

Description of the Project

Prof. Banerjee's project "Mountains of the Mind" focuses on the colonial depiction of the Himalaya from 1750-1950. In order to understand the impact of colonialism on the physical and ideological Himalaya, I studied its textual and visual representations, focusing on travelogues and popular travel narratives. Working with Prof. Banerjee, I compiled a bibliography of primary and secondary sources on the colonial Himalaya.

Mountains of the Mind

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Key People

- George Bogle was a key figure in the initial exploration and interest of the British in the Himalaya. He arrived in India in 1770, and four years later, was appointed first British envoy to Bhutan and Tibet. He worked to open up trade between Bengal and Tibet, contributing to the East India Company's interest in trans-Himalayan trade.
- Francis Younghusband led the British invasion of Tibet in 1903-4, which is often described as the last battle of the British Empire, and was motivated by the threat of Russian influence. The consequent British withdrawal from Lhasa allowed for Chinese influence in Tibet, and Younghusband turned towards the natural and spiritual world.

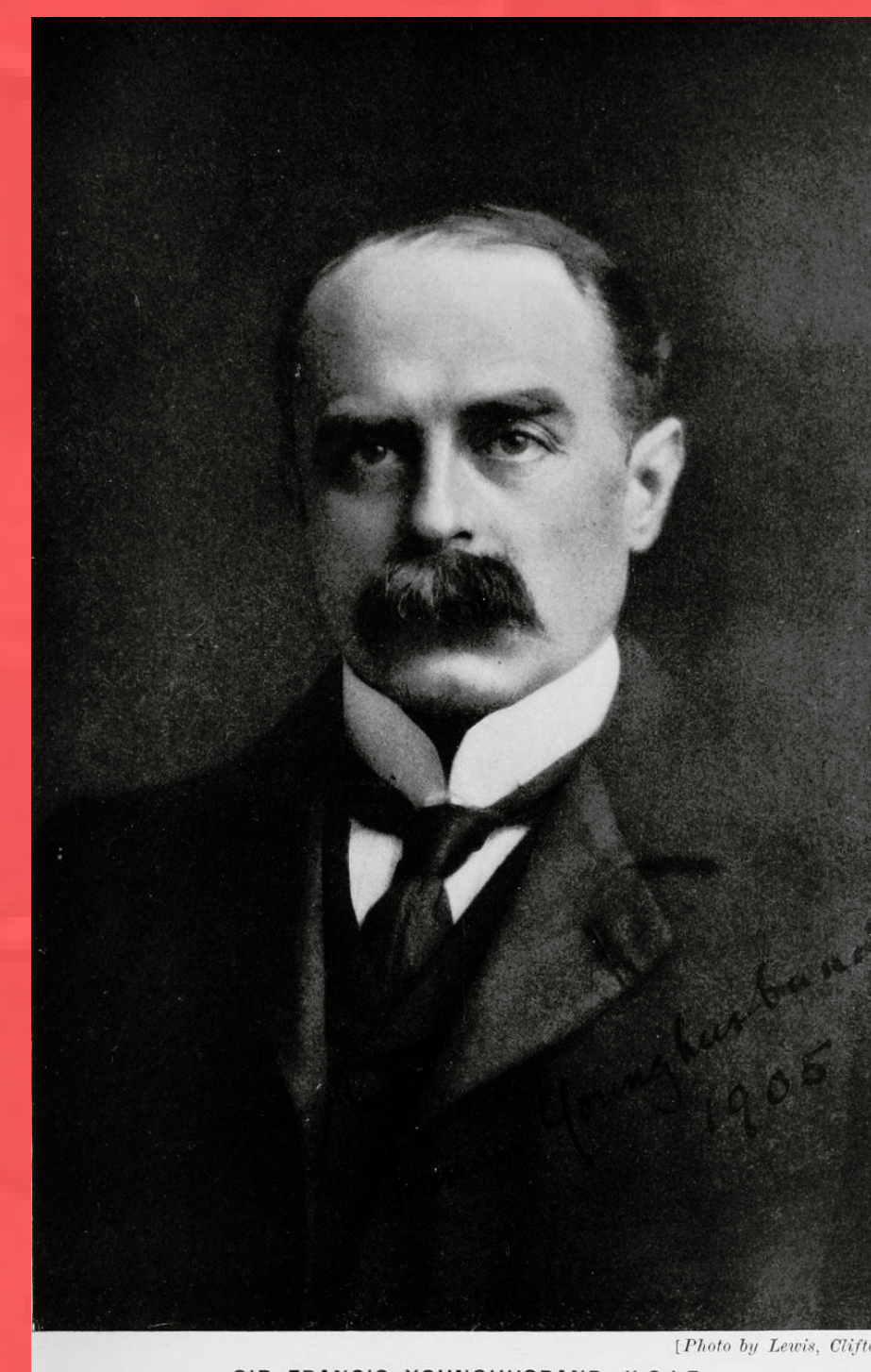


Photo by Lewis, Oxford
SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, K.C.I.E.

The Peaks

Following the start of British rule in India in 1757, the British set out to map India for over a hundred years, in what is called **The Trigonometrical Survey of India**.

After a series of name changes, **Mount Everest** (8,849 meters) was named after Sir George Everest in 1856, who never climbed the mountain, but was integral to the surveying efforts of the British.

Godwin Austen/K2 (8611 meters) was named after the surveyor of the peaks. The name K2 goes back to the first surveyor of the peak.

The Great Game

The "Great Game" was a rivalry between the British and Russian empires in the late-nineteenth century. The phrase was first coined by a British officer, and popularized by Rudyard Kipling. It emerged out of the British need to defend their territories, specifically India, from foreign powers. Alarmed by Russian expansion in Asia, the British also expanded in territories they had not explored previously.

Though the start of the Great Game can be attributed to various historical factors, it ended around 1907, when the British and Russians turned their attention towards the growing threat of Germany.



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