

# Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia

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A MAP IS A PECULIAR KIND OF VISUAL TEXT. It seems a mere instrument of utility, showing us where to go and how to put things in place. Invisible ingredients, however, render every map a Pandora's box. Emotions are undoubtedly the most potent of all of the invisible elements in maps. The cartographic passions that make the headlines may be national ones, but in cities, towns, and villages, people have strong feelings about local maps. Street gangs, real estate developers, insurance companies, zoning boards, planners, and electorates invest maps with local politics. Landowners love their property lines. Universities map their campus identity. The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) signifies itself succinctly in its logo, a map of Asia. Such territorial attachments and many others have striking similarities: they infuse boundaries with iconic significance, tinged with feelings of security, belonging, possessiveness, enclosure, entitlement, and exclusion.

Equally invisible in maps are social relations of mapping that produce maps and authorize their interpretation. The most influential mapmakers today work in national institutions, including schools, colleges, and universities. State-authorized mapping is so ubiquitous that most governments do not regulate most map making, but almost everyone draws official lines on maps by habit anyway, in accordance with cartographic regimentation that is so invisible, pervasive, and widely accepted that few people ever

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think about it, indicating the current global hegemony of the national state's territorial authority. We see the internal and external boundaries of national states so often they appear as virtually natural features of the globe. This virtual reality came into being in the nineteenth century, as industrial technologies for surveying the Earth, producing statistics, mass printing, mass reading, and mass education began to make viewing standardized maps a common experience. Making maps, reading maps, talking about maps, and thinking with maps in the mind became increasingly common each decade. By 1950 people around the world had substantial map knowledge in common. Today, we can reasonably imagine that most people in the world share common map knowledge because they routinely experience various versions of exactly the same maps.

During the global expansion of modern mapping, national territory incorporated all geography. Old spatial realities remained—and new ones emerged—but maps in everyone's mind increasingly had to make sense inside maps of national states. National boundaries covered the globe only after 1950, and only since then, all histories of all peoples have come to appear inside national maps, in a cookie-cutter world of national geography, the most comprehensive organization of spatial experience in human history. Scholars work inside that experience. Spaces that elude national maps have mostly disappeared from our intellectual life. That disappearance is invisible in maps and in the histories that maps contain, yet the novelty of national maps indicates deep, enduring discrepancies between national geography and human history. Habits of mapping expunge dissonance from our geographical imagination by invisibly burying disorderly spaces under neat graphics of national order.<sup>1</sup>

## Mapping Asian Studies<sup>2</sup>

Each national state maps the world for itself, but invisible elements in national world maps indicate more complex spatial histories of knowledge lurking inside. All state maps use national grids that validate their own borders and conceal the mobility of national life so as to organize knowledge strategically around national "interests" (conceived in the broadest possible sense).<sup>3</sup> For example, the United States drew its

<sup>1</sup>Cartography (Bird 1989; Monmonier 1993, 1996) and its representations (Cosgrove 1999) now attract increasing attention across a range of disciplines, as boundaries attract more theorizing (Black 1997; Newman 1999; Painter 1995; Sack 1986), space becomes more prominent in social theory (Harvey 2001; Lefebvre 1991; McDowell and Sharp 1997; Soja 1989), and scholars devise new approaches to the process of boundary making (Blaut 1993; Daniel 1984; Kaufmann 1998; Kashani-Sabet 1999; Lewis and Wigen 1997; Malkii 1992; Sahlins 1989; Samaddar 1999; Sharp 2000; Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Thongchai 1994; Weber 1976; Wolch and Dear 1989; Yeager 1995).

<sup>2</sup>Asian studies is diverse, complex, and ever changing. It embraces people of all ages, as well as disciplines with different histories, sensibilities, and contextual priorities (Alam 2002). It has many "hands that feed" for many reasons (Lewis 2002). Many Asianists have deep personal attachments to Asia, where their identity is anchored and many are citizens, while others treat Asia as a mere object of study. Comprehensive maps of Asian studies would have to include all of its producers, consumers, assets, knowledge, data, and subjects. Here, I suggest points of departure for composing a spatial appreciation of that complexity.

<sup>3</sup>Mapping knowledge is difficult, but methods and models are available (Batten, Casti, and Thord 1995; Bryson 2000; Crouch 1999; Gittelman 2000; Mirowski and Sent 2002; Schumaker 2001; Stein 2001). Knowledge maps in Asian studies typically represent various dimensions of national territory (Elder, Embree, and Dimock 1998; Schwartzberg 1992).

map of Asia by lumping countries into regions that officially define East, Southeast, Central, and South Asia; these became areas in area studies. Although many maps depict Asia as including most of Russia and touching the Mediterranean, the U.S. government mapped Asia so as to separate the Middle East from Central and South Asia. Scholars, educators, publishers, schools, tourist agencies, news agencies, and countless others in many countries did the same. Attachments to maps of Asia developed accordingly.

Invisibly, however, America's Asia mostly means China and Japan. This appears in the fact that roughly 75 percent of the members of the AAS study China, Japan, or Korea. This knowledge map of Asia is invisible in the AAS logo and reflects a special American attachment to East Asia dating back to the days of the Opium Wars and Admiral Perry's adventures. By the 1950s, when area studies took shape in America, a century of mobility across the Pacific had formed a distinctly American geography of attachments to Asia, interests in Asia, and knowledge about Asia. By contrast, European knowledge about Asia evolved over centuries of mobility across the Indian Ocean, and as a result, European Asian studies pay proportionately more attention to South and Southeast Asia.

Territorial attachments to Asia in Europe and America historically developed alike inside expansive geographies of competitive national interests in Asia. European and American interests moved into Asia, as materials for Asian studies moved out of Asia and into Europe and America.<sup>4</sup> Asia thus became a vast, mobile corpus of knowledge, whose elements traveled among producers, learners, and users on several continents.<sup>5</sup> Historical geographies of national interest drew route maps for knowledge: Americans focused on China and Japan, while the Dutch, French, and English focused on Indonesia, Indochina, and India, respectively.<sup>6</sup> Knowledge about Asia also acquired geographical histories inside homelands of Asian studies.<sup>7</sup> In Europe, Asia came

<sup>4</sup>Numerous U.S. libraries contain more books on many Asian countries than libraries in those countries. More scholars move from Asia to Europe and America than in any other direction. Restrictions on mobility separate scholars from scholarly resources. In South Asia, vast historical documentation on Bangladesh and Pakistan in India is out of reach to those in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Asian studies resources in Europe and America are out of reach for most scholars in Asia.

<sup>5</sup>Knowledge moving among countries forms an international geography of Asian studies. National states filter all sorts of knowledge. National states compose a bilateral framework for the study of each country in every other country. National tastes and markets filter knowledge that travels internationally (Ludden 2001b), but interacting state policies operate more visibly (Wallerstein 1997). For example, on 4 April 2002, the *Far East Economic Review* (owned by the *Wall Street Journal*) featured a story depicting Bangladesh as "a cocoon of terrorism" filled with Muslim extremists, an image that spread internationally more quickly than other "news" about Bangladesh (Lintner 2002). The Bangladeshi government banned the original article and then clamped down on foreign journalists, arresting two along with native assistants, so as to prevent negative portrayals of the country, especially in the United States, where the government put Bangladesh on a list of suspect Muslim countries whose citizens in America must register with authorities to facilitate their own surveillance.

<sup>6</sup>Accumulation of knowledge in all forms continues to gravitate toward privileged sites of processing and consumption in imperial centers where academic institutions set global standards. Asian studies knowledge follows the tracks of global commodity chains, and its uneven development replicates spatial patterns of capital accumulation inside countries (in big urban centers) and internationally (in rich countries) (Smith 1984).

<sup>7</sup>Historical interactions between imperialism in Asia and knowledge about Asia are established topics of research (Abdel-Malek 1963; Said 1978), which seem most compelling for scholars of western and southern Asia, where they are deeply embedded in national thought (Nandy 1983; Breckenridge and van der Veer 1993; Said 1993; Rahnama 1997; Dirks 2001).

together as a subject of knowledge under imperial intelligence in capital cities that organized national interests in Asia and centralized accumulation of knowledge in huge national repositories.<sup>8</sup> Asia emerged as an organized subject of study in America during the twentieth-century decades of Asian national independence and American ascendancy, which spawned distinctively American dialogues with Asia's intelligentsia, steeped in a cold war discourse of modernity, tradition, and development. Based in Washington, D.C., Asian studies spread widely in America with government and foundation funding and with regionally diverse popular interests. A handful of old elite institutions kept a grip on Asia expertise, but the Americanization of Asian Studies formed an expansive intellectual space filled with many creative sites, mostly in major metropolitan centers, where area studies institutions engaged in "outreach" activities under federal mandate.

Thus in the U.S., as in other national environments, geographies of knowledge and of territorial attachment have complex entanglements, which American expansion has rendered global in scope.<sup>9</sup> After 1950, mobile interests of missionaries, immigrants, businesses, diplomats, and the military continued to be influential, as a proliferation of area studies programs informed an increasingly global America. Teaching and scholarship about each foreign country adapted itself to the tenor of U.S. bilateral relations. Strategically more important countries and topics received more attention, as each hot spot in the news attracted scholars, politicians, publishers, and educators. In 1980 a new hot spot appeared in South Asia, when the U.S. revived the "Great Game" with a war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. American oil companies then began pressing their interests in Central Asia, strategic routes to which cross Afghanistan and Pakistan. At the same time, American children of South Asian immigrants, mostly from India, began to enter college. South Asian professionals, again mostly from India, began coming more often to work and study in the United States. American interests in South Asia expanded with globalization programs induced by economic development agencies, while South Asian migration to the U.S. steadily increased. In 2001 India surpassed China as the top national exporter of students to America. On 6 October 2001, when the U.S. began bombing Afghanistan, more of South Asia became newsworthy in the U.S. than ever before.<sup>10</sup>

Trends after 1980 also accentuated South Asia's own divergent spatial histories. As differences among Asian countries increased—between rich and poor, between labor importers and exporters, and between good sites for investors and problematic places for development and governance—South Asia became one of the poorest problem areas in the world economy. At the same time, South Asia's mobile peoples, cultures, assets, and politics moved into spaces spanning the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, Afro-Asia, Europe, America, and the worlds of English

<sup>8</sup>Scholars often credit eighteenth-century Orientalists with the first research to constitute India as a composite subject of knowledge, but James Rennell's maps constructed India geographically, and the first compilation of local and regional data to constitute India as a region for "area studies" appeared in a committee report to the House of Commons (Firminger [1917] 1969; Breckenridge and van der Veer 1993).

<sup>9</sup>For further reading, see Kaplan 2002; Smith 2003.

<sup>10</sup>South Asian representation in AAS continues to hover around 11 percent of membership. The only major challenge to the official American world-knowledge map came with post-cold war globalization, which popularized ideas about deterritorialization. Extensive critical thinking about area studies ensued (Duara 1997, 1999; Ludden 2001a; Mirsepassi, Basu, and Weaver 2003; Nugent 2002; Wallerstein 1997). Political anxiety about global disorder (Brzezinsky 1993; Kaplan 1994) reaffirmed the old boundaries of area studies, however, with ideas about global order based on cultural territories (Huntington 1996).

literature and global culture. South Asia also acquired a double location in world politics, torn between an Asia where independent national states are in firm control and an Asia where national authority is deeply contested amid a new version of the Great Game, complete with its old Muslim nemesis.<sup>11</sup> South Asian studies thus acquired two intellectual geographies: one based inside sharply demarcated, often hostile South Asian countries, all with powerful American attachments, and the other moving in boundless zones of culture and history, in which Arundhati Roy (2003) is only one critical “subject of the American Empire.”

The Asia that South Asia now inhabits extends far beyond the AAS map of Asia. It connects the far west and northwest of Eurasia to South, Central, East, and Southeast Asia to conjure a nameless Asia that touches Chechnya, Palestine, Armenia, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Much of this nameless Asia preoccupied Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, but its news today invites specific comparison with texts about America’s Wild West and British imperial frontiers because it appears in popular media as fearsome terrain, filled with volatile, dangerous, irrationally religious people who threaten civilization with deadly chaos, moving surreptitiously across harsh terrain, where the U.S. military must establish law and order inside national borders.<sup>12</sup>

## Mobility and Territorialism

News sites in this nameless Asia scatter like the dots on flight maps of airlines that shuttle workers constantly from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to and from jobs in the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. This pattern in turn recalls old sites and routes around the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean. These spatial coincidences indicate that very old histories of mobility animate the Asia that South Asia inhabits today. In order to appreciate these old and still-living spaces of mobility, we need to consider why they are so invisible, and taking a very long term perspective, we see that territorial authorities habitually bury mobility inside territorial order in many cultures over many centuries. Territorial maps in the mind give social space cultural form because elites map spatial power with symbols that contain human attachments spatially. Authors of territorialism have long described their own sublime domain as the enclosure of civility, outside of which fearsome people and demons lurk in the dreaded forest, wild steppe, fierce desert, mysterious mountains, and endless untamed darkness of the sea. As a result, most evidence that we use to write history articulates territorialism in one way or another. The vast record of territorial order banished disorderly mobility to the outlands.

This banishment includes the mobility of territorialism itself, which always travels across borders to alter the substance and meaning of territorial authority. In shifting sands of spatial dominion, territorial authorities insist on controlling geography in their own space and time, where they bury old geographies in the graveyard of archaic cultural forms in order to affirm the timeless permanence of their own boundaries. Thus, territorial anachronism gains a new life in each epoch. In every

<sup>11</sup>On the Great Game, see Chakravarty 2002; Klass 1987. For indications of imperial continuity, see Ludden 2002a; see especially Hunter [1871] 1965 on Muslim threats.

<sup>12</sup>For further reading, see Kaplan 2002; Kaplan and Pease 1993; Hyslop 2002.

place and time, the most practically useful past always appears inside maps of the present. Modernity produced the present-day maps that now control history, using scientific cartography to bury old mobile spaces by putting all of their evidence in the proper place, inside national maps, like a primitive archaeologist ripping artifacts out of context to store neatly in a museum. Scholars work inside national histories, in which national maps show them where to go and where to locate data. In this view, all of the spatial history of mobility appears merely to be comings and goings along routes inside and among national territories.

Modernity consigned human mobility to the dusty dark corners of archives that document the hegemonic space of national territorialism. As a result, we imagine that mobility is border crossing, as though borders came first, and mobility, second. The truth is more the other way around. In the nameless Asia that South Asia inhabits, which sprawls around the old domains of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, societies have always been extensively mobile, and mobility has typified human experience as much as sedentary, settled life, and in many places and times, much more. Many territorial authorities have drawn boundaries here, over many centuries. Their literati composed texts to articulate territorial order embodied in monuments such as the mosque, shrine, temple, garden, fort, palace, and stupa, yet the people who wrote the old texts and built the old monuments of territorialism also moved around over land and sea, in huge spatial zones of interaction. Most maps in their minds resembled route maps and travel guides; some had cosmic forms impossible to pin down. Their capitals were multiple and mobile. All premodern territorial authorities moved across unstable terrain, from one settled site to another, to cultivate sites of civilized order in archipelagos of sedentary security surrounded by open expanses of land and sea.<sup>13</sup>

Over the ages and also in modern times, mobility and territorialism oppose one another, in theory and practice, but they also need one another and live together, however roughly, because mobile forms of social life intersect settled environs and escape control by territorial authority, while mobile folk have many reasons to transact routinely with sedentary folk. In everyday practice, transactions between mobility and territorialism often include conflict. The simple reason is this: people who control resources inside their own territory invest their energy and assets to generate dividends inside their own territory, while mobile folk move from one place to another, investing locally to carry proceeds away, back into the realm of mobility. Endless transactions between mobility and territorialism enrich all societies and pit mobile and territorial interests against one another. Good examples are fraught relations between nomads and farmers, shifting and settled cultivators, and merchants and artisans. More complex transactions inflect imperialism, nationalism, and globalization—that is, between mobile territorial folk who bring separate territories under expansive

<sup>13</sup>Religion, empire, commerce, migration, livelihoods, ecology, language, literature, memory, popular culture, and other features of Asia describe many geographical forms, some tiny and barely visible (Saikia 1999; Ludden 2002c), some extensive, even boundless, but lost (Pollock 1996), and others intensely present but ephemeral (Moynihan 1979; Pollock 2003; Paranjape 2001; Lim, Smith, and Dissanayake 1999). Their formation can be understood as contested transactions between mobility and territorialism that engage power and knowledge simultaneously and take different forms in different lenses, areas, and epochs (Chambers 1996; Dodgshon 1987; Freedgood 2000; Gregg and Kale 1997; Kazmi 1995; Kearny 1991; Korte 2000; Lozovsky 2000; Muqaddasi 1994; Sitwell 1993). Territorial forms always include mobile spaces that overlap, transect, perforate, inform, enrich, and challenge territorial order (Bose 1990; Castells 1998; Freitag and Clarence-Smith 1997).

territorial authority and sedentary territorial folk who covet assets that move across wide spaces but also who fight to secure their own territory, so that they can put assets from the wider world to work on their own ground.

Combining creative powers and reconciling conflicts at intersections of mobility and territorialism preoccupy elites who produce most historical records. They typically live in central territorial sites and spread their influence over networks of mobility, where they enrich themselves as they endeavor to accommodate conflict with combinations of coercion, adjudication, patronage, and persuasion. The spatial reach and provenance of territorial elites changed countless times over centuries; thus, territories acquired many shifting, mobile geographies. In this light, it appears that, in the long span of history, mobility has had the upper hand overall in its transactions with territorialism. Mobility has repeatedly remapped Asia. After 1000 C.E., the force of mobility steadily increased, along with territorial conflict that provoked more mobility and made the fixing of boundaries increasingly imperative, pervasive, and impossible. In eighteenth-century South Asia, territorial boundaries formed a frantic kaleidoscope, as perhaps half of the total population consisted of mobile artisans and workers; peasants colonizing new land; itinerant merchants and nomads; pilgrims; shifting cultivators; hunters; migratory service workers and literati; herders; transporters; people fleeing war, drought, and flood; and soldiers and camp followers supplying troops on the move. All of this mobility sparked widespread conflict and a huge expansion of commercial activity, commodity production, and economic interconnections; it formed the space of modern empires and globalization.

In this mobile Asia, modern territorialism began its long march to supremacy, and here, as elsewhere, it marched with and against armies of industrializing imperialism. British armies sailed, marched, and steamed from Cairo to Hong Kong, with their Asian base in India. The civilizing mission of modern territorialism came with a massive use of military force to demolish countless fighting forces that fought for their own turf, defined ethnic minipolities, controlled most of the land, and were still moving into their own frontiers when modern armies arrived. In the nineteenth century, industrial force moving over vast distances created static states of political order contained in modern maps, not only under the British and not only in Asia, of course. The same process of conquest and spatial structuring produced national boundaries and expansive territorial attachments for the United States, whose conquest of the Philippines marked its first endeavor to construct an Asian territory.

By 1900 sedentary territorialism was a pervasive cultural norm that prescribed spatial containment for the essential rootedness of social identity. Permanently settled agriculture defined civil agrarian life, replete with property lines. Mobility became suspect, even deviant. Nomads, itinerants, shifting cultivators, and other vagrant, unsettled sorts came under strict scrutiny and regulation. In British India, the most recalcitrant misfits became “criminal castes and tribes.” State officials counted people who crossed the lines of state territory, and census officials counted people born in one territory who lived in another. Thus enumerated, migrants became people out of place in the book of modernity.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, ethnography and administration erased mobility from the constitution of sedentary village societies that became essential building blocks for modern territorialism in Asia. Mobile folk became aliens in social theory, social science, and political practice, in which mobility fell outside the normal—that is, the typical, ordinary, and normative—society. Mobility implied

<sup>14</sup>Counting “foreign born” people provides standard data on international migration today (see, for example, World Bank 1995, 65).

uprooting, detachment, alienation, and separation from sedentary sites that became authoritative locations for authentic identities.

Modernity cast a harsh eye on mobile forms of social life in all of its mapped constituencies, from the microdomain of the village to the macrodomain of the national state. Territorialism became a cultural passion. Being a native insider became the only firm basis for social status in each mapped territory. A mobile past became a cultural liability that faded from memory for people who sank roots in native places, where being alien became more perilous as societies attached themselves more firmly to modern maps. Constructing “the native” inside native territory and inside native social, cultural, and political order became an academic passion. Civilization and culture thus became strictly territorialized in mapped social spaces, where natives essentially belonged, others did not, and people who moved away disappeared from maps of belonging.

The alien stigma of mobility darkened in the twentieth-century world of national maps, where borders make the nation.<sup>15</sup> Communities imagine nationality in maps. All of the external margins of national territory fall inside national geography in order to confirm national coherence.<sup>16</sup> National graphics bury all of the marginal spaces inside national territory under symbols of orderly geography.<sup>17</sup> Conflict at the external

<sup>15</sup>Transactions between mobility and territorialism make and remake boundaries. Some border crossings, such as tourism, translation, and international trade, authorize existing boundaries. Empires cross borders, erase old ones, and restructure territories where new identities emerge (Edney 1997; Goswami forthcoming, 1998; Ludden forthcoming, 2002c, 1999). Mobility constitutes disorder against which territorial authorities construct boundaries that mobility may strengthen, modify, invigorate, disrupt, or escape. Territorial authorities endeavor to foster, regulate, repress, and coerce mobility all at once; in modern times, their powers to do so steadily increased. Increasing “flows” of mobility thus do not necessarily imply weakening boundaries. Capitalist “free market” territories, for example, combine high mobility with high regulation; they require intense structuring to foster mobility inside proper bounds. Contemporary concerns with governance in transitional and developing economies indicate this ongoing structuring (Barry and Goodin 1992; Breman 1985, 1990; Daunton and Halpern 1999; Gardezi 1995; Kale 1998; Omvedt 1980; Rao 1986; Sen 1998; Tinker 1974; Washbrook 1981; World Bank 2002; Yang 1979, 1985; Hall and Bierstecker 2003; Nugent 2002; Gereffi and Koreniewicz 1994).

<sup>16</sup>Modern territorialism strives to encompass all mobility. National geography thus portrays a world where mobility has no “exit” option, no space to move outside national territory, so that “loyalty” and “voice” seem to be the only options for transactions between mobility and territorialism (Hirschman 1970). The exit option thrives, however, in Asia. Mobile spaces elude national control on geographical margins in mountains, forests, deserts, and waterways and on islands and coastlines. Nations put these spaces inside national maps, but their locals and dissidents also inhabit other geographies, where some have within memory made revolutions, such as in China and Vietnam. Nepal is filled with such places, which spawned Maoist rebellion (Dixit and Ramachandran 2003; Seddon 1993). Insurgencies in India’s northeast inhabit borderlands with Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, China, and Tibet. Geographical margins of state territory scatter across Asia from Chechnya to Kashmir. On such territorial margins, military force becomes national necessity (Akbar 1991; Baruah 1999; Hazarika 2000), and mobility is always an option, often painfully so, because most locals have no real place to “exit,” only at best to another alien territory across the border (Samaddar 1999).

<sup>17</sup>Marginal spaces of exile, exclusion, deprivation, and alienation appear in slums, shantytowns, camps, ghettos, mountains, badlands, outskirts, remote villages, and many other out-of-the-way places. Underclasses, underworlds, and undergrounds inhabit internal margins. National regimes produce new internal margins by expelling minorities, importing alien workers, displacing people with development projects, and encompassing regions where natives became marginal. Internal margins are typically off-limits for middle-class civilians, under-



and internal margins of national territory constantly replays the ever present past of boundary making, which separates people who control territory from aliens and mere citizens. Gender, class, and ethnicity together define who belongs and who does not, who owns territory and who lives there under sufferance, who is naturally native and who needs naturalizing. Territorial violence produces marginal, expendable, and vulnerable people and often targets women whose bodies become sites for inscribing national boundaries. In South Asia, where countless generations have moved and resettled over centuries across unbounded spaces, millions became foreigners in national territories where the joys of independence still mingle today with pains of alienation, marginality, victimization, expulsion, exodus, dislocation, and assimilation.<sup>18</sup>

### Territorial Mobility

The citizen, alien, migrant, and refugee thus arrive together as definitive social identities in our contemporary world, where mobility continues its long historic increase and national maps represent novel instrumentation of controls over mobility. In this context, transactions between mobility and territorialism appear in new forms, as people in national territories strive simultaneously to enforce the enclosure of boundaries, to control people and assets inside boundaries, to exclude and subdue aliens, to move in and out of territories, to move assets across borders, to move and settle in richer places, to change and mix territorial identities, and to invent new mobile territories such as diasporas, metropolitan regions, multinational enterprises, and global America.

In order to imagine contemporary geographies more realistic than national maps describe, we can simply abandon the idea that territorialism could ever contain mobility completely and can thus eliminate spatial disorder. National territories depend on mobility that they cannot control. Mobility is always at work transforming territories in ways that territorialism does not comprehend. Asian studies lives in spaces of mobility and also in national territories, where its city sites are focal points for everything mobile amid territorial order. Social life now moves inside, among, through, and around cities more than ever, and social mobility typically leads people from poorer to richer places, on routes from village and town to the city. Human mobility elides borders and transforms territory, intranationally and internationally, and not only in cities, of course, although quite visibly there because modern mobility has made whole regions and countries immigrant homelands.

Assets also travel widely and likewise tend to accumulate in specific places. They settle most voluminously in territories where networks of mobility allow people to invest wherever they see promise to bring dividends back home. Asset mobility also

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counted by national censuses, bypassed by national development, and ripe for mobile activism by what Bandana Purkayastha (2002) calls "alien insiders" (see also Anandhi 1995; Baviskar 1995; Gain 1995; Gain, Moral, and Tigga 2000; Lin and Paul 1995; Samaddar 1999; van Schendel 2002; Wallach 1996). The world's official international refugee population grew from 1.4 million in 1960 to 18.2 million in 1992, making it larger than many small countries (UNHCR 1995, n.p.).

<sup>18</sup>For further reading, see Agarwal 1994; Butalia 2000, 2002; Chatterji 1995; Ivekovic and Mostov 2002; McHale 2002; Menon 2002; Menon and Bhasin 2000; van Schendel 2002; Susser 1999, 2002; Pandey 2001; Verkaaik 1994; Weiner 1978, 1993; Zolberg, Surke, and Aguayo 1989.

intersects territorialism both intranationally and internationally, and continuing spatial trends in asset accumulation describe increasing territorial inequality. Over the last century, poor people in poor places have formed an ever larger percent of the world population and also of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons. Rich territories have become richer as their populations have become proportionately smaller. Only 10 percent of the world's people now live in the twelve richest countries, with over twenty thousand dollars per capita GDP—the most populous being the U.S. (45 percent) and Japan (21 percent)—while 80 percent of the world's people live in fifty-four countries with under one thousand dollars per capita GDP (Johnson 1999, 1:16). Similar spatial trends separate rich and poor places in most countries. In this world of inequality, people move in ever larger numbers from poorer to richer places—most of all to richer urban areas but also to richer countries, despite constraints on immigration—while powerful people in richer places use their increasing command of the world's wealth to acquire more assets, not only with money but also with force and with knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

Boundaries that compose national territories are constantly challenged by mobile spaces that destabilize and restructure national environments.<sup>20</sup> The term “globalization” points to this process but obscures many transactions between mobility and territorialism around South Asia, where the force of territorial conflict increased noticeably after 1980, as people and assets moved more quickly into global networks,

<sup>19</sup>Asset mobility is changing national territory by moving inside and outside its regulation to shift the ground on which it operates and by invading and escaping it to change its rules of operation. Active assets continue to accumulate among the world's richest 20 percent, whose share of world wealth increased from 70 to 85 percent in the thirty years after 1962. Between 1977 and 1999, the richest 20 percent of U.S. households increased their share of national income from 44 to 50 percent, and the richest 1 percent increased their share six times more, from 7 to 13 percent (Johnson 1999). Mobile businesses exert independent force in national territory. The top three hundred transnational corporations own one-quarter of the world's assets, including finance, and some rank as leading world economies. In 1992 gross sales by the ten largest countries exceeded the national wealth of the hundred smallest countries, and General Motors' sales alone surpassed the national wealth of Nepal, Bangladesh, and Pakistan combined (Korten 1995, 220–21, 255). In policy practice, “globalization” and “development” refer to projects of reshaping national territories to enhance asset mobility, now the prescribed method for “attacking world poverty,” which policymakers in poor countries endeavor to adjust to their own national interests (World Bank 2000; Muqtada, Singh, and Rashid 2002). Most of the world's poorest live in Asia: China (34 percent), India (26 percent), Indonesia (5 percent), Pakistan (4 percent), Bangladesh (3 percent), Viet Nam (2 percent), the Philippines (3 percent), and so on (World Bank 2001; UNDP 1992, 1998; Pritchett 1995; Ludden 2002b).

<sup>20</sup>Some of this change is visible in maps that show more numerous national states and territorial divisions in most countries. Mega-urbanism has generated expansive localities (Brechin 1999), but the vast impact of urbanism is less visible. Even less so is the expansion of control by national regimes over internal and external margins, which has made national territory more precious and more contested. Ranajit Guha, for instance, describes the origins of the Subaltern Studies project in the Indian government's conquest of Naxalbari hill rebels and urban supporters (1997, xii; see also Ludden 2001b, 4–20). Moishe Postone argues that the internal composition of national territory has changed with “the weakening and partial dissolution of . . . national state bureaucracies, industrial labor unions, and physically centralized, state-dependent capitalist firms” (1992, 175). He explains further that “[t]hose institutions have been undermined in two directions: by the emergence of a new plurality of social groupings, organizations, movements, parties, regions, and subcultures on the one hand and by a process of globalization and concentration of capital on a new, very abstract level that is far removed from immediate experience and is apparently outside the effective control of the state machinery on the other.”

wealth and inequality both increased, and the U.S. launched new wars to structure Asian territory (following the series of East and Southeast Asian wars that ended in 1975). Conflicts to restructure territory in our nameless Asia thus operate in geographies of mobility where national maps represent an illusion that national borders contain national life. National states retain territorial authority, but national maps do not describe mobile spaces traveled by national societies, economies, cultures, and politics. Most boundaries remain open to walk across; many are entirely invisible on the land. Armed guards and high walls stand out as security forces protect public and private property against land grabbing and other forced appropriation. Porous boundaries between public and private property appear as corruption but indicate markets moving inside public institutions. Courts spend much of their time on property disputes that spill periodically onto the streets to mark fuzzy boundaries between public politics and private profits. Countless conflicts erupt at intersections of mobility and territorialism over conflicting insider and outsider claims in rural localities and urban neighborhoods. International conflicts are of the same kind.

In this contemporary context, national maps represent normative instruments of power in struggles over territorial authority characterized increasingly by organized violence. Cartographic passions feature prominently in territorial conflict, as the media propagate fear of alien threats. The external and internal margins of national territory now seem ever more infested with alien menace amid the territorial anxieties of globalization that mix hefty doses of fearful aggression into popular politics. For example, in 1989 Americans celebrated the dismantling of the dreaded national territory that Ronald Reagan called the “evil empire,” and praised the demolition of national barriers to capitalist enterprise in poor countries around the world, as the U.S. barricaded its own borders. Then, in 2001, horrific attacks on monuments of U.S. power triggered national panic that stoked a new round of American wars in Asia. Homeland security forces clamped down on alien Muslims. The government compiled a long list of suspect Muslim countries, where U.S. embassies now manage aggressive vigilance.<sup>21</sup>

After 1980 passionate violence against suspect peoples also increased in South Asia, as the domestic contestation of national sovereignty amid globalization provoked popular anxiety about national stability and security. In India, a well-organized set of Hindu activists targeted Muslims. In the 1980s and 1990s, electoral power moved into the hands of the Hindu chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which formed a national government in 1998. In February 2002, after three years of official state campaigns to make India Hindu, rampaging gangs massacred Muslims across the

<sup>21</sup>Bill Clinton’s initial public account of September 11, in a speech delivered on 14 December 2001 in England, merits reprinting here:

The reason September 11th happened, and it was shocking to Americans, because it happened on our soil, is that we have built a world where we tore down barriers, collapsed distances and spread information. And the UK and America have benefited richly—look at how our economies have performed, look at how our societies have diversified, look at the advances we have made in technology and science. This new world has been good to us, but you can’t gain the benefits of a world without walls without being more vulnerable. September 11th was the dark side of this new age of global interdependence. If you don’t want to put those walls back up and . . . don’t want to live with barbed wire around your children and grandchildren for the next hundred years, then it’s not enough to defeat the terrorist. We have to make a world where there are far fewer terrorists, where there are fewer potential terrorists and more partners. And that responsibility falls primarily upon the wealthy nations, to spread the benefits and shrink the burdens.

Indian state of Gujarat, as the U.S. military massacred the Taliban and killed two Afghan civilians for each person who died in the World Trade Center. As the Gujarat killings continued, the Indian government threatened war with Pakistan over Kashmir, which it claims is under attack by the same Muslim terrorists who many Americans believe threaten America.

Gujarat's spatial history adds depth to recent events. Gujarat has always been a land of the Indian Ocean as well as of India. Old sea routes to Kashmir and Tashkent came ashore in Gujarat, where people sailed for Cairo, Cape Town, London, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Mohandas Gandhi was born in Gujarat, where a composite Jain, Hindu, and Muslim culture spawned traditions of nonviolence that began their Indian political career in Gandhi's South Africa. Affluent Gujaratis have always been prominent Indians overseas; they embrace globalization at home in the world. In 2002 a BJP state government in Gujarat connived in the massacre of Muslims to conquer Gujarat for their Hindu nation, as locals reshaped localities by stealing Muslim property and driving Muslims away. State elections then bolstered the BJP victory, and Gujarati businessmen celebrated in Bombay, with an event called "Gujarat Unlimited," in which one tycoon reportedly called the Gujarat killings that cost the lives of as many people as died in the World Trade Center "a storm in a teacup" (Praful Bidwai, "India's Lumpen Capitalism: Business Kowtows to Moditva," *Daily Star*, 28 January 2003, p. 4 [originally published as "Big Business, Low Cunning," *Hindustan Times*, 24 January 2003]).<sup>22</sup>

Gandhi's mobile image of a peacefully spiritual India once charmed people around the world, and today, proponents of Hindu India spend more money than Gandhi could imagine spreading suitably Hindu knowledge about India globally. Such mobile activism, with one foot in America, has shaped national regimes around the world and has also always informed Asian studies. In this light—amid the vast mobility of assets, interests, and people that constitute Asia as a body of knowledge—we can realistically envision Asian studies as a mobile intellectual space that intersects many national territories, where Gujarat is only one contested terrain for mobile people who engage in struggles for territorial authority, using money, law, guns, media, bombs, votes, schools, and knowledge that travels the world. Hindu India is only one emotionally charged, ethnically majoritarian national identity thriving amid the territorial anxieties of globalization, basing itself on the idea that each national state is the unique domain of a singular, unitary, and definitively national culture. People rally around this idea in many countries. Their knowledge seeks to regulate, subdue, erase, expel, terrorize, and even kill the living legacy of human mobility that antedates national boundaries and moves across them to form culturally mixed societies.<sup>23</sup> In much of today's world, intellectual activity that erases mobility and all of its attendant

<sup>22</sup>On Hindu chauvinist politics, see Hansen 1999; Jaffrelot 1996; Ludden 1996; Ramachandran 1999; on Gujarat killings, April and May 2002 issues of *HIMAL* (available at [www.himalmag.com](http://www.himalmag.com)); on mobile Gujarat history, Nair 2001; on big business support for Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to court big business, "Gujarat Unlimited" ([www.indiaonline.com/nevi/modi.html](http://www.indiaonline.com/nevi/modi.html), [news.narendramodi.org/2003/January/18012003\\_2.htm](http://news.narendramodi.org/2003/January/18012003_2.htm), and [www.gujaratindia.com/what\\_new/achievement%20111%20days.htm](http://www.gujaratindia.com/what_new/achievement%20111%20days.htm)). Stanley Tambiah (1990) has suggested that electoral democracy may encourage ethnic violence in South Asia. On territorial anxiety in India, see Krishnan 1996.

<sup>23</sup>India's national schoolbooks now depict the Aryan Hindu as indigenously Indian and the Muslims as originally alien invaders; at the same time, the Indian media describe Pakistan and Bangladesh as Muslim terrorist camps, and the Indian government tries to force millions of Muslim Bengalis "back" to where they supposedly came from and thus "belong," Bangladesh (Ramachandran 1999; Samaddar 1999).

cultural mixing and spatial ambiguity from human history marks vulnerable people as natural targets for national violence.

### The Mobility of Asian Studies

All of this information indicates that Asian studies enjoys a compelling opportunity to explore spatial histories of knowledge and human experience. In this effort, Asia might be usefully imagined as a mobile, changing collection of spaces that never settle absolutely inside any fixed boundaries. Asia's external and internal boundaries have never been as firm as they appear in national maps that represent one kind of geography among many. More complex geographies better serve to orient Asian studies, in which national territories and international collaboration constitute settings for mobile knowledge that connects the past and future. Asian studies will move among nations for long time to come, but national maps conceal the pervasive importance of mobility in the ever present past of boundary making, as well as in human experience that eludes boundaries entirely.

Many scholars are now working hard to bring mobility out of the shadows. In 1989 the eminent Mughal historian M. Athar Ali opened his presidential address to the Indian Historical Congress by arguing that we should not read our present-day national sentiments into the histories of previous ages, and he then proceeded to survey histories that traveled from the Oxus to the Narmada from the eleventh to eighteenth centuries (Athar Ali 1990). Much important work on this line has appeared since then. Its cumulative message is that human experience moves in spaces that we grossly distort by merely drawing routes of trade, migration, and cultural flows among territories defined only by national maps.<sup>24</sup>

Human mobility creates affect-laden spaces that include all kinds of people and foster cultural identity in and among territories. Asian studies thrives in mobile spaces in which scholars and teachers can well appreciate that globalization operates in disparate geographies, which coexist and complicate one another and which have done so for a long time. We can abandon the idea that national maps represent essential geographical facts. Modern anxiety about mobility is perhaps more essential, as are modern efforts to contain, regulate, marginalize, and erase mobility. By embracing and analyzing its own intellectual space, Asian studies might thus better appreciate the spatial and temporal dissonance that modernity generates and silences. Disorderly mobility disturbs all purveyors of territorial order, but by abandoning its own attachment to static, secure, territorial maps, a more self-consciously mobile Asian studies might perhaps help make the future a little more secure for all of those mobile people who appear in territorial light as aliens, minorities, migrants, and hyphenated nationals. Rather than seeing identity through maps in the mind that identify people with one place or another and rather than mapping belonging as being either here or there, or both, inside a fixed grid of national maps, Asian studies could demonstrate that most if not all human societies emerge inside mobile geographies, where attachments to territory always change with the times. We often use "diaspora" to denote social spaces of cultural migration, but mobile social life rarely leaves one

<sup>24</sup>Good reading includes Abu-Lughod 1989; Bender and Winer 2001; Casimir and Rao 1992; Cohen 2002; Doty 1996; Eaton 1994; Horton 2000; Khazanov and Wink 2001; Little 2001; MacDonald 1998; Nair 2001; Nichols 2001; Rudner 1994; Samaddar 1999; van Spengen 2000; Wink 1990; Naples and Desai 2002.

territory merely to arrive in others: its mobility generates dissonant, nonterritorial spaces that repulse regimentation and challenge territorialism, at the same time as mobile folks settle in places where they exclude and subordinate others to secure territorial dominance.

In addition, we can see territorial force at work in the world more realistically by locating research and teaching at intellectual intersections of mobility and territorialism, rather than working inside national boundaries or imagining a world without borders. Hindu India and global America are two indications that culture and power produce and transform territory in traveling spaces that national maps conceal. People who shape territorial authority and national passion today travel wide networks that did not disappear when nations made "empire" sound archaic. War and pogrom transact freely across boundaries of states, properties, and neighborhoods that seem ever more permeable and also more useful as weapons for people who seek to control territory with violence. The mobility of Asia indicates that, at the end of the day, all of the boundaries will change. They are in fact changing in front of our eyes. Asian studies might improve knowledge of the past and options for the future by embracing the emotional dissonance of its own mobile existence in a world of territorialism and by exploring the boundless experience of human mobility amid territorial passions that are today bursting the seams of Pandora's cartography.

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