Conclusion

Postcolonial Urbanism: Speed, Hysteria, Mass Dreams

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> What is at stake is a "worlding," the reinscription of a cartography that must (re)present itself as impeccable.
>
> (Spivak 1999: 228)

In her opening essay, "Worlding Cities, or the Art of Being Global," Aihwa Ong calls for new approaches in global metropolitan studies, those that can trouble both political economy and postcolonial frameworks. The former, she argues, positions cities within a singular script, that of "planetary capitalism." The latter searches for "subaltern resistances" in cities that were once subject to colonial rule. Neither, she notes, is sufficient in enabling robust theorizations of the problem-space that is the contemporary city. Ong's critique is a much-needed intervention in the production of knowledge about the urban condition. Indeed, this book is assembled as precisely such an intervention. Its essays highlight an urban problematic – "Asian" experiments with city-making – that cannot be easily subsumed within existing genres of urban theory, from political economy to the postcolonial.

This concluding essay is written in conversation with Ong's critique and is informed by the complex theoretical analysis presented by the many authors of this volume. Rather than seeking to reach a definitive conclusion on the question of "worlding cities," it is meant to open up lines of inquiry in the field of global metropolitan studies. I am especially interested in the project of postcolonial urbanism and how the study of cities can be enriched through a renewed engagement with postcolonial studies. What, then, is such a postcolonial analysis? I am in agreement with Ong that postcolonial theory, in its emphasis on subaltern agency, remains limited in its capacity to describe and explain urban experiments. Also limited is postcolonial theory's capacity to explain formations of development that no longer refer to

what Mignolo (2005) has famously called the "colonial wound." In this sense, the essays in this volume can be seen as a challenge to postcolonial theory, for they foreground processes of ascendance, emergence, and contestation that defy the grid of postcolonial world-systems (as they do the map of planetary capitalism).

But I believe that another route through postcolonial urbanism is possible. I am interested in a genre of postcolonial analytics that critically deconstructs the "worlding" of knowledge. My interest lies not in the urban environments that are usually designated as postcolonial cities but, rather, in how postcolonial theory may enable new lines of urban research and theory. This shift – from the postcolonial as an urban condition to the postcolonial as a critical, deconstructive methodology – inaugurates a new way of doing global metropolitan studies. My exploration of a project of postcolonial urbanism in effect echoes an inquiry posed by Jane M. Jacobs (1996: 15) in her important postcolonial text, *Edge of Empire*: "How can the spatial discipline of geography move from its historical positioning of colonial complicity towards productively postcolonial spatial narratives?" With such questions in mind, in this essay, I put forward two theoretical positions. The first is concerned with geographies of authoritative knowledge; the second with articulations of subject-power.

Itineraries of Recognition

In my previous work, I have argued, inspired by Jennifer Robinson, that it is time to rethink the geography of authoritative knowledge that attends our study of cities (Roy 2009). That authoritative knowledge, which we designate as Theory, operates through what Robinson has called the "regulating fiction" of the First World global city. Overly "globalist," such frameworks also obscure, as Olds and Yeung (2004: 489) have argued, the "differential and dynamic developmental pathways" through which global cities come into being. Especially troubling is the map through which cities are placed in the world. While global cities, mainly in the First World, are seen as command and control nodes of the global economy, the cities of the global South are scripted as megacities, big but powerless. Off the map, they are usually assembled under the sign of underdevelopment, that last and compulsory chapter on "Third World Urbanization" in the urban studies textbook. They are the sites at which capital accumulation and democratic governance happen under "special circumstances." They are the megacities, bursting at the seams, overtaken by their own fate of poverty, disease, violence, and toxicity. They constitute the "planet of slums," with its "surplus humanity" and "twilight struggles." Recovered through ethnography, the analysis of such cities lacks the authority and legitimacy to be written as

Theory. In other words, "we need to understand more fully the schema through which the subject of universal knowledge becomes isomorphic with the West and all other regions become consigned to particularity" (Cheah 2002: 59).

My call for new geographies of knowledge does not imply a simple journey out of the bounds of Euro-America to the colonial space/non-place that is usually designated as *terra incognita* or *terra nulla* (Bhabha 1994). Nor is it a call for studying the diversity of urban modernities. Sassen (2008: 124) argues that "reassembling the category of the urban" requires explanations that "encompass diverse spatial forms" and frameworks that foreground the "diversity of economic trajectories through which cities and regions become globalized." But the narrative of urban diversity, I argue, does not enable a productive reassembling of the category of the urban. Making visible the diverse urbanisms of the global South is a project of recognition that can maintain intact dominant maps of economy, power, and culture. Such an endeavor is akin to what Mitchell (2000: xii) has critiqued as the "vocabulary of alternatives," that which holds constant "an underlying and fundamentally singular modernity, modified by local circumstances into a multiplicity of 'cultural' forms." Ong's dissatisfaction with such a project is thus right on the mark. She insists on an analytical framework that shows "how an urban situation can be at once heterogeneously particular and yet irreducibly global." Postcolonial urbanism must therefore entail more than a theoretical proliferation of urbanisms; it must exceed the effort to supplant universality with emplaced heterogeneity. An appreciation of the "diversity of cities" is not enough; instead, the "privileged link between modernity and certain kinds of cities" needs to be questioned (Robinson 2004: 709).

Thus, our work in this volume cannot be seen as an effort to list and reveal the multiple urban forms, practices, and meanings produced in that vast space marked by the ambiguous nomenclature, "Asia." Instead, it is an analysis of the social technologies through which claims to an Asian century are made, of the circulatory capacity of Asian models of urbanism, and of the norm(aliz)ed interpellations through which urban subjects come to inhabit space. In other words, as a study of Asian city-making, this book is also a study of the making and unmaking of the referent: Asia. This, I believe, is central to the project of postcolonial urbanism: that it is an analysis of the worlding practices through which knowledge is constituted. Geographic imaginations in turn are the very essence of such worlding practices (Gregory 1994). To practice a theory of postcolonial urbanism therefore means, following Chakrabarty's (2000) broad mandate, to "provincialize" its geographic declarations.

Modernity is too often interpreted as emerging from the West and spreading to the rest (Gaonkar 2001). So is it with urbanism. It is thus that the modernity and globality of Southern cities is studied in the valence of

surprise and dismay; they are seen to be weak copies of a Western urbanism, a betrayal of an indigenous urban formation. Take, for example, Anthony King's (2004) study of "spaces of global culture" and its documentation of the "villafication of Chinese cities" and the spread of "Western suburbs" to Indian cities. Such readings of Asian urbanism in the register of Westernization are commonplace. It is thus that the peripheries of Indian cities are seen to be colonized by the "globurb" (King 2004: 97) and its American lifestyle. But such peripheries embody much more than the internationalization of the American suburb; they are also, as I have shown in the case of Kolkata (Roy 2003), land tenure systems that combine colonial landholding arrangements with national imperatives of planning and zoning; where squatter settlements and sharecropper agriculture proliferate alongside gated zones of residence and industrial factories and where ties of patronage and clientelism thrive in the interstices of the electoral regimes of liberal democracy. Solomon Benjamin (2009) has rightly designated this complex spectrum of tenure arrangements "occupancy urbanism," for this is how city-space is produced and inhabited. These occupations must therefore be understood as much more than the imposition of global designs of Suburb and Villa.

Postcolonial analysis calls into question these "origins" stories, eroding ideas of original and borrowed urbanisms. It demonstrates how seemingly original templates of modernism, developmentalism, and neoliberalism emerge through global circulations and experiments. They are, in other words, thoroughly hybrid, thoroughly corrupted. Origins are not what they seem. It is thus that Anthony King's (1995) genealogical analysis of the "bungalow" reveals the travels of this spatial form – from the tropical colonies to middle-class American suburbs to Australian frontiers to postcolonial cities. Indeed, King (2004: 124) himself casts doubt on his own narrative of the "villafication" of Beijing, asking whether such forms "come from 'the west' or whether they are mediated via Hong Kong and Shanghai," since these cities are "central to China's 'official' imagination of modernity." Here, Mitchell's cautionary note – that "locating the origins of capitalist modernity entirely within the West has always been open to question" – must be taken up more fully. After all, various modern forms of industrial production, spatial organization, and subject-formation were invented and perfected in the colonies; in other words, "in reticulations of exchange and production encircling the world" (Mitchell 2000: 2).

The themes of emergence and encirclement are central to our work. Kolkata, Dubai, Bangalore, and Dalian are all sites of emergence, where intense experiments with city-making are inflected by strategic global influences and investments, but are also inevitably "homegrown," defying the plotted coordinates of "planetary capitalism." These urban ventures demand a provincialization of urban theory, since they demonstrate how neoliberal urbanism is as much "Asian" as it is "Western," as much "homegrown" as

it is borrowed. Such forms of urban creativity – and violence – far exceed the political economy of regulation that is the concern of quite a bit of urban theory. Forged in the crucible of a handful of Euro-American cities, with New York usually leading the pack, urban political economy misses the assemblages of exception, sovereignty, and citizenship that Ong so deftly exposes in her many treatises. The urbanisms analyzed in this volume thus cannot be easily designated as what Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2009: 55) have termed "localized neoliberalizations." They are better understood as "globally interconnected, conjunctural formations" – a phrase that Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2009: 54) also employ, but that is at odds with the narrative of planetary neoliberalism and its localizations. At such conjunctures, neoliberalism itself turns out to be a "hybrid assemblage" (Peck, Theodore, and Brenner 2009: 96), a "mobile technology" that unfolds in a shifting terrain of borrowings, appropriations and alliances (Aihwa Ong, Introduction, this volume).

Equally important, the Asian experiments highlighted in the essays demonstrate the instability of claims to geographic origin. In this, they confound any simple analysis of the postcolonial condition, for this is not the subaltern effort to play the Rostowian catch-up game or heal the "colonial wound." Here, there is no single teleology of modernization, no prescribed ladder of development to climb. Instead, the postcolonial condition, as Ong argues in her introduction, hosts a multitude of performative and speculative enterprises, all of which operate through geographic referents. They are, in this sense, provincial as much as they are global. That these referents and circulations cannot be reduced to a unified and universal colonial history does not mean that they do not carry within them forms of coloniality. These are, in fact, worlding practices that inaugurate particular types of subject-power.

For this, it is worth turning to the work of postcolonial critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In an important critique of subaltern studies, Spivak casts doubt on projects of recognition that seek to confer visibility and voice to the subaltern. Indeed, as Spivak (1993: 11) notes, postcolonial deconstruction has been misread as a project of crafting a decentered subject when in fact it is a practice that studies how the subject always "tends towards centering" and how such a sovereign subject can claim an object of inquiry. Itineraries of recognition, Spivak argues, seek to assimilate the subaltern Other as objects of "conscientious ethnography" recovered by Native Informants. This produced "transparency," she rightly notes, itself "marks the place of interest." Spivak's critique thus directs our attention from subaltern agency to the practices of centering and worlding through which postcolonial subject-power is consolidated. In contrast to the Third World slum – the emblem through which Asia has so often been worlded – geographies of postcolonial worldliness lie at the heart of the essays in this volume.

From Asher Ghertner's interest in the "distribution of the sensible" to Michael Goldman's delineation of speculative accumulation, to Glen Lowry and Eugene McCann's tracing of the travels of urban symbolic landscapes, these geographies include and exceed the slum. On the one hand, they disrupt dominant maps of global and world cities, revealing a geography that explodes the boundaries of the West. On the other hand, they destabilize narratives of the "colonial wound," for they involve experiments and circulations that cannot be contained within itineraries of subaltern recognition. In doing so, they shift the terrain of the political from the standard icons of global capital and subaltern subjects to worlding practices.

Worlding Practices

Postcolonial urbanism has been most often understood as one or more of the following conditions: colonial cities and their transformation through projects of nationalism and development; and heterogeneous forms of subalternity through which colonial cities are lived, negotiated, and shaped. In this volume, we have put forward a quite different framework of postcolonial urbanism. We have sought to trouble the space–time imagination associated with postcoloniality by highlighting the remaking of core–periphery geographies and thereby urban claims to the global future. We have also sought to trouble the subject-power of the subaltern by demonstrating how subordinated social groups both oppose and take up the vision of the world-class city. This in turn troubles understandings of the postcolonial city as a subaltern space and as a subject of history. Central to our framework of postcolonial urbanism is the idea of "worlding." Three types of practices are implicated in the worlding of cities.

    First, worlding is a practice of centering, of generating and harnessing global regimes of value. Aihwa Ong (Introduction, this volume) describes the worlding city as "a milieu of intervention," a "claim to instantiate some vision of the world in formation." Such practices of centering also have considerable circulatory capacity. As is evident in the various essays that make up this volume, urban experiments are interconnected to one another, creating a world of inter-Asian urbanism, a space of emergence activated by models-in-circulation. Equally important, such regimes of globality are also regimes of subject-making. As Lisa Hoffman (this volume) argues, modeling is a "mode of governing the urban," "tied to the fostering of civilized and quality citizens who have a sense of national obligation and social responsibility, as well as the skills desirable for the global knowledge economy." Worlding practices, then, are not only the domain of the state and corporate actors, but are also instantiated in what Asher Ghertner (this volume) calls

the "everyday experience of world-class aesthetic discourse." His analysis of aesthetic politics in Delhi demonstrates how the making of the world-class city is also a worlding of subjects, of the taking up of the world-class aesthetic by urban residents desiring a new future.

In similar fashion, Simone (2001: 22, 15) outlines the "worlding of African cities" as "experimentation for engagement," the reaching of a "larger world" through "circuits of migration, resource evacuation, and commodity exchange." Simone (2001: 17) is especially concerned with how such practices of worlding are set into motion through the "state of being 'cast out' into the world," or what he calls "worlding from below." In other words, worlding is much more than the control of global economic functions; it is also the transactions of those "most marginal from these new economic capacities" (Simone 2001: 16). Worlding is the "speculative urbanism" – to use Michael Goldman's (this volume) phrase – of information technology, finance capital, and real-estate development, but it is also the anticipatory politics of residents and transients, citizens and migrants.

Second, worlding is an inherently unstable practice. Gavin Shatkin (this volume) draws attention to the numerous urban mega-projects that are never completed, that founder on "issues surrounding land acquisition, legal controversies, difficulties in financing, and popular resistance." Such failed projects mark the limits of the circulatory capacity of urban models and of global capital. These limits, as Michael Goldman (this volume) demonstrates, are often negotiated through experiments with governance, one where new frontiers of speculation are opened up through forms of urban planning that can manage "black, white, and grey markets." In my own work on Kolkata, I have argued that urban development unfolds in differential and "unmapped" geographies of informality and illegality, and that such city-making pivots on the flexible practices of a powerful state (Roy 2003). Yet, such a state can also come to be blockaded, its projects of development halted by the same logic of territorialized flexibility and uncertainty that enables speculation. The incomplete and unstable nature of worlding also extends to articulations of subject-power. It is thus that Glen Lowry and Eugene McCann (this volume), following Miki, position the figure of the "Asian Canadian" as a "double edged site." The Asian Canadian is at once a "platform for the flow of new (Asian) capital" and an embodiment of an "Asiancy" that can engender "altered states" or "alter-nations." But it is important to note that such contestations can also serve as the platform for new experiments with hegemony. In Kolkata, as I argue (this volume), the blockade of development inaugurates renewed efforts to create a "world-class" city. In a brilliant analysis, Sparke (2010) shows how in Seattle, the social mobilizations of 1999 that "sought to remake the meaning of world class livability in terms of global justice" set the stage for a "curative reconceptualization of the city," this time of a world-class center that is home to philanthrocapitalism,

including that of the Gates Foundation, arguably the most powerful player in the world of global health philanthropy.

Third, worlding as a practice of centering also involves the production of regimes of truth. In urban theory, cities have been worlded through the map of planetary capitalism or through the grid of postcolonial cores and peripheries. Our work seeks to deconstruct such forms of worlding. Here once again, Spivak's analysis provides valuable insight. In a seminal essay, Spivak (1985: 262) draws attention to the "worlding of what is now called the Third World." Examining the "empire of the literary discipline," Spivak shows how the Third World is taken up as "distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation." At the same, there is a disavowal of such worlding connections in the literatures of European colonizing cultures, a sanctioned ignorance of imperialism and its penetrations. Spivak's concept of worlding is useful because it makes evident the entanglement of geographies of knowledge and the articulation of subject-power. It is through the worlding of the Third World that Europe is consolidated as sovereign subject – "sovereign and Subject" (Spivak 1999: 2000). It is this itinerary of recognition – and misrecognition – that Spivak urges us to study. For example, such a mandate can be extended to the (self)-worlding of Asia. This volume, then, is a critical intervention in the truth-claims that are constructed and circulated in the space that is inter-Asia. But for us, worlding is both an object of analysis and a method of critical deconstruction. Our work is thus a critical intervention in the ways in which urban theory worlds Asia. It marks a shift from concepts of world cities and world-systems to that of worlding practices.

To make evident these interlocked practices of worlding, I provide some scenes of inter-Asian urbanism. Each scene, each city, is shaped by a key trope: speed, hysteria, mass dreams. These tropes reveal the making of cities and of subject-power – but, more important, they reveal the ways in which these cities are worlded. It is thus that "speed" becomes a self-worlding practice of Shenzhen, that which allows the city to be positioned as the "world's workshop," a place where the future of the world is made. Dubai, a desert frontier of speculation and calculation, circulates as a global referent. But in both academic and popular discourses, it is narrated through modes of hysteria, a worlding practice that signals anxieties about Arab wealth and power. Mumbai, the city of lucre, is the site of mass dreams. It is here that many forms of globality are staged and negotiated. Mumbai is the urban commons that is claimed by all, but that cannot ever be fully appropriated by any. Such sites and tropes must also be situated in the itineraries of recognition through which urban theory worlds cities. With this in mind, I have also provided glimpses of the circuits of knowledge production through which such forms of worlding are consolidated and contested.

Shenzhen: speed

At a recent conference held in Shenzhen, China, I found myself in a small cluster of urban scholars. We had been assembled by our gracious hosts to be interviewed by local reporters. Young men and women, they were not interested in the usual media sound bytes but, instead, settled in for a long conversation about the conference theme: "Global Cities and the World Economic Crisis." Their eager questions sought to uncover the mystery of the "global city" – what precisely makes a city global? But at the heart of this global imagination was a persistent concern: Shenzhen. These Shenzhen reporters quite boldly imagined Shenzhen as the global city of the future. They were keen to solicit our appraisals of Shenzhen's infrastructure, its urban milieu: Was it world-class? How did it fare in comparison with other global cities? Since news headlines had just noted the inauguration of Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, they asked if Shenzhen should build a higher tower. It is through such forms of inter-referencing, this performance of citationary structures of global urbanism, that these young reporters placed Shenzhen in the world.

[A bracketed note is in order: I start with this story because multiple worldings are at work here. The questions posed by the Shenzhen reporters speak to the exhibitionary impulse of worlding practices. But also at stake is the distinctive venue that is the global academic conference, a site marked by cosmopolitan encounters and voyeuristic sojourns. This too is a worlding practice, one that enables the travel of theory – "What makes a city global?" – from centers of calculation to the seeming margins of knowledge production. In such circuits of truth-making, the Third World city, the Asian city, is most often a curious object, its secrets waiting to be unearthed by the Global Scholar and revealed by the Native Informant. Bunnell and Maringati (2010: 419) thus call for greater attention to the "embodied practice of traveling, dwelling, seeing, collecting, recording and narrating" through which diverse actors, including academic scholars, produce knowledge about cities.]

The exhibitionary impulse is not new. Mitchell (1991) shows how the optics of exhibition was central to colonial rule. From world fairs to urban design, colonial technologies of exhibition recreated the world within the city. Today's global cities contain similar exhibitionary spaces. Thus, in Shenzhen, the kitschy "Windows of the World" is a montage of well-known global icons, from the Eiffel Tower to the Taj Mahal. This urban theme park, with its characteristic space–time arrangements of juxtaposition and compression, is best understood as a simulation not of the world, but of the world-exhibition; in other words, as a simulation of the Las Vegas strip.

This practice of remaking the world within the city also marks Shenzhen's reputation as the "world's workshop." After all, it is in Shenzhen's fortified

factories that the world's favorite commodities – from iPods to iPhones – are churned out. The Shenzhen assembly line is known for its flexibility, with machine tools that can be redeployed for a new electronic product in a matter of days. It is an instance of a temporal imagination that is widely celebrated in Shenzhen as "Shenzhen speed." As Cartier (2002) notes, the use of this phrase to connote a rapidity of economic growth suggests that "no other place or time has experienced the transformations that have characterized this city."

Once invisible, the Shenzhen assembly line is now the site of various worlding practices, including that where a migrant worker, completing the assembly of an iPhone, left a photograph of herself on the phone. Dressed in a pink and white striped uniform, smiling, making a peace sign, her image became the indelible trace on the next-generation 3G iPhone that was to eventually make its way into the hands of "markm49uk," a British consumer. In the circuits of cybercirculation, she came to be known simply as "iPhone girl." By asserting her place in the global value chain, "iPhone girl" suggests the possibility of an imagined community crafted through the transactions of the global commodity. This too is a worlding practice. It would be a mistake to read these various practices as a "worlding from above" pitched against a "worlding from below." The Shenzhen assembly line does not fit neatly into the verticality of power suggested by such metaphors. Instead, it is a site for the making of multiple regimes of globality – from the global city to the global value chain.

Another distinctive worlding practice is at work in Shenzhen: the viewing of the city (Figure 12.1). At Lianhua mountain, where a bronze statue of Deng Xiaoping was unveiled on the twentieth anniversary of the city (Cartier 2002), Chinese tourists come to view the city. They take photographs at the foot of Deng Xiaoping's statue. Shenzhen, perhaps more than any other Chinese city, is the city of Deng rather than of Mao. Declared a Special Economic Zone by Deng Xiaoping in 1979, it is China's first official experiment with "market socialism." It is to Shenzhen that Deng was to return after the Tiananmen Square protests, as part of the carefully scripted itinerary of the "Southern tour" (Cartier 2002). This was an itinerary of recognition, one that declared the Pearl River Delta and its Special Economic Zones the symbols of Chinese entrepreneurialism, global ingenuity, and market reform. That itinerary remains encapsulated in the viewing platform of Lianhua mountain. The statue captures Deng in motion, one step forward, looking toward the panorama of the city. It is this panorama that Chinese tourists come to watch and photograph, an endless sea of urban development stretching to the horizon. And it is in this panorama that Shenzhen far exceeds its prehistory as a zone of assembly lines; its future is that of the global city, its revolution is now urban. In a visibly Lefebvrian sense, what is being produced in Shenzhen today is space, urban space. Massive urban development

Figure 12.1   Photographing the city, Lianhua mountain, Shenzhen, 2010
Source: photograph by Ananya Roy, 2010.

projects have become the venue for "state-led spatial restructuring" (Xu, Yeh, and Wu 2009: 910). Everywhere there is construction; everywhere the new becomes old; everywhere factories and paddy fields give way to condominiums and malls; everywhere fast-speed infrastructure inhabits the city. As Chinese tourists watch this panorama of production, a worlding is once again under way – a placing of Shenzhen in the world, a self-worlding of Asia.

   As panorama-city, Shenzhen embodies an intense and volatile remaking of spatial arrangements. But it is also a remaking of the future. In a city that has grown from about 25,000 people in 1980 to nearly 14 million people in 2010, the theme of speed permeates all discourse. It is thus that a new rail link, connecting Hong Kong to Shenzhen and Shanghai, is presented as a "high-speeding" of Hong Kong. If a decade ago, Shenzhen was a provincial hinterland servicing Hong Kong with cheap-labor factories and mistress villages, then today it is Hong Kong that is seen to be the island that risks isolation and backwardness. As Helen Siu (this volume) notes, once a command and control node of neo-imperial connections, Hong Kong must now manage a new regional geography of proximity, the roaring economic powerhouse that is the Pearl River Delta, a region that is perhaps the world's largest metropolitan agglomeration. This is a new postcolonial

worldliness mediated by a temporal imagination that is most commonly designated as "Shenzhen speed." "No politics is possible," Virilio (2005 [1991]: 43) notes, "at the scale of the speed of light."

Worlding practices are articulations of subject-power. As they map the encirclement of the world, so they disavow particular subjectivities and relationalities. In Shenzhen, the panorama-city thus disavows its homegrown subject: the migrant worker. Housed in the ubiquitous and yet barely visible dormitory, this urban figure is central to the enterprise that is the "world's workshop." And yet can this habitation – uniformed bodies bound to the Taylorist rhythms of factory and service work, bodies indelibly marked by the provincial aspirations of the Chinese interior – be reconciled with the high-speed future that is Shenzhen? Can the self-worlding of Asia, enacted through the panorama of the global city, accommodate this subaltern subject? It is tempting to read Shenzhen as the regulated absence of the migrant worker, to search for traces of this subject in the interstitial spaces of the city, to conduct a "conscientious ethnography" that can confer visibility and voice on this subaltern subject. But in Shenzhen there is no simple itinerary of subaltern recognition.

Let me return to that opening scene of worlding: young Shenzhen reporters eager to understand the script of the global city. Toward the end of the encounter, one of the scholars in our assembled group, Brenda Yeoh, asked the reporters what they saw as the symbol of Shenzhen. Their answer, put forward without hesitation, surprised us: the migrant worker. Defying the predictable line-up of worldly icons – Windows of the World or a star-architect-designed civic center or the high-speed rail link to Hong Kong – these young reporters yoked Shenzhen's future to the subaltern subject of Shenzhen's prehistory. In doing so, they seemingly reversed the disavowal of provincial alterity that one has come to expect of such global zones of production. Yet, a closer look reveals how the designation of the migrant worker as the symbol of Shenzhen is also a worlding practice. The reporters admitted that their choice of this symbol was shaped by the fact that just a few days ago *Time* magazine (2009) had named "the Chinese Worker," specifically Shenzhen's migrant workers, as one of that year's four "runners-up" for Person of the Year. Photographed in black and white, Shenzhen's workers appear on the pages of *Time* magazine as heroes of the global economy. Crafted as an abstract, composite figure termed "the Chinese Worker," these women and men are given credit for "leading the world to economic recovery." It is worth noting that in this same issue, *Time* named Ben Bernanke, chairman of the American Federal Reserve Bank, as Person of the Year, praising his efforts to manage the financial crisis that erupted on Wall Street. But here, "the Chinese Worker," her heroism narrated in portraits of sacrifice and aspiration, cannot be understood as the cheap-labor periphery of Wall-Street-centered finance

capital. Rather, she is at the heart of a high-speed frontier of emergence and circulation: the "tens of millions of workers who have left their homes, and often their families, to find work in the factories of China's booming coastal cities."

The "Chinese Worker" is not merely a global construction. As Florence (2007: 140) shows, the theme of model workers has been in circulation for a while in Shenzhen. Articles in the *Shenzhen Special Zone Daily* thank model workers for their "painful labor" and sacrifices undertaken "for their company and for the zone." Model workers are saluted, as in one article, for offering "their youth silently" to the company, for having "created the Chinese miracle," and for thereby having "stepped into the new century." As a worlding city, Shenzhen then is also a mass dream, that of model workers and their sacrifices for the sake of the model nation.

The "Chinese Worker" as composite figure marks a worlding practice, an itinerary that makes possible recognition of the "world's fastest-growing major economy." The model worker is the linchpin of the model economy, the harbinger of an Asian future to which cities from Kolkata to Manila aspire. To borrow a phrase from Harvey (2009), such encirclements of the world indicate a reconfiguration of "economic hegemony," one where American deficits are covered by "those countries with saved surpluses" – China, the Gulf States. In China, Harvey notes, much of the surplus will be "mopped up in the further production of space." It is thus that the panorama-city of Shenzhen, inhabited by the heroic migrant worker, is deeply implicated in the worlding of late capitalism.

But this itinerary of recognition is complicated by the growing phenomenon of worker suicides. At Foxconn Technology, a company that produces the vaunted electronic gadgets of companies such as Apple, Dell, and Hewlett Packard, workers have jumped to their death from dormitory buildings and factory buildings. The suicides have triggered scrutiny of conditions of work at Foxconn, which in turn has responded with steep salary increases for its workers (Barboza 2010). Indeed, the suicides are a poignant reminder of worldly entanglements – of how urban cosmopolitan lifestyles fueled by electronic tools such as iPhones and iPads remain dependent on the embodied labor of migrant workers in dreary Shenzhen factories and dormitories.

[Yet another bracketed note: our conference on global cities allowed us entrance into Foxconn, past its gated and guarded perimeters, but not onto its shop floor or into its dormitory rooms. It is here that, a few weeks after our visit, a 19-year-old worker, Ma Xiangqian, jumped to his death from one of the dormitories. It has been reported that Mr. Ma "shared a dormitory room with nine other workers … and worked night shifts" (Barboza 2010).]

But the suicides also trouble narratives of subaltern recognition. Is suicide the ultimate act of heroism of the self-sacrificing "Chinese Worker," the

runner-up Person of the Year? Or is suicide a shout of rebellion, the refusal by a new generation of workers to sacrifice for the sake of family and nation? Is suicide the only politics possible at the scale of the speed of light in the mass dream that is the Asian world-class city?

Dubai: hysteria

In demarcating the global quality of a city, the reporters in Shenzhen had referenced a key icon: the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, which opened in January 2010, overtaking Taipei 101 as the world's tallest building. Situated at the heart of the "Dubai Downtown" mega-development, the Burj tower has become a symbol of the hyper-development that is Dubai. It is estimated that just in the first few days, over 10,000 people paid a hefty fee to visit the observation deck located on the 124th floor of the building. One of them, Prajash Kelkar, interviewed by the *New York Times*, declared that the Burj tower was the "pride of Dubai." One of Dubai's countless "expatriates," Kelkar went on to say: "This shows how the wealth is moving from the West to the East" (Slackman 2010). Indeed, the Burj tower is only the most recent in a set of extravagant Dubai projects, all of which seem to mark that reconfiguration of economic hegemony that is of interest to Harvey. It is thus that Mike Davis designates Dubai as the ultimate frontier of development, one that far surpasses any city in America, even Las Vegas:

> Dubai has only one real rival: China … Starting from feudalism and peasant Maoism, respectively, both have arrived at the stage of hyper-capitalism through what Trotsky called the 'dialectic of uneven and combined development'. In the cases of Dubai and China, all the arduous intermediate stages of commercial evolution have been telescoped or short-circuited to embrace the 'perfected' synthesis of shopping, entertainment and architectural spectacle, on the most pharaonic scale. (Davis 2006: 53–4)

Of course, Dubai is much more than a location; it is also a circulatory capacity. Dubai capital circulates and travels. It reshapes urban landscapes across a wide swath of territory, from Cairo to Delhi. Although Dubai itself is often billed to be an "oasis of free enterprise" – for example, by Davis (2006) – Dubai capital enters into strategic partnerships with a variety of nation-states. For example, in India, Emaar MGF, a joint venture between Dubai property conglomerate Emaar Properties and India's MGF Developments, has not only built gated communities replete with the amenities of bourgeois living but has also partnered with the Delhi Development Authority to build the Commonwealth Games village. In an interesting twist, Emaar MGF is implementing one of the key spatial technologies of global India: Chinese-style Special Economic Zones. Indeed, in Dubai itself,

capital is thoroughly permeated by state interests and control such that it is difficult to distinguish between the practices of "free enterprise" and the enterprise of the emirate.

Dubai has often been interpreted as a city of excess and extravagance. These discursive frames of hysteria are most evident in a popular language of "Dubaization," which has been deployed to refer to an outlandish urbanism of spectacle, fakery, and caricature (Elsheshtawy 2010: 251). From residential islands carved out in the sea, each serviced by a private helicopter, to some of the world's largest shopping malls, each hosting an exhibition of spectacle and entertainment, Dubai is, as Davis puts it, "a monstrous caricature." This narrative of caricature, in turn, becomes a means of worlding Asia, of situating its development trajectories as beyond the bounds of reason. Indeed, Asian cities once depicted as unreasonable megacities, concentrations of poverty and misery, are now being reframed as unreasonable hyper-development, concentrations of urban megalomania. Against such hysterical modes of worlding, it is necessary to position Dubai as Reason. Here, I draw on Partha Chatterjee's (1986: 168) analysis of nationalism, which argues that postcolonial worldliness operates in the name of Reason, and does so by seeking to "find for 'the nation' a place in the global order of capital." Chatterjee (1986: 169) designates this "historical identity between Reason and capital" as an "epistemic privilege, namely development." It is in this sense that Dubai is not a monstrous caricature of development; it is simply development. It is at sites such as Shenzhen and Dubai that the telescoping of time that is characteristic of all development becomes visible, that the bold rearranging of space that is the task of all development stretches to the horizon.

Chatterjee rightly notes that such a project of development, undertaken as Reason, is fragile. For example, it has to "keep the contradictions between capital and the people in perpetual suspension" (Chatterjee 1986: 168). Dubai too is fragile. Its labor camps are uncomfortable reminders of the corralling of cheap, migrant labor that makes possible the construction of the world's tallest building. It is a city of iconic architecture, but it is also a city, as Elsheshtawy (2010: 216) argues, of "transitory spaces," those claimed by the migrant bodies that build the city. Will the laboring bodies that produce these global commodities be recognized as Person of the Year, making a contribution to economic recovery, as is the "Chinese Worker"? Or is the Dubai Worker tainted by the hysterical modes of worlding through which Dubai is understood? After all, if the Burj Khalifa is the "pride of Dubai," then it is also a reminder that this city-state is nearly $100 billion in debt. Various discourses of hysteria surround Dubai's indebtedness, from the dramatic fluctuations of the Dubai stock market to the stalling of Dubai-financed projects in Las Vegas to the return of South Asian migrants, their hopes of Dubai gold dashed by the crisis. The hysteria spreads and contaminates.

It marks Dubai as ineluctably different – a speculative Arab version of an Asian frame of success, one that once again escapes Reason. Dubai, and its manifestations of crisis, thus seems to stand in contrast to more robust Asian frames of success: Singapore, Shenzhen. Dubaization, once hailed as a sign of prosperous globality, now seems tainted by the hysteria of debt. At the ambitious new City Center development in Las Vegas, which marks a collaboration between MGM and Dubai World, "star architecture" is the exhibition of choice. Ultra-modern, sleek, urban architecture. Euro-American cities are no longer the referent for such architecture. Shanghai, not Dubai, is the brand on display. In an interview, a corporate spokesperson called the City Center the "showcase of architecture." He continued, "Does one feel one is in New York? No, one feels in Shanghai" (CBS 2010).

Dubai's indebtedness has been followed by a bailout. In 2009, oil-rich Abu Dhabi provided a $10 billion reprieve for Dubai and its flagship conglomerates, notably Dubai World, whose real-estate arm, Nakheel, is responsible for Dubai's signature mega-projects. Petro-capital, it seems, is more durable than property capital. Immediately following the bailout, the key icon of Dubai World's "Downtown Dubai" project, the Burj Dubai, was renamed Burj Khalifa, a reference to Sheikh Khalifa, the president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and ruler of Abu Dhabi. Dubai, once imagined as the center of the world, was now repositioned as an Arab city, its future entangled with local circuits of brotherly solidarity. Indeed, there are other Sheikh Khalifa Cities in the Arab world. The Abu Dhabi Municipality recently announced that it will create a brand new city, the Sheikh Khalifa City, on the periphery of Cairo, on land provided by the Egyptian government. The city is to be developed and run by Emaar Misr, the Egyptian arm of the Dubai-based real-estate development firm. Sheikh Khalifa City is presented by Abu Dhabi as a "grant," a "community project" by the oil-rich emirate in an impover-ished Egypt. "The city is a gift from the President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, to Egyptian youth with limited income," for "fresh graduates and newly-married couples" (*Arab Finance*, December 14, 2008), in short for the Egyptian generation that must struggle in an economy hollowed out by liberalization, the generation that finds it impossible to imagine a future, to get a salaried job, to buy the apartment that must precede marriage, to pay the school fees that must precede having children. Sheikh Khalifa City is thus billed as the gift from the UAE that "aims to create stability and development in Egypt." Sheikh Khalifa City is a postcolonial centering, scripted as "the deep-rooted ties between two brotherly peoples" (*UAE Interact*, January 27, 2009). As a world-ing city, it is at once a space of (Arab) emergence and a mass dream. There are Sheikh Khalifa Cities, it is worth noting, in Banda Aceh and Gaza.

But the bailout of Dubai also generated hysteria, this time the fear that the "open city" of Dubai would be controlled by a "conservative" Abu

Dhabi, that this expatriate playground would now be subject to the norms of "Arab" life and monarchy. Had the universal referent, Dubai, now been reduced to yet another Sheikh Khalifa City? To read Dubai as Development, as Reason, is to confront the aspirations and limits of postcolonial worldliness. That the Burj tower, meant to be the latest icon of this global city, is now mired in the hysteria of debt, while also signifying the careful calculation of a bailout, indicates the frictions and fissures that accompany what Yeoh (2005) has called "spatial imagineering." It is thus that in the context of Kuala Lumpur, Bunnell (2004) shows how the iconic Petronas Towers is subject to "symbolic discontent," reimagined as the "twin dipsticks" for air pollution. Such calculative discontent is intriguing, often eroding the epistemic privilege that is development. But it cannot necessarily be expected to have any "coherent or unified authoritative intentionality" (Bunnell 2004: 78). Instead, it is perhaps merely an expression of the fragility of postcolonial worldliness, that which mirrors colonialism's fragility.

If Dubai is Development, then its fragility is most evident in a form of "standing still" that has taken hold in a few spaces of the city. Stories of Dubai's debt crisis report on a development at the edge of the famed Dubai Downtown. In the shadows of the Burj Khalifa, International City, a 2,000 acre development of Nakheel, is a future that lies in ruins:

> Traffic circles are now overgrown. Apartment buildings are now almost completely vacant. Rows of storefronts are empty. Families say they feel stuck, unable to sell and frightened for their safety. There are reports of crime, and what was supposed to be a family neighborhood has been transformed into a place where companies house low-wage laborers. There are piles of construction debris, a flooded parking lot, and street lights that do not work. (Slackman 2010)

Dubai's International City is reminiscent of places that stand still, and in turn of Benjamin's "dialectics at a standstill." In my essay on Kolkata (this volume), I argue that such spaces function as dialectical images, allowing us to unearth the logic of metropolitan desire. In Dubai, these spaces where the future lies in ruins are the urban speculations that seek to place this city in the world, to find a home in the order of global capital. But they also make evident the ambiguity that attends "Brand Dubai," one where the city occupies an unstable position in different worlding frames: Asia, Arab, success, speculation, excess, crisis. Is there now the emergence of a "Brand Khalifa," a repositioning of Dubai within a new world order that is centered in the Arabian Gulf?

Mumbai: mass dreams

In 2008, Mumbai, often scripted as India's most cosmopolitan city, a city of high finance and high living, appeared live on television screens and news streams around the world. The story was "Terror in the Taj," a city taken

over by ten young men with a mission to kill. Their choice of killing sites was a mix of urban sites – from well-heeled hotels to popular cafés to religious sanctuaries to vast public spaces such as the railway terminal. Billed by the global media as India's 9/11, here once again terror and urban life seemed to collide. It was a ground zero at what is India's gateway to the world, the strip of Mumbai quite literally located at the Gateway of India, the gateway through which Lord Mountbatten, the last British viceroy, left India in the middle of the twentieth century. The Mumbai killings were eerily echoed a few months later in the commando-style attacks on the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore. For the South Asian subcontinent, it was as if the very icons of its postcolonial globality were under attack: even cricket was no longer secure.

The Mumbai killings were framed by Suketu Mehta, author of the much celebrated book, *Maximum City*, as a contest between globality and parochiality, between the open city and the closed minds of religious extremism. In an op-ed in the *New York Times*, he wrote "There's something about this island-state that appalls religious extremists, Hindus and Muslims alike. Perhaps because Mumbai stands for lucre, profane dreams and an indiscriminate openness" (Mehta 2008). Mehta worlds Mumbai in commonsense ways, delineating an incontrovertible difference between the global geography of a profane, capitalist city and the remote geography of medieval madrasah and militias. This narrative also rehearses a familiar frame – of a global New York attacked on 9/11 by a tribal Al-Qaeda, of the figure of the Muslim extremist, trained in the rural frontiers of Afghanistan and Pakistan, as the counterpoint to the cosmopolitan urbanite of Mumbai and New York.

Mehta (2008) above all asserts the role of lucre in Mumbai: "From the street food vendor squatting on a sidewalk, fiercely guarding his little business, to the tycoons … this city understands money and has no guilt about the getting and spending of it." But could it be that the ten men were in Mumbai also for their own profane dreams? The one attacker who is still alive and in custody in India is Ajmal Amir Kasab, who is in his early twenties. Scenes of Kasab – in a presumably fake Versace shirt, gun in hand, roaming Mumbai's railway terminus – continue to circulate. Little is known about him. Newspaper reports suggest that he hails from an impoverished family in the village of Faridkot, Pakistan, where he worked as an informal vendor. He was possibly sent to live with his brother, a struggling wage-laborer in Lahore, since his family could not afford to keep him in school. Circulating through spaces of impoverishment, Kasab eventually ended up in the training camps of the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Recruiters supposedly pledged to pay between $1,250 and $4,000 to his family once he had completed this mission to kill. It is not possible, then, to read the Mumbai killings as an attack on lucre. As it turns out, the militants

were also in Mumbai to do business, to complete a transaction in which a few thousand dollars was to be exchanged for the taking of lives.

It would be a mistake to interpret such transactions as an attack on globalization, for they too represent a form of globality, one that is fueled by a worldly imagination about Islam. Images of key sites of violence – Bosnia, Kashmir – circulate in the training camps of Lashkar-e-Taiba (Anand, Rosenberg, Gorman, and Schmidt 2008). In other words, these too are calculative strategies enmeshed in a global network of Islamist militancy, with its own worlding practices of finance, information, and war. Similarly, it would be a mistake to interpret such violent practices as "urbicide," or the death of the city. It is the lucre of the city that lubricates such dreams, even those of religious fanaticism, and makes possible the implementation of grand schemes of terror. After all, where else but in the Taj Hotel of Mumbai, a few steps from the Gateway of India, would militant groups find such a collection of high-value targets? A *Vanity Fair* essay describes the scene thus:

> Politicians and socialites and bankers from Saudi Arabia packed the rooms of the hotel. That night there would be a wedding in the Crystal Room for the scion of a prominent textile family, a private dinner for the board of the Hindustan Unilever company, and a banquet with European dignitaries in the Rendezvous Room … The talk at poolside was about a new movie, *Slumdog Millionaire*, that had just opened in New York to rave reviews. "It is a travesty," one guest said. "They are making us look like we all live in a *chawl* [slum]." (Brenner 2009)

Suketu Mehta's 2004 book, *Maximum City*, tells in prescient fashion of the many sites and characters implicated in the 2008 Mumbai killings. Of these, the most legible urban site is the Taj Hotel. Mehta notes that this "is less a hotel than a proving-ground for the ego." Indeed, the Taj Hotel was built as a counter-worlding gesture, "born out of a slight," as Mehta puts it. When Jamshedji Tata, prominent Indian industrialist, was turned away from the Watson's Hotel, he built the Taj Hotel with a pomp and grandeur that soon overshadowed the Watson's. A mark of native rebellion, of a refusal by the colonial Mimic Man, the Taj Hotel is today the symbol of the worldly, open city. Watching "Terror in the Taj" unfold on my television screen, I am reminded of my first trip to Mumbai, barely five years old, with my parents on a luxurious holiday to western India. We stayed for a night at the Taj. I remember it not for the views of the Arabian Sea from our hotel room but, rather, for my first experience of room service – the food arrived in the most amazing contraptions, little ovens that kept everything perfectly warm, perfectly set tables with tablecloth and fine china, on wheels, and the luxury of eating in one's hotel room. The Taj, that grand postcolonial gesture, was my first encounter with a world beyond the parochial

familiarity of home. In that hotel room, with its rituals and luxuries, the world – the modern world – had arrived. It was a world-class experience in the world-class city. Mehta (2008) thus rightly notes: "Just as cinema is a mass dream of the audience, Mumbai is a mass dream of the peoples of South Asia." It is the world-class city as mass dream that we need to better understand.

The world-class city as mass dream belongs to many: global corporate elites, star architects, assembly line workers, militants and militias. In India, it is also increasingly claimed by the "common man." As I argue in my essay on Indian cities (this volume), such claims are central to a new middle-class urban politics and its mass dream of the world-class city. Belying usual stereotypes of enclave urbanism, such middle-class politics is waged in defense of the urban commons, social integration, good governance, and the public interest. It is in the name of these values that the urban poor are evicted, slums are demolished, and hawkers and vendors are banished from city streets. It is also in the name of these values that new experiments with governance are launched: neighborhood groups, resident welfare associations, urban reform committees, public interest NGOs. Together, they create a fractal geography of private jurisdictions and territorial interests, albeit closely bound to the apparatus of the state. In their most extreme form, they signify a vigilante urbanism that deploys violence – physical, structural, epistemic, symbolic – in the name of the public interest that is the world-class city. Such is the script of a provocative Bollywood film released only a few weeks prior to the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Titled *A Wednesday*, the film depicts an elaborate terror plot unleashed by a "stupid, common man" in revenge for the 2006 Mumbai train bombings. The plot, with its mission to cleanse "a roach-infested house," exterminates key Al-Qaeda militants who are being held in the custody of the Indian government and in doing so warns an Indian polity of the constraints of liberal democracy. But above all, the terror plot seeks to regain peace and security for the "stupid, common man" in the everyday routines and public spaces of the city. It is appropriate, then, that the "stupid, common man" carries out the plot from the rooftop of a building under construction. All around him is more construction, towers stretching to the urban horizon: Mumbai's lucre. This is the mass dream that is vigilante urbanism.

But the world-class city as mass dream is also subject to blockades. The encirclement of the world, that circulatory capacity of cities, of capital, of urban models, can easily be halted by an encirclement of the city, the spatial practice known in India as *gherao*. It is thus that two of Mumbai's prominent urban activists, Sheela Patel and Jockin Arputham (2008: 250), remind the state that the residents of Dharavi, Mumbai's largest slum, can "easily block all the roads and train tracks that are close to Dharavi," thereby suspending the "flow of north–south traffic in the city" and ultimately blockading the

ambitious plans for slum redevelopment. In India, such blockades have disrupted the project of making the world-class city. While the Taj Hotel in Mumbai marks the first postcolonial gesture of what was to become India's largest corporate empire, the Tata Group, a century later, in Kolkata, Tata's Nanocar factory has been stymied by a mass movement of peasants, sharecroppers, and squatters. As I have argued before, the Nanocar too is a postcolonial dream-image, bearing the promise of automobility for the Indian middle class. But the persistent blockades lay down a challenge to the mass dream of the world-class city. I am especially interested in how such mobilizations inaugurate a crisis of what Peck and Theodore (2010: 170) describe as the "performative power of policy models." If Indian policy-makers and planners have worlded the Indian city in the image of Shanghai or Singapore, then the blockades erode the legitimacy of such worlding practices. They make visible the displacement and dispossession inherent in such models of urbanization. At work here is the inherently contentious and contested nature of neoliberalism; but also at work here is a set of contestations that far exceed neoliberalism (Leitner, Sheppard, Sziarto, and Maringati 2007: 11).

It is tempting to read these blockades as counter-worlding tactics – to see them, if not in the register of subaltern resistance, then at least as Simone (2001: 22) does: as everyday strategies of "worlding from below." The blockades may in fact be efforts to create alternative urban worlds. But I am interested in how such subaltern uprisings are also forms of postcolonial centering, how they consolidate particular forms of subject-power, and how such consolidation takes place through worlding practices. Thus, the urban mobilizations and mediations that have unfolded in India cannot be understood as local responses to the global designs of the world-class city. Instead, they too are regimes of globality, embedded in worldwide networks of social movements, development finance, and poverty entrepreneurship.

ASIA

I have argued that a postcolonial theory of cities must be concerned with geographies of knowledge and articulations of subject-power. I have also argued that a critical deconstruction of worlding allows us to understand the "regulating fictions" of urban theory and to call them into question through the study of "off the map" urban formations that emerge in the "reticulations of exchange and production encircling the world." In this volume, such an enterprise has taken place within a specific field of emergence and encirclement: ASIA.

Let me juxtapose four statements about geographies of knowledge. These are also inevitably articulations of subject-power:

1 *Los Angeles*. In a defense of the territory and mission of the "Los Angeles
   School" of urban theory, Dear and Dahmann (2008: 268) write: "To put
   it succinctly, Los Angeles is simply one of the best currently available
   counterfactuals to conventional urban theory and practice, and as such,
   it is a valuable foundation for excavating the future of cities
   everywhere."

2 *Asia*. A recent report by McKinsey & Company (2010: 167), titled *India's
   Urban Awakening*, states: "The economic rise of the developing world is
   emphatically under way and driving a wave of global urban expansion.
   At the heart of this story is the spectacular renaissance that we are seeing
   in Asia, with China and India at its vanguard in returning to the global
   prominence they played before the European and North American
   industrial revolution."

3 *Asia*. Of Asia, Spivak (1999: 83, 96) writes that it "inhabits[s] the
   pre-historical or para-geographic space–time that mark the outside of
   the feudalism–capitalism circuit," the designation of difference that is
   meant to provide the answer to Marx's question: "Why did capitalism
   develop only in Europe?" But in *Other Asias*, she notes that "today more
   than ever, 'Asia' is uncritically regionalist, thinks 'Asia' metonymically in
   terms of its own region, and sees as its other the 'West,' meaning, increas-
   ingly, the United States" (Spivak 2008: 213).

4 *Africa*. In his intervention, *On the Postcolony*, Achille Mbembe (2001: 2, 11)
   notes that "Africa still constitutes one of the metaphors through which the
   West represents the origin of its own norms, develops a self-image"; Africa
   is that which is defined as "radically *other*, as all that the West is not."

LA–Asia–Africa: three counterfactuals. Can postcolonial theory enact a
rearrangement of such geographic spacings?

   What is at stake here, of course, is not just an understanding of spatial
arrangements, but also narratives of historical time. Africa, as the signification
of radical otherness, is primitive, bestial, backward. Los Angeles, as
foundation, is the future of cities everywhere. Asia, as *différance*, is the space
in which the singular history of capitalism is suspended. In the Asian century,
Asia is a reversal of this suspension: it becomes the space, the only space in
which the history of capitalism can unfold. Asia becomes the metonymy for
global capital.

   These too are worlding practices and these too require critical
deconstruction. It is thus that Mitchell (2000: 7) argues that "to disrupt the
powerful story of modernity, rather than contribute to its globalization, it is
not enough to question simply its location. One also has to question its
temporality." How, then, can we understand the geographic space and
historical time that is Asia? What does it mean to talk about Asian urbanism
in the time of the Asian century? This volume, crafted in the context of the

Social Science Research Council's "Inter-Asia" program, makes visible specific urban conjunctures in Asia. But the task of the volume has also been to inscribe the term "Asia" with new, critical meanings. Two in particular are worth highlighting.

First, to read Asian urbanism requires, as many of the essays in this volume have argued, a tracing of "models-in-circulation," of the material and discursive practices of inter-referencing through which cities are made and inhabited. It is thus that the Shenzhen reporters, eager to image their city as truly global, seek to reference the Burj Khalifa in Dubai; or that Singapore emerges not only as a model of urban planning and order but, more ambitiously, as an Asian "frame of success." Eco-cities, world-class cities, silicon cities, hyper-cities – these are all the nomenclature of an interconnected Asian urbanism anchored by key referents and consolidated through technologies of reference. In this sense, the name "Asia" becomes, as Spivak (2008: 220) has argued, a "place-holder in the iteration of a citation." Asia, she notes, is "the instrument of an altered citation: an iteration" (Spivak 2008: 217). Such a conceptualization moves us away from locationist references of "Asia" to understandings of emergence, reticulation, and circulation. It insures a "pluralization of Asia" and makes possible a "critical regionalism" (Spivak 2008: 131). But it also makes evident the citationary structures of urban capitalism, those that unfold through the iteration of key "Asian" themes and icons, including that of the Asian city. Asia, as an unstable signifier, is an "invented latitude." I borrow this term from Abdoumaliq Simone's (2010: 14, 16) critical intervention in global urban studies. Seeking to locate cities, from Dakar to Jakarta, across an invented latitude, Simone calls for attention to "shared colonial histories, development strategies, trade circuits, regional integration, common challenges, investment flows, and geopolitical articulation." These, he notes, are not only "grand, self-conscious design" but also "hundreds and hundreds of small initiatives that affect, even unwittingly, some kind of articulation." Simone's conceptualization echoes Ong's (2006) invocation of "latitudes" as "lateral spaces of production." In short, this volume advocates a latitudinal analysis of Asian urbanism, with a focus on the citationary practices of city-making and subject-power.

Second, to think critically about Asia requires a deconstruction of the worlding practices that organize history and make claims to the future. In a distinction that pervades quite a bit of urban theory, Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2009) identify "core metropolises such as London and New York City" and "newly ascendant cities such as Lagos, Mumbai, or Shanghai." This is as much a narrative about the time of capital as it is about geographic space. Against such a narrative, it is possible to argue that "newly ascendant cities" – take Shanghai, for example – represent a reemergent spatial power, a revitalization of the cosmopolitan globality of a previous turn of the

century. It is also possible to argue that core metropolises – take London, for example – are embedded in old and new imperial territorializations such that both their past and future have always been entangled with those "newly ascendant cities" of the global periphery. In her treatise *World City*, Doreen Massey (2007: 177) argues that such entanglements demand ethical notions of "extended responsibility" – that which is not restricted to the immediate or the local, and that which also takes up in the present the responsibilities of the past.

Such perspectives are important, but the essays in this volume also exceed these familiar spatio-temporal vectors. Mbembe (2001: 15–16) conceptualizes the "postcolony" as a "combination of several temporalities," one that cannot be reduced to a "before" and an "after" of colonization, one that is instead constituted of an "*interlocking* of presents, pasts, and futures," one where "time is made up of disturbances." The pluralization of Asia requires attention to this complexity and variety of temporalities: the "standing still" of blockaded Kolkata; the financial speculations of Dubai and Bangalore and the aesthetic speculations of Delhi slum-dwellers; the "Shenzhen speed" of a reimagined Pearl River Delta region; the climate-controlled future of the Chinese eco-village that comes to stand in, as Shannon May (this volume) pointedly notes, for the very "survival of human life." These temporalities are the "time of entanglement" (Mbembe 2001: 17). For example, Kolkata's New Town and Dubai's International City are poignant echoes of Mbembe's (2001: 17) inscription of contemporary African experience: "emerging time is appearing in a context today in which the future horizon is apparently closed, while the horizon of the past has apparently receded." But, as I have argued in my essay on the "blockade," such forms of "standing still" do not disrupt the citationary structure that is Asia. Instead, they consolidate the icon of the world-class city. Surely elsewhere, Asia at the speed of Shenzhen can be claimed.

Where, then, does Asia begin and end? As an invented latitude and as a postcolony of multiple temporalities, the ambivalence of Asia's boundaries is apparent. In this volume, we have ignored the boundary-spaces of continental power such as Istanbul, Jerusalem, Moscow, and Beirut and their performance of competing continental claims: Europe, Asia, Phoenicia, Zion. For in a sense, all Asian cities are boundary-spaces. Such is the ambiguous nature of Dubai, a city often worlded through hysterical narratives of excess and crisis, at once Asian and Arab. As Chad Haines (this volume) notes, Dubai defies our commonsense geographies; it is simultaneously an Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, Malay, Egyptian, Palestinian, and a Kenyan city. Dubai is thus an unstable referent, an unmaking of the space of "inter-Asia" that has been constructed through numerous practices of reference, exchange, circulation, and reticulation. It is perhaps appropriate, then, that the Social Science Research Council conference that laid the foundation for this book took

place under the theme of "Inter-Asia" in Dubai, in the shadows of Dubai's unfinished urban towers.

To ask where Asia ends and begins is thus a call to pay attention to the unstable space that is "inter-Asia," to trace the ways in which Asia travels, to make note of how urban experiments rely on the citationary structure that is Asia. But iterations of Asia also generate a surplus that cannot be easily contained within familiar frames of urban success and globality. A few months after the conference in Dubai, I found myself in Brazil. Once again, I was a part of the embodied practices of travel through which global scholarship is forged and mediated. In the university classrooms of Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian urban scholars were engaged in lively debates about the contemporary relevance of that powerful counter-worlding paradigm: dependency theory. Could the periphery put forward a new model of the city? On the streets of Rio de Janeiro, urban activists were facilitating shelter rights, consolidating the gains of a national movement organized around the "right to the city." These are bold and hopeful projects that aim to challenge neoliberal urbanism. They seek to reassemble the brutal geographies of race and class, of violence and indifference, which constitute Brazilian cities. They insist on asserting what one Brazilian colleague, invoking Lefebvre's idea of "experimental utopias," defined as "time-spaces of transgression." The transgression was meant to be both urban and global: "How to assure that rooted in low-income neighbourhoods, slums and ghettos of every city, it protrudes on national scales and celebrates the internationalist heritage reinvented in transnational counter-hegemonic networks and movements such as the World Social Forum?"[1]

I was quite taken with this field of urban and global politics in Brazil. For a moment, I came to see South America, specifically Brazil, as the counter-world to Asia – one seemingly a site of resistance, the other a metonymy for global capital. Such were my worlding desires. But walking along an unevenly paved, narrow street in a hillside *favela* in São Paulo, I came face to face with ASIA. Our hosts, graduate students who study the politics of housing, pointed out "Cingapura" – a line of newly constructed apartment houses that ringed the original *favela* (Figure 12.2). A slum redevelopment program in São Paulo, whose success continues to be hotly debated in Brazil, it makes explicit reference to Singapore's history of public housing. This is a model-in-circulation, but one that disrupts the model – for, after all, it is rare for Singapore's public housing pedigree to be referenced. Such a rare occurrence happens, surprisingly, in McKinsey & Company's (2010: 122) recent report on Indian urbanization, where Singapore's housing policy is promoted as a global model worthy of emulation by all. Usually, Singapore, despite its constant experimentation with technologies of welfare, circulates as a model of market logic and free enterprise, or as a model of ordered urbanism and technocratic management. As Chua Beng Huat (this volume) has shown, its

Figure 12.2   Cingapura, a slum redevelopment project in São Paulo, Brazil, 2009
Source: photograph by Ananya Roy, 2009.

nationalization of land, its modes of redistributive welfare, its model of national inclusiveness, are usually elided in transnational circulations. But here in a displaced space of inter-Asia, at the margins of the Latin American city, Singapore was finally resurrected as a model of public housing. It is a counter-worlding of sorts. In the São Paulo *favela*, Cingapura is a space of radical alterity. It is the image of the future, the formal, brightly painted, ordered housing that is the counter-world to the Brazilian *favela* and its constellations of informality. It is also a sign of the travels of Asia. Cingapura is a colloquial citation, an indigenization of the referent that is Asia. Displaced into the space of political struggle in Brazil, Cingapura is an aspiration markedly different from the Singapore taken up by Dalian or Manila. As a geographic spacing, it makes possible the pluralization of Asia. It is Asia, unbounded. It is the moment of interruption that makes possible an imagining of multiple Asian futures.

Note

1   C. Vainer, in a personal communication about the 2010 World Urban Forum.

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