more work than perhaps he would compensate. What is not as comprehensible in the painting, but rhetorically orbiting the painting, is the historical situatedness of the politically turbulent sixties of America that both Greene and Emma were bound as white/black and as male/female.

To understand the visualizing of "Emma," the social and political culture of 1960s America must be read rhetorically and historically from the perspective of the space and place from which it is captured in the Other's Stare. As noted earlier by Nathansohn and Zuev, "the visual sphere is "everywhere. No matter where you "look"" (2013, p. 1). Therefore, NKC's as cooperative and participatory meaning-making sites are constantly transmitting images as metadata to visually locate the gendered and raced Other from a top-down, logos centered, and expert-knowledge positionality. Greene's intentions, then, like many educated and social elites are well-intentioned; however, their insight into the gendered and raced Other is often from a comfortable spectatorial distance and not from experiential social, cultural, and political knowledge. This is why so many of the gendered and raced Other rarely accede to their likeness in an image taken by the dominant group—their visual representation pivots around discursive formations of marginality and deviance.

In his article "Revolutionary Undoing," John Berger reminds us that "the revolutionary meaning of a work of art . . . is a meaning continually awaiting discovery and release" (2001, p.236) since there is no permanent unified or rational view of an image. For Berger, to accept the visual inference of a work of art is indeed troubling and requires the visual reader to work out "the conflicting demands of [the rhetorical and] historical situation" in the image (2001, p.237)." The goal of a 'revolutionary undoing' of an image, as Berger suggests, is to unmask the hidden sociopolitical complexities of an image from the capsule of its rhetorical and historical visual culture. Thus, the visual reader has the possibility and the responsibility of unveiling and broadening "the revolutionary meaning of the works inherited from the past (2001, p.237)." The distance from the image, then, from the third person-point-of-view perspective should be a conduit to what is dialogically disclosed to the image-making rather than an institutionalized discursive formation of the visual narrative.

The image-making of Emma like so many of the gendered and/or raced Other are often reduced to a third person-point-of-view perspective where history and the sociopolitical struggles of the era shape and control how they are visualized. For the visual reader, the visual sphere of NKC's are a complex location since the visual reader is frequently caught between historic racist and misogynist images and modern visualizing practices dedicated to reclaiming the discourses underpinning the marginalizing imagery. It is fair to say that before Greene even painted Emma she was always already produced by a multiplicity of discursive formations that subjugated her. Ironically, through Greene's portrait painting of her, the historical sociopolitical location of Emma was thrust into visibility by a "regime of looking" (Seshadri-Crooks, 2000, p.2). For the visual reader, any critical attempt to reconcile these visually conflicting discursive practices of the gendered and/or raced Other are met with clichéd and reductive reflections, erasing the very humanizing lens that seeks to remediate the contradiction in the image-making.

Therefore, the "image is not so much of bootstrapping as of ratcheting up" (Nelson, 2003, p. 19) discursive incongruities hemmed in and fused by both history and the modern era. Emma's mode of resistance, then, was both defined and constrained by her social and political location—a spatial tension



that the gendered and/or raced Other are often forced to reclaim from the various forms and patterns of patriarchy. bell hooks argue spatial location is a form of opposition and that:

*As a radical standpoint, perspective, position, 'the politics of location' necessarily calls those of us who would participate in the formation of counter-hegemonic cultural practice to identify the spaces where we begin the process of re-vision. (hooks 1991:145)*

What is so compelling about Emma's portrait is her visual attitude. Her eyes are neither downcast nor dull but attentive to the encroachment of her space. More importantly, Emma appears to resent being reminded of the gender and racial inequalities between her and Greene. Within this spatial arena, Emma's visual attitude reshapes the power dynamics with her resistant stare; and thus, illuminates the tension between her transcendence and transformation. Visual attitude, then, is a visually conscious disturbance to mitigate the discursive formation of the subject's spatial imagery. Emma's concentrated stare is a visual rupture to the homogeneity and normalizing power of Western visual discourse(s). Although Emma appears trapped in the space that she inhabits as a human prop, she takes control of her image by being resistant to her discursive formation by reshaping herself into visibility. There is no naturalness to Green's image-making of Emma because she refuses to exist in Green's portraiture of her as the docile help. Not only has Emma taken over Green's production of her, she has also shifted the visual narrative from the third person-point-of-view gaze of Green, to the first-person point-of-view of the Other's Stare. Emma's visual attitude, then, not only gives us a peephole into the social hierarchies of the sixties and a well-intentioned social elite like Greene, it also reshapes the male/female, white/black, and power/disempower imbalance for the visual reader.

Emma's spatial location in Greene's home as the hired help is critical to understanding her subversive form of resistance in her visual attitude. Not only does she reveal the gender and racial tensions of America's turbulent sixties, Emma also reveals in her body rhetoric what it means to be "unidentifiable [and] unassimilable" (Fanon, 1952, p.139) into Greene's visual world. In the subjugated social space of the "looking position" (Mulvey, 1975), Emma externalizes her internal feelings—she knows that Greene's portrait of her would be a misrepresentation of her. The Other's Stare, then, is a conscious and radical refusal of one's visual presence. Emma's visual attitude is both a refusal of Greene's constituting ideology and of becoming the image of docility in his portrait of her. In short, Emma's visual attitude confirms that "there is power in looking" (hooks,1992, p.115) with resistance at a distortion of one's self and then reclaim one's image-making by visual rupture from the exploitative and oppressive social and political location one exist within.

Emma's stance, then, abolishes rather than activates any notion of docility. She refuses to corroborate with any portraiture of Greene's that unequivocally visualizes her as subservient, obedient, and docile. Instead, Emma reacts with a visual attitude that is discursively flexible enough to consciously resist without suggesting that she is overtly resistant—there is no ideological conflict here on Emma's part. Furthermore, we must remember it is 1965—the structures of power and agency that Greene has as the privilege of being white and male, Emma forcefully and visually exhibit in her stance to communicate her active unwillingness to consciously become the image in Greene's monolithic portraiture of her as black and woman. To do so verbally will create overt tension opposition with Greene, her employer, which may cost Emma her employment.

Emma, unlike Greene, seems to be aware that she embodies all of that which separates her from Greene—race, gender, and class. The estrangement, in 1965, is vast and Emma knows the social, cul-

## ***The Other Stares Back***

tural and political rhetoric that constitutes her. By reframing Greene's portrait narrative of her, Emma breaks the frame of Greene's discourse in his image-making of her. In short, Emma refuses to become the definitive image of subordination trapped in a visual discursive prison. With the visual rupture of Greene's naturalistic image of her as the help that often subsequently guarantees invisibility, Emma's stance becomes dialogical. With such an approach Emma suggests that "to see means to see in relation" (Arnheim, 2004, p. 54), rather than relying on, and being hemmed in by, social stereotypes of race, gender, and class.

## **SHARBAT GULA: "AMERICA'S" AFGHAN GIRL**

Despite the distinctive, penetrating, and ethereal green eyes staring back into the camera, there were no details of the 12-year-old Afghan refugee in the rust colored burkah on the June 1985 cover of *National Geographic*. And yet, the nameless Afghan girl's photograph as reported by NPR reporter Alex Chadwick, is the "most famous photograph in [*National Geographic's*] 114-year history." However, seventeen years later in 2002, her name—Sharbat Gula—was revealed when Steve McCurry, the photographer of the iconic photo returned to the Afghanistan—Pakistan border in search of the "Afghan Girl," since he failed to obtain her birth name in 1985. Since then, the visualization of Gula in NKC's like *National Geographic* focalize more on America's post 9-11 discourses of globalization, war, displacement, and nationalism in a colonialist framework than Gula's visible pubescent beauty.

For example, Gula's eyes, always explained in fetishistic rhetoric—haunting, ferocious, piercing—never express the terror and fear, which no doubt occupies the 12-year-old Afghan refugee whose daily existence was upended in 1985 "around the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan" (Denker 1985, 772). Vision, still considered as the receptacle through which knowledge is illuminated, has reached a crisis point in NKC's where an endless stockpile of images emerges not as a gateway for comprehending the Other but as apotheosis of the visual sphere. In short, America's war on terror resonate in Gula's eyes. Ironically though, Gula, as a child is safe—except for the burkah and her mesmerizing defiant stare.

As a discursive practice, colonization sharpens when external systems of thought and social practices subvert the visualizer's ideology and become the framework of reference for the visualizer to engage and educate themselves. Colonizing discursive practices become particularly problematic when the visualizer surrenders to master discourses rather than reflecting critically on the semiotic system imbued in an image of the racialized and gendered Other that create binaries of "us" against "them" in the image. Regarding the complexity of defining colonization as discursive Mohanty (2003) states:

*The definition of colonization I wish to invoke here is a predominantly discursive one, focusing on a certain mode of appropriation and codification of "scholarship" and "knowledge" about women in the third world by particular analytic categories employed in specific writings on the subject which take as their referent feminist interests as they have been articulated in the U.S. and Western Europe. (p. 333-334)*

Like Emma, Sharbat Gula was always already produced by a multiplicity of discursive formations that lock her in a marginalizing visual framework, which does not allow her to exist outside of that context. Also like Emma, Gula does not own her image: Greene owns Emma's as McCurry owns Gula's. Furthermore, the full birth names of the women, I argue, are lost to history—how many people will

look at either image and search for their full names? It is one thing to be Other and it is another thing to be Othered by a mediating discursive formation that constructs one as different, difficult, and deviant. Visual images, as metadata, are like written discursive formations because they have the power to reorder and shape ideologies. While this may occur unwittingly by the image maker, it remains that visual images are often separated from their context. Signs and representations imbued in the image that are epistemic often uphold the hierarchal status of Western master discourses that privileges and nurtures dominant Western modes of thought. What is important, then, for the visualizer of Gula's image is to be mindful of the metadata that dialogically orbits the image in visual spheres like *National Geographic* and "to see how the master texts need [the Other] in [their] construction . . . without acknowledging that need" (Spivak, 1990, p.73).

With the proliferation of information in the visual sphere of spaces like *National Geographic*, human subjects become nothing more than a mish mash of data which impacts and/or conflates the visualizer's experience with the image. Visual spheres, like *National Geographic*, then, become a laboratory for the visualizer to draw on knowledge to mediate the conceptual groundwork for the visual experience. In short, *National Geographic* as a master text legitimizes its stories with visual images filtered through a photographer's lens as objective truth. But in every sense, when an image as strikingly provocative as Gula's appears in visual spheres like *National Geographic*, the visualizer should make the ethical leap and synthesize data from relevant epistemic spaces, rather than decoding the image in its totality from colonizing discursive formations. As noted earlier, NKC's are "new types of learning communities [. . .] where people from all around the world create and share their ideas, stories, and knowledges" (Gurung, 2014, p.2). Despite *National Geographic's* noble desire to visually exemplify the horrors of a protracted Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the visual references in Gula's image in a burkah as a Muslim afghan refugee traffics and dynamizes visions of America's war on terrorism. An image and its relation to the social and political history is often constrained by the rhetorical trappings of that space-time context, which eventually disintegrate over historical time. Therefore, master texts function so powerfully as the epistemic default because they are discursively mobile enough, given their colonialist rhetoric, to bring a larger focus to an image for the visualizer who has no narrative subtext to move around ideological blind spots. In the visual sphere of NKC's like *National Geographic*, then, social relations are dynamic and active agents in propagating Western visual discourses. Images mediate more than as a tacit aesthetic. They also serve as epistemic or knowledge-producing structures that give rhetorical inflection to master texts when they discursively point to the visual sphere of NKC's like *National Geographic*. Fortunately, this space-time dynamic is not static but fluid for social geographer Doreen Massey (1994) who argues:

*The view, then, is of space-time as a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity. Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification. (p.3)*

According to Massey, then, the marginalized, like Gula, can challenge or reconstitute subjugating tropes of their images despite the mediating influence of Western visual discourses. For example, Gula ruptures the constituting image within the very spatial dynamic created to subjugate her. Her intense alertness subordinates the colonizing discursive formation with the Other's Stare, as a combat to McCurry's visual framing of her through his photographic lens. Therefore, even in the visual sphere of NKC's like *National Geographic*, tension between groups is an integral part of social relations. Direct

## ***The Other Stares Back***

and indirect modes of power often mediated by visual images are always shifting in a dynamic process between antagonistic social groups. While Gula cannot change her station in life in a culture that religiously and politically constrains women, with the Other's Stare she teaches us that defiance is possible even in a visual image as an apparatus of colonizing confinement.

Even while being visually framed as the Other, Gula's unblinking stare ruptures and even remedies America's ways of seeing a young Muslim woman in a burkah. The image of Gula, then, as a 12-year-old Afghan refugee in a burkah is more than that—it suggests colonizing narratives beyond the photographic lens. Although Gula is visualized and constituted through the prism of Otherness which often signifies different, difficult, and deviant, she refuses to become imagistic proof in America's war on terrorism. With such a refusal, Gula's Other's Stare becomes a discursive act and she cultivates “a new sense of autonomy” (Felski, 1989, p.118) where the Other is not as complacent and transparent as Western visual discourses allege.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have explored the Other's Stare of gendered and raced bodies in Network Knowledge Communities (NKC)s as a form of visual rupture to resist the colonizing discursive formation of Western visual discourses. Discursive practices are now more than ever not just written formations—they are increasingly significant visual formations which discursively shape epistemic or knowledge making in our image saturated world view. As noted, the visual sphere is a semiotic space where “looking, framing, and presenting” (Nathansohn and Zuev, 2013, p. 3) rely on marginalizing visual discursive formations imbued with colonialist rhetoric. However, the Other's Stare in the portrait of Emma and in the photograph of Sharbat Gula are self-protective ontological strikes against their image-making shaped by discursive formations rooted in oppressive visual frames. It may seem tempting to view Emma and Gula's oppositional gaze as a mild form of resistance to the perverse image-making of them. According to hooks, looking back at the systems and the spaces and places that constitute the Other is both transformative and political. Massey takes a similar stance, but broadens her approach by arguing that spaces and places like the visual sphere for example, are not fixed and static, but dynamic space-time sites where social relations between asymmetrical groups are in conflict over the issues of race, gender, and class. Visual rupture, then, is a radical form of resistance by the Other's Stare because it is forged from the space-time configuration in the visual sphere of NKC)s as subtle but defiant form of opposition to the political and epistemological formations of Western discourse(s).

## **REFERENCES**

- Afghan Girl Mystery Solved. (n.d.). *Morning Edition*. NPR.
- Arnheim, R. (1997). *Visual Thinking*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- August, A. (2014). Emerging Pedagogies in the Networked Knowledge Society. In M. Limbu & B. Gurung (Eds.), *Visuality and the Difficult Differences in Networked Knowledge Communities* (pp. 247–261). Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing.

- Berger, J. (2001). *Selected Essays*. New York, NY: Vintage International.
- Britzman, D., Santiago-Valles, Jimenez-Munoz, G., & Lamash, L. (1993). Race Identity and Representation in Education. In *Slips That Show and Tell: Fashioning Multiculture as a Problem of Representation* (pp. 188-200). New York: Routledge.
- Bybee, C. (1990). Constructing Women as Authorities: Local Journalism and the Microphysics of Power. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 7(3), 197–214. doi:10.1080/15295039009360174
- Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.
- Emma. (2012). *Comments made by Daniel Greene on portrait*. Fairfield, CT. Sacred Heart University.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.
- Felski, R. (1989). *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (D. Bouchard, Ed., D. Bouchard & S. Simon, Trans.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*. Smith (A. M. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (2000). *Power* (Vol. 3; J. D. Faubion, Ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.michel-foucault.com/dulwich/subject.pdf>
- Gurung, B. (2014). Emerging Pedagogies in the Networked Knowledge Society. In *Emerging Pedagogies in the Networked Knowledge Communities* (pp. 1-24). Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing.
- hooks, b. (1991). *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- hooks, b. (1992). *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space Place and Gender*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (2002). Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 1(2), 165–181. doi:10.1177/147041290200100202
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. doi:10.1215/9780822384649
- Mulvey, L. (1999). *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory readings*. In *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (pp. 833–844). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nathanson, R., & Zuev, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Sociology of the Visual Sphere*. London: Routledge.
- Nelson, K. (2003). Narrative and Consciousness: Literature, Psychology, and The Brain. In *Narrative and the Emergence of a Consciousness of Self* (pp. 17-36). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pinar, W. (1993). Race Identity and Representation in Education. In *Notes on Understanding Curriculum as a Racial Text* (pp. 60-71). New York: Routledge.

## ***The Other Stares Back***

Selfe, C., & Takayoshi, P. (2007). Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers. In *Thinking About Multimodality* (pp. 1-12). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Seshadri-Crooks, K. (2000). *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*. New York: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203454787

Smith, N., & Katz, C. (1993). Place and the Politics of Identity. In *Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics* (pp. 67-83). London: Routledge.

Spivak, G. (1990). The Post-Colonial Critic: Interview, Strategies, and Dialogues. In *Questions of Multiculturalism* (pp. 61-62). New York: Routledge.

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Discourse:** Thought disseminated through various modes of communication i.e. visuals, sound, alphabetic text, etc.

**Discursive Formation:** The manner in which discourse creates knowledge presumed as fixed and immutable.

**Image-Making:** The force and manner in which images create and carry meaning.

**Metadata:** The way information is used to provide knowledge about another form of knowledge.

**Multimodal:** To integrate multiple modes of expression to create and communicate meaning.

**Visual Sphere:** The manner and mode that visuals are used to create and interpret meaning.

**Visual Attitude:** The means by which an individual resists their image-making.

**Western Visual Discourse:** The manner and means of using imagery to promote Western ideology.