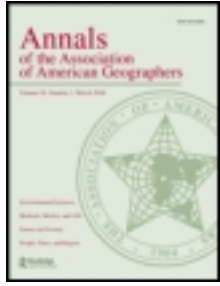


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Geography, Globalization, and the Problematic of Area Studies

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There has been considerable debate about the challenges and opportunities posed for geographical scholarship by globalization. In similar contexts, however, the discipline's relationship to area studies merits careful review and reworking. Three prospective pathways through this are presented here: the status of geographical knowledge in the aftermath of the critique of orientalism and associated postcolonial departures, debates about language and translation, and attention to the situatedness and operation of perspective in geographical imaginations. Charting these tracks, the article notes obstacles and highlights opportunities. *Key Words:* *area studies, comparative method, globalization, orientalism, postcolonialism.*

对由全球化所带来的地理学术上的挑战和机会，一直存在相当大的争议。然而，在类似的背景下，学科与区域研究的关系是值得认真评审和改造的。这里呈现三个前瞻性的途径：在东方主义批判和相关的后殖民时代离去之后的地理知识的状况，有关语言和翻译的辩论，以及对地理想象的境遇和操作角度的注意。通过用图来表示这些途径，文章指出现存的障碍和突出存在的机会。*关键词：*区域研究，比较方法，全球化，东方主义，后殖民主义。

El debate sobre los retos y oportunidades que presenta la globalización a la erudición geográfica ha recibido considerable atención. Sin embargo, en contextos similares la relación de la disciplina con los estudios de áreas amerita una revisión y re-estudio cuidadosos. Aquí se presentan tres opciones prospectivas sobre el particular: el estatus del conocimiento geográfico en el período subsiguiente a la crítica del orientalismo y desvíos poscoloniales asociados, los debates sobre lenguaje y traducción, y atención a la situadidad y operación de la perspectiva en las imaginaciones geográficas. Al trazar estos derroteros, el artículo pone de presente obstáculos y destaca oportunidades. *Palabras clave:* *estudios de área, método comparativo, globalización, orientalismo, poscolonialismo.*

Writing about the exercise—simultaneously emotional and mundane—of clearing a deceased colleague's office, the British geographer Hugh Clout (himself a specialist on the historical geography of France) noted how there was probably no one who would now be able to draw on the library of his colleague. For Clout (2003), such a loss marks a weakening relationship between geography and area studies:

Regional expertise is being conveyed at these centres (universities), and in other places, by anthropologists, linguists, "historians of the present time," and a galaxy of others who recognise that spatial knowledge ("place") genuinely does matter in our globalising world . . . [but less so by contemporary geographers]. . . . Clearing the bookshelves and box files of my colleague Professor Frank Carter, who died in 2001, was depressing, since his amazing personal library could have been a gold mine for a young geographer with wide-ranging East European expertise. There is, however, no one in British geography with appropriate linguistic skills and interests that span historical geography, political studies, migration, environmental management and conservation. (267)

Clout's perception is shared more widely and amounts to more than the nostalgic musings of a senior British geographer, in the context of so many new-fangled trends, theories, technologies, and practices. Of course, this observation also relates to geography's history as a worldly discipline, tangled up for many years with European imperialism and nation-building, which provided much of the rationale and content of the discipline as it formed out of the growth of modern universities in the nineteenth century. As geography traveled across the Atlantic and into Asia and the European colonies, these roots were sometimes attenuated and tempered with a more critical sense of educational missions or it became caught up with planning and other applied agendas. But it is noteworthy that the *global* remit of geography endures in university and school learning in many countries: Witness the ubiquity of world regional geography classes delivered by U.S. geography programs. Yet there is often a sense that such worldly description is best left to introductory classes, allowing advanced students to focus on systematic subdisciplines, theories, and methods. One UK-based observer of these trends argued that geography cannot escape the burden

of global claims (Bonnett 2003), recognizing that the burden also requires moves beyond repeating colonial derived stereotypes of the world and hierarchies of societies and economies.

What are the consequences of such a burden? And what paths forward are there for geography and geographers in the light of challenges that Bonnett signals and the wider shifts they embody? Certainly, in the public imagination and among colleagues in other disciplines, geography remains closely associated with specialist knowledge about places and regions. In the Anglophone world, the National Geographic Society reinforces this public association between geography and representation of life and nature in foreign places and regions. Their popular glossy magazines merge with the genres of travel writing and photojournalism (Lutz and Collins 2003), usually making little or no reference to work by academic geographers (Johnston 2009). Indeed, there is a long-standing bifurcation between what academic geographers write for each other (and their students) and public perceptions or popular geographies (Downs 2010). Yet colleagues from the humanities and social sciences are often surprised, sometimes bemused, and occasionally engaged and impressed by the extent to which human geography makes theoretical abstractions and is framed by social theory, exceeding perceptions of a descriptive focus on places. Although there is no shortage of manifestos for geography, in reconsidering the intersections between geography and area studies and ranging beyond the formal discipline, this article addresses contested ground but denotes significant opportunities.

The primary concern here is not with regions (and allied work on localities), in the sense of subnational jurisdictions or as assemblages of economic production, social reproduction, or social-cultural relations. These have been fertile domains of geographical analysis and research for decades (Wheeler 1986), echoing earlier twentieth-century debates about the status of functional regions and finding expression more recently in the mapping of regional and global city-nodes and networks.¹ Clearly, area studies and regional geography have a complex relationship, and a fuller story of the muddled relationship between them is beyond the scope of a single article.

My focus is therefore on areas or regions in the sense of midrange scales of analysis, knowledge, and representation. These include a variety of levels and categories; national- and state-level, wider linguistic cultural areas (as in, say, predominantly or *lingua franca* Arabic-,

Turkish-, Russian-, or Swahili-speaking societies), or geopolitically determined domains, such as Southeast Asia, the southern cone of Latin America, or southern Africa. The problematic of area studies within and alongside geography can be pursued in a variety of directions. As a number of other considerations of the relationships between geography and area studies have indicated, area-based categories and approaches have been subject to critique, through a variety of theoretical departures, most recently including postcolonialism and poststructuralism.² The problematic is certainly not new then, but the contexts—material, ideological, and theoretical—are shifting and more sustained scrutiny and reflection is merited. With these concerns in mind, as an invitation to reconsider the discipline's relationship to area studies and knowledge and representation of places, three intertwined pathways are presented here: the status of geographical knowledge in the aftermath of the critique of orientalism and associated postcolonial departures; debates about language and translation; and attention to the situatedness and operation of perspective in geographical imaginations.

All of these issues have been configured by, and articulate with, the unwieldy literatures signified by the term *globalization*. According to Dicken (2004), geographers "missed the boat" regarding globalization: "The syndrome of processes currently bundled together within the term 'globalization' is intrinsically geographical, as are the outcomes of such processes. Yet, once again, it seems, we are not, as a discipline, centrally involved in what are clearly very 'big issues' indeed" (5). Dicken's paper generated responses critically focused on the dynamics of territorial states and—in the style of the work already mentioned—on new regional spaces of production (Jones and Jones 2004; Deas and Lord 2006); however, there are other paths of departure and, to adapt his rhetorical expression, boats to steer. This brings us again to the problematic of area studies. Indeed, twenty years before Dicken used the metaphor, another British geographer asked, with reference to the status of geography in area studies, whether British geographers had missed that boat (Coyne 1984).

Area Studies in Question

Geography remains relatively marginal also to evolving debates concerning the status of area studies in restructuring the academy and changing the world; witness the absence of geographers from one landmark

collection considering how scholars can reconfigure area-based knowledge in response to globalization (Mirsepassi, Basu, and Weaver 2003) or from a useful collection (Kratoska, Raben, and Nordholt 2005), *Locating Southeast Asia* (notwithstanding the book's subtitle: *Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*). An exception is an edited collection, *Remaking Area Studies*—which includes several essays by geographers. In one of these Neil Smith (2010) claims:

A good argument can be made that area studies emerged in the United States in part because of the weakness of that country's academic geography by the 1940s. The instrumental need for knowledge of the postwar world, which largely drove the founding of area studies was poorly served by U.S. geography. (24)

Smith contrasted such weakness with the more central role played by geographers in the making of European imperial knowledge of the globe. I return to that post-war moment—and geographers' relationships to area studies—later. After several decades of consolidation in area studies during the Cold War years after 1945, however, a sense of decline and reappraisal became evident by the 1990s. For as the introduction to *Remaking Area Studies* also notes:

It is widely acknowledged that area studies, the dominant academic institution in the United States for research and teaching on America's overseas "others," is in the thralls of a fiscal and epistemological crisis. . . . At stake is the perceived relevance of area studies knowledge . . . and the apparent erosion of the conceptual and spatial boundaries with which area studies constructed its objects and defined its institutional identity. (Goss and Wesley-Smith 2010, ix)

Goss and Wesley-Smith's observations reflect the broader tenor of discussion about area studies in more recent years. What Hanson (2009, 159) rightly labeled as "a prolonged and often acrimonious debate" about area studies has most often been led by anthropologists, historians, linguists, and political scientists. The lines of critique in this debate are threefold.

First, there has been extensive assessment of the ways that area studies have emerged out of, and continue to reflect, imperial projects of classification, ordering, and power. This was principally a European venture until well into the twentieth century; however, this situation changed with the rise of American superpower in the second half of the century. Chow (2006, 39) went as far as to claim that "area studies as a mode of knowledge production is, strictly speaking, military

in origins." It is certainly the case that in the United States, area studies that were deemed strategic, notably of Russia and the predominantly Slavic societies, or of East and Southeast Asia, received significant federal funding and found military markets. As Ludden (2003) explained:

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. 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. (1060)

Other area studies programs, such as Latin American and the Middle Eastern studies, were soon caught up and shaped by similar Cold War strategic considerations, as were wider disciplinary initiatives in comparative sociology, political science, and international relations (the latter in particular became both a scholarly and public policy field). Intellectual histories of this era indicate a very complex story, however, in which scholars and institutions were shaped by, but cannot be simply reduced to, Cold War funding and imperatives as they negotiated patronage and disciplinary legacies (Engerman 2010). Indeed, as the 1960s progressed, and more radical currents began to impact on American academia, reactions to the presence of Cold War funding in the social sciences produced a heightened sensitivity to and fed into epistemological debates (Solovey 2001).

Such issues of scholarship's geopolitical functions and strategic framing, and particularly the roles of area studies, articulate with a significant and complex area of debate that was crystallized and given impetus by Said's (1978) *Orientalism*. Said charted the ways that there is "a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts . . . less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (17).

Among those citing Said's text, Kolluoglu-Kirla (2003) claimed that area studies became the direct heirs of classical orientalism. Unsurprisingly, Said's work led to three decades of responses and case studies. As some of these have pointed out, Said's book was part of a wider (and longer established³) critique of the assumptions and biases about the West itself and the non-West; categories whose separateness and self-identity have been radically questioned (Al-Azm 1981; Ahmad 1992; Zia-Ebrahimi 2011). Said has also attracted

strident criticism. One book-length review of these criticisms charges him with “malignant charlatanry” (Irwin 2006, 4). A more measured tone was taken by Jasanoff (2006), who noted how “Said’s most enduring legacy has been to embed in a rising generation of Western scholars, many of whom are now contemporaries of *Orientalism* itself, the awareness that their work has political substance and ramifications, whether or not it might appear to be political a priori” (15). Orientalism is part of a shifting intellectual climate that has spurred reevaluations of area studies.

The second trend arose from the decline of the Cold War at the end of the 1980s, which undermined the relatively stable sense of geopolitical categories (e.g., Eastern Europe vis-à-vis Western Europe) and the flows of resources into research and training programs hitherto deemed strategic (in the original military and geopolitical sense). For example, Southeast Asia,⁴ which soon became the scene of the biggest U.S. effort to contain Third World revolution (and perceived communist influence), according to Anderson (1998, 10), “was more real, in the 1950s and 1960s, to people in American universities than to anyone else.” As Bonura and Sears (2007) subsequently claimed, “Driven by American geopolitical priorities, this new field of study also grappled with these priorities at the same time as its practitioners dealt with the improbability that the recognition of a geographical region could unify scholarship across disparate academic disciplines” (16).

In fact, many post-World War II area studies were also driven by the belief that recognition and demarcation of a geographical region could unify scholarship, as areas could act as vessels for mixing interdisciplinary theorizing. In this way, area studies became both a mode of thinking, seeing, and interpreting the world and a way of organizing research, akin to disciplinary structures—although not always viewed favorably by the mainstream in established disciplines. When deprived of Cold War funding in the early 1990s, area studies at first seemed to face decline. Fields such as Soviet studies had to be reconfigured, without the generous levels of funding they had enjoyed in the Cold War (Engerman 2010). Moreover, although the collapse of the Soviet Union had rendered some areas, notably Central Asia, more visible (Cowan 2007), other areas faded. In particular, Eastern Europe was no longer seen as a meaningful category. It was increasingly overwritten with the resuscitated label of Central Europe (Le Rider 2008).

Subsequently, the heightened centrality of the Persian Gulf and later Central Asia in post-Cold War

American geopolitics revived late Cold War era debates about how scholarship should respond; however, that these debates took place in the context of the rightward-moving post-11 September 2001 (hereinafter 9/11) political climate (and amid a heightened atmosphere of surveillance) gave them a different mood. Not since the late 1960s (and possibly to a greater extent than then), or perhaps the 1930s, has the contest and debate been so heated, especially in Middle East studies.⁵ This controversy relates to what Doumani (2006, 13) described as “the dilemma debated by the government when it seeks, at one and the same time, to promote language acquisition and area studies while attempting to control the uses that this knowledge is put to.” Today, however, it takes place in an academy in North America, and (to a lesser extent) in Europe and Australasia, where faculty and students are relatively less white and male than in the 1960s. As has been documented elsewhere in geography (Pulido 2002), this shift affects the look and feel of disciplines and what counts for knowledge and thus the tone of such debates.

Third, the advance of new ways of framing difference, diversity, areas, and connections (Elden 2005), in short the idiom of globalization already noted, was by the 1990s further reframing area studies. From 1997, a new program initiated by the Ford Foundation and supported by the Social Science Research Council sought to revitalize area studies in these new contexts (Ludden 2000; Fine-Dare and Rubenstein 2009). Subsequent retrospectives on area studies, such as that of Rafael (1994), begin with references to how, under conditions of globalization and geopolitical shifts, “the very categories of *local* and *global* are constantly renegotiated and reinvented and when assuming a singular, unified position from which to ask about such developments has become politically unfeasible and structurally impossible” (92), while noting the agendas “propelling global studies over area studies curricula” (Slocum and Thomas 2003, 553) in American universities.

Clearly, the three trends outlined overlap and the debates continue. What place, however, for critical geographical contributions now? A single article can only begin to consider this question. Moreover, the course of area studies looks different from different sites and contests. Within the Anglophone academy there are, for example, significant variations in the course of area studies and their relationships to geography. Contrast the former British settler dominions of Australia and New Zealand or Canada (where in particular Canadian studies has a direct connection to nationalism) with the geopolitical framing of area studies that was especially

evident in the United States. Or consider the UK case, where the postimperial state had a rather different relationship to military and geopolitical power and the “areas” of its former colonies. Although it reconsiders some key debates and exchanges, a fuller genealogy of geography’s relationships to area studies in these sites remains beyond the scope of this article. The next section, however, traces some of the key debates and in so doing paves the way to the three pathways and the maps of their obstacles and opportunities that follow.

Geographers and Area Studies

Since the 1980s, geographers have become much better at telling the history of their discipline. To do so has required excavating how geography was established as a separate discipline in Anglophone universities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, part of the last significant moment of imperial expansion. This, too, was the core ground of Orientalism as described by Said.⁶ As such, geography became caught up in debates of the time about race, place, and civilization, weaving them into narratives of environmental determinism. Geography had some other related roles, impressing the boundaries of the nation-state on children (and therefore training their teachers), for example, as well as practical planning and land use issues. As area studies programs were established after World War II, however, and the European empires mostly collapsed (and many more new postcolonial states were established), the reconfigured field of area studies was quickly dominated by larger disciplines such as political science and international relations (and to a lesser extent anthropology and sociology). New allied fields emerged, too, such as development studies, animated by modernization theory. As Gilman (2003), Latham (2000), and Reynolds (2008) charted, the emergence of the Third World and the mobilizations associated with it, such as the 1955 Bandung Conference and the consolidation of new blocs at the United Nations, created the context for modernization theory. This story, responses to it, and geographers’ involvement, have been well documented (Power and Sidaway 2004). Geography, however, was largely on the margins. In the meantime, geography sought scientific status through modeling and positivism, but the quantitative revolution and spatial science were not really amenable to, or a significant part of, the area studies project despite the fact that spatial science was also connected with Cold War imperatives and funds. Geography therefore

played a relatively limited role in postwar area studies and, even when it did via work on geographies of development and in Soviet geography (Matless, Oldfield, and Swain 2008), for example, geographers rarely became significant contributors to the transdisciplinary debates about the character of the Soviet Union or the paths to development.

In a valuable account of this period, Farish (2010, 52) noted how the discipline of geography was seen by many “champions of area studies” as insufficiently rigorous to play anything more than a supporting role. For although State Department funding enabled area studies, for geography, paradoxically, the Cold War cutting edge was spatial science, propelled by the rocket state (Barnes and Farish 2006, 2008). The émigré German Jewish intellectual Cahnman (1948), then based in sociology at the University of Chicago, had published an *Outline of a Theory of Area Studies* in the *Annals* in 1948, but it seems to have hardly been cited since. A few years later, Ullman’s (1953) call—also in this journal—for geography to be fully engaged in area studies came just as what became known as the quantitative revolution took the discipline elsewhere. Twenty years later, across the Atlantic in postcolonial Britain, Farmer⁷ (1973) noted how the United Kingdom had established area studies centers in the 1960s (inspired by those in the United States) and argued for a more central role of geographers in them. In addition to a barbed critique of the language and universal assumptions of what he was then still able to call the new quantitative geography, Farmer critiqued those fellow Brits, notably Wooldridge (1950), who had condemned what they saw as a descriptive fascination with far-flung places. As postwar Britain was on the cusp of losing its remaining empire but gaining many new citizens from those territories, Wooldridge (1950) had claimed that:

Here we find a reason for the perennial, if friendly, disputation within the walls of the Royal Geographical Society between so-called “academic” geography and exploration. To some of us the human geography of Somerset is more interesting and in many ways more significant than that of, say, Somaliland, and though we should wish both to be studied, it is the former, in general, which is neglected. The physical difficulties of doing so are admittedly less, but the intellectual difficulties are incomparably greater. (7)

The echoes of this exchange, held over the years of British retreat from empire, find expression in some of the subsequent manifestos and debates (Bradshaw 1990; A. Smith 2002; Gibson-Graham 2004). Indeed,

Farmer's article appeared in the year that the United Kingdom joined the forerunner of the European Union, a practical recognition that the British Empire was no longer London's hinterland. Yet the debate rather petered out, aside from the kinds of laments with which this article opened. Now is a good opportunity to take stock. For the agendas have shifted with more recent theoretical openings and the prospects for fresh ways of seeing and knowing emerge. In exploring these, I invariably range beyond the formal boundaries of a discipline of human geography. Work by those located in geography programs will be juxtaposed and read with and sometimes against material from a range of disciplines in negotiating the analytical, theoretical, political, and practical intersections of geographical approaches (especially attention to space, place, and scale) and area studies.

Postorientalist Geographies

Continuing debates over Said's (1978) book have proven suggestive to those thinking about metageographical categories, encouraging interrogation of their origins and the development of alternatives. In this spirit, Lewis and Wigen (1997) addressed the making of the idea of distinct continents. As the preface to their book notes:

Every global consideration of human affairs employs a metageography, whether acknowledged or not. By *metageography* we mean the set of spatial structures through which people gain their knowledge of the world: the often unconscious frameworks that organize studies of history, sociology, anthropology economics, political science, or even natural history. (ix)

They excavated the role of such studies in colonial categories and their enduring purchase. Lewis and Wigen were critical of academic geography's neglect of these issues, claiming that:

In most of the country's top-ranked geography departments, world regional courses are viewed as suitable only for remedial instruction to beginning students. . . . World regional geography textbooks are, at their worst, repositories of the discipline's past mistakes, constructing 1950s-style catalogs of regional traits over unacknowledged substrata of 1920s-style environmental determinism. It is little wonder that most American college graduates have such a fuzzy conception of the world. (xiii)

Subsequently, Tyner (2007, 1) also explored the roles of metageographies in terms of their active functions, charting how "the construction of Southeast Asia as

a geographic entity has been a crucial component in the creation of the American empire." Arguably the idea of the Middle East has had comparable roles (Culcasi 2010). In similar terms, Mignolo demanded a shift from the assumption that history takes place in continents, toward an understanding of how such geographies came about—as labels, designations, and identities that are themselves historical constructs; reflecting wider geopolitics. Tracing *The Idea of Latin America*, Mignolo (2005, 67) challenged assumptions "that 'Latin America' is a geographical entity where all these things 'happened.' My point here is, on the contrary, that the 'idea of Latin' America twisted the past . . . to 'make' into 'Latin America' historical events that occurred after the idea was invented and adapted." Others proposed novel comparisons of established regional categories, such as Murray, Boellstroff, and Robinson (2006, 220), who "ask how rethinking spatial imaginaries—rather than simply discarding them—could play an important role in developing approaches that take into account the enduring importance of place in social life." A particularly suggestive alternative was designated by van Schendel (2002), who considered:

how areas are imagined and how area knowledge is structured to construct area "heartlands" as well as area "borderlands." This is illustrated by considering a large region of Asia (here named *Zomia*) that did not make it as a world area in the area dispensation after World War 2 because it lacked strong centres of state formation, was politically ambiguous, and did not command sufficient scholarly clout. As *Zomia* was quartered and rendered peripheral by the emergence of strong communities of area specialists of East, Southeast, South, and Central Asia, the production of knowledge about it slowed down. (647)

Van Schendel illustrated his point by taking readers to the eastern Himalaya where four towns just a few miles away from each other might be classified as belonging to East, South, Southeast, or Central Asia, depending on which side of a barely policed state border they fall (Figure 1). Moreover, with each area come specialist literatures and scholarly societies and thus different structures of knowing. *Zomia* might appear as an outlandish label, but it is precisely such unfamiliarity that forces realization that other categorizations, such as those that partition *Zomia*, include arbitrary lines. The recognition of some regions at the expense of others reflects power, rather than the ontological status of the regions per se. The *Zomia* designation has subsequently been productively taken up by Scott (among others⁸), who

Figure 1. The intellectual partition of Zomia: Indicating four proximate towns assigned to different area specialisms. (Color figure available online.)



read it as one of the last places in the world to incorporate peoples into nation-states. Indeed, in the highlands of Burma, that process remains fraught. For Scott (2009):

Since this huge area is at the periphery of nine states and at the center of none, since it also bestrides the usual regional designations (Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia), and since what makes it interesting is its ecological variety as well as its relation to states, it represents a novel object of study, a kind of transnational Appalachia, and a new way to think of area studies. (ix)

In a parallel to the consideration of this mountain-girt space, Steinberg (2009) reviewed the representation of ocean-spaces to

revision a world without distinct insides and outsides. Under this agenda, one would go beyond bringing externalized spaces of mobility to the foreground. Instead, one would consider that, in fact, all spaces are spaces of both mobility and fixity and all social processes are driven by ideologies of both internalization and externalization. This is an ambitious agenda. Analytical thought, after all, involves differentiating, comparing, and drawing “lines” of contrast. A first step, however, might well involve erasing the boundaries on our maps that divide inside from outside. Perhaps then we can begin working from behind the lines. (490)

In this vein, literatures on the Mediterranean (Giaccaria and Minca, 2010), Atlantic, Pacific (Cumings 2009), or Indian ocean for example, challenge traditional national or continent-based studies (Peters 2010). In the Indian Ocean case, Hofmeyer, Kaarsholm, and Frederiksen (2011) noted that:

Over the last decade, the boundaries of Indian Ocean Studies have expanded, moving outwards from a substantial historiography on early modern transoceanic trade to a focus on European empires . . . colonial worlds . . . post-colonial societies, and their interactions with these older networks. . . . At the heart of this scholarship is an Indian Ocean world system created by monsoons, port cities, sailors, religious networks, transoceanic trade and the ways in which Europeans merchant companies initially had to accommodate themselves to this order. (1–2)

On the Atlantic, Sheller (2009) similarly described how “The contemporary field of transatlantic geographies rests on a translocal, postnational conception of regional or area studies . . . disrupting the geographical imagination of nationally bound units of analysis by bringing multifaceted transactions and relations with the periphery into view” (345).

In similar terms, trans-Saharan history points to it as, in Lydon’s (2005, 295) words, a space characterized by “continuous exchanges.” Scrutiny of these exchanges

requires stepping beyond and destabilizes area studies categories of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and “so called *Sub-Saharan Africa*” (Lydon 2005, 315). And yet, just as such critical scholarly departures have opened up, a new phase of geopolitical associations with area studies has become more marked in strategic affairs of American and allied policy through the war on terror. Nearly twenty years ago, Al-Azmeh (1993, 142) claimed that many presented by media as experts on Islam or the Middle East were making claims that critical scholarship would never be able to sustain, whereby experience is held “as an adequate substitute for study and lived exposure to ‘Islam’ as perfect substitutes for scholarship.” Al-Azmeh pointed to a mode of generalization, referring to the ways that for so many media experts, their contact with the Middle East is overwhelmingly through a lens of power. Hence, “partial contiguity in space is taken for mastery of the whole . . . connected less with knowledge than with belonging to particular circles which politicians and businessmen endow with oracular qualities, less because of reliability than because of a unity of practical purpose—diplomacy, war, subversion and profit, with the occasional tinge of romanticism” (Al-Azmeh 1993, 142).

Lately, less in romantic gesture and more in an angry and vengeful mood, such media orientalism has accompanied the post-9/11 wars. In such a spirit, as Mufti (2010, 488) reminded us, the critique of orientalism “is best understood as open-ended and ongoing rather than engaged in and accomplished once and for all.” A valuable path of response for geography and geographers is to rework a critical commitment to area studies, devoting to this effort the required time and scholarship and drawing on the nuances of social, cultural, and political theory that have enriched the discipline in recent decades. Toal (2003, 655) has put this point in terms of a commitment to study distant and near places and the connections between them, valuing “grounded geographical knowledge” in lieu of the “abstract geopolitical sloganizing” that has been so evident since 9/11. It requires stepping back and being critically aware of how dominant discourses construct particular regions, which can be approached afresh and the blind spots and limits opened up. Consider the case of Europe. Rumford (2009, 2–3), in his introduction to a *Handbook of European Studies*, declared that “It is possible that people will pick up this book assuming that it is another contribution to integration studies. After all, European studies is often used as a catch-all name for the study of EU integration.” But, as Rumford set out:

When we say that European studies should study Europe we are referring to the constructiveness of Europe, and its meaning to different people at different times and in different places. . . . European studies should be studying Europe, in the broadest and most inclusive sense possible; it should never presume to be able to answer the question “What is Europe?” in definitive, once-for all terms. (2–3)

Another consideration of what a decentered area studies might look like wonders what could constitute a European curriculum interrogating stable understandings of Europe:

Perhaps European studies can now be structured around a series of glocal tropes:

- Atlantean myths and Black Athena ancient and modern
- Trading powers and colonial endeavours: passages to India: golden triangles; silk roads
- Arctic climatology: ozone holes; melting ice; fishing fields
- A history of Israel/Palestine
- African, Asian and Romany diasporas
- GATT and GATS
- Europe’s Pacific Rims. (Ellis 2004, 5)

In turn, the history of such concepts as Silk Roads or Black Athena⁹ is a mirror to how areas and connections between them have been reconceptualized. Consider the former, for example, coined first as *Seidenstraße* by German geographer Ferdinand von Richtofen in the 1870s and subsequently elaborated by other European geographers before being taken up in travel, media, and other narratives (Christian 2000; Waugh 2007). Just a few decades before Mackinder’s geopolitical accounts of heartland and pivot areas, and amid schemes for Berlin to Baghdad railways, it is not hard to detect the nineteenth-century imperial backdrops within which new ways of thinking about Eurasia, trade, and connections were being mapped. Indeed, these backdrops are meticulously charted in Marchand’s (2009) landmark study *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, whereby: “today’s conceptions and preoccupations were foreshadowed, and in some ways, prepared for by the orientalist of the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (xxiii). More recently these silk road(s) are both at the basis of lively debates on reconceptualizing Central Asia’s historical importance (Beckwith 1987; Balland 1992; Gunder Frank 1992) or the merits of studying the area in *tandem* with others (e.g., South Asia, as in Gommans 1999) or through explicitly strategic geopolitical lenses, as in a remarkable report entitled *The Key to Success in Afghanistan: A Modern Silk Road*

Strategy (Starr and Kuchins 2010) and texts on China's *New Silk Road Diplomacy* (Karrar 2009). One initiative mobilizing critical approaches and drawing on a wide range of more conventional area studies (among these Slavic studies, South, East, and Southeast Asian Studies) claimed:

The "Silk Road" has yet to find a secure place in the academy: there are few programs in American universities devoted to, and defined by, the Silk Road. Scholars are cautious with regard to the concept of the "Silk Road," considering it something of a modern construct. But it is precisely the constructed nature of the Silk Road that makes it such a fertile organizing concept for scholarship: by (constructed) definition, it both permits and encourages trans-national, trans-regional, cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approaches to research and understanding. The Silk Road rubric provides an opportunity to transcend longstanding boundaries that have challenged and constricted existing area studies, to re-imagine and reconfigure space and place, to emphasize their dynamism and syncretism rather than their traditional, static identities. (Buddhist Studies at UC Berkeley 2010)

The history as a concept of the category or area or, in this case, trans-area becomes a starting point for reappraising its potential. To return to the European case, therefore, the issue of blending novel approaches with the more traditional topics of European cultural or economic geography, geopolitics, and European integration opens productive intellectual challenges. Such creative possibilities are evident for other areas and categories including those alternatives, Zomia among them, that cut across established ones. In this vein, we can productively ask where and in what forms a Euro-Zomia might be located. This might include Europe's Eastern marches, where the Balkans or Eastern Europe overlap with Western or Central Asia, at the Caucasus Mountains, for example. It would hence overlap with the contested category of Eurasia, much in vogue in post-Cold War Russian geopolitics. Each of these labels conjures histories and geographies—the historical geography of the categories are other starting points.¹⁰ Or Euro-Zomia might transect southern Spain and northern Morocco where the Riff and Atlas mountains face the Sierra Nevada across a few miles of water that was previously bridged by colonial power and is today crossed by narcotics and migrants that the littoral states seek to control.¹¹ Such a space need not be geographically contiguous, for perhaps the networks of migrant spaces or the camps used to detain people when they are categorized as "illegal" migrants might also form parts of a Euro-Zomia? Bigo (2007, 31) termed

such spaces "zones of waiting and transit, between exile and asylum . . . where stopping to rest or settle is not allowed." Euro-Zomia thus becomes both marginal and central; points where sovereignty is enacted but legality suspended.

Translations and the Specter of Comparisons

Recent years have seen a lively debate about the extent and consequences of Anglophone publications in setting wider agendas for geographical scholarship. Summarizing this extensive debate, Aalbers and Rossi (2009) noted that:

The central premise in this literature is that within human geography English has become the dominant language used in the production, reproduction and circulation of knowledge. As a result, what are considered to be "relevant" or "international" journals are almost exclusively English-language journals in which predominantly native English speakers publish. Protagonists in this debate are geographers pursuing an intellectual argument which is sensitive to the critiques of cultural Euro-centrism and rationalism and the related modes of discourse that have been developed since the late 1970s onward by thinkers and social scientists such as Edward Said. (116)

Thus, the debate relates to more than the putative hegemony of a particular language but also to the way in which with it come particular norms, assumptions, and ideas, and a false sense of universality. The fact that geographic debates on issues such as Eurocentrism and postcolonialism take place and are framed in English¹² is not lost on, for example, Portuguese-speaking geographers, who have interrogated these concepts through Portuguese writing and sensibilities of another postimperial academy (Pimenta, Sarmiento, and de Azevedo 2007).

In geography these issues also relate to the status of case studies vis-à-vis theory. Thus, in a consideration of area studies after poststructuralism, Gibson-Graham (2004, 405) described how "The claim that one is pursuing, say, South American or East Asian studies rather than economic or urban geography consigns one to the periphery of the discipline, whilst simultaneously invoking the authority, authenticity, and mystery of 'the field.'" In similar terms, Dikeç (2010, 803) noted that "Some contexts (a town in a former colony, a tsunami affected village, a slum in a 'developing country,' a tea plantation . . .) are unhesitatingly called 'the field' whereas others, at the very best, still have to negotiate their way through legitimacy." Berg (2004, 555)

similarly noted how “geographies of the United Kingdom and America are unmarked by limits—they constitute the field of geography. Geographies of other people and places become marked as Other—exotic, transgressive, extraordinary, and unrepresentative.”

In other words, the basis and form of comparison often reproduce hierarchies of judgement. Jazeel and Colin McFarlane (2010, 116) described comparison as “a rather unfashionable (in disciplinary geography at least) notion.” They go on to note how “comparison has a difficult history, caught up as it is with the history of a metropolitan colonial ethnographic style of research in the social sciences . . . but it constitutes an essential and crucially inevitable mode of learning for researchers” (117).

Others, notably Robinson (2003), have addressed these questions arguing for the value of all case studies and questioning how some sites become sources of comparative example at the expense of others. Reading the canon of urban geography, whose definitions of modernity and morphology have invariably cited certain cities, first in Europe, then America, Taiwan-based scholar Chen (2010, 1070) considered the consequences of Ed Soja choosing Los Angeles as *the* site in which to explore the character of postmodern urbanism, asking “why postmodern geography, as a general development, did not originate in Cambodia or Burma, or why Seoul and Hong Kong were not the reference points. . . . If they had been, what differences might have been produced?”

The urban has recently become a fertile domain for similar arguments about where and what is compared and cited (Roy 2009; Bunnell and Maringanti 2010; McFarlane 2010; Ward 2010; Robinson 2011). This interest has also been enabled by the rise of relational ways of studying cities as points of connections, rather than foremost as localities. Yet, as this literature signals, something more is at stake than simply broadening the range of case studies. The point is how those seemingly universal categories, such as the urban, the state, and the economy (or even more broadly, modernity), always internalize and are constituted through global historical and geographical difference. Thus, in Chakrabarty’s (2000) words:

A key question in the world of postcolonial scholarship will be the following. The problem of [the nature, origins and dynamics of] capitalist modernity. . . . Categories are assumed as universal, rather than (as they are) claims to be such, which thereby sometimes occlude the processes by which their meaning is reworked (translated, so to speak) across difference. (70)

In other words, as Chakrabarty goes on to set out, “Capital is a philosophical-historical category—that is, historical difference is not external to it but is rather constitutive of it” (70). Decades of Marxist geography have shown how space–time is at the heart of capitalism; however, what Chakrabarty pointed to and has since been joined in by others such as Birla (2009), who drew on subaltern histories, are the ways that capitalism rests on and reworks other historical-geographical difference. Birla’s examination of indigenous merchant capital, the bazaar economy in colonial India, shows how it was central to the expansion of the colonial economy and thus central to the expansion of capitalism, not just a peripheral adjunct to it.

All this discussion might appear somewhat abstract. One strand of interpretation for geography and area studies to embrace is multisited research across customary regions. In anthropology, the call for a “multisited ethnography” was codified more than fifteen years ago by Marcus (1995) and has since inspired a generation of debate and research (Falzon 2009). Calls to rework area studies through conversations with diaspora studies (Chakrabarty 1998) and Appadurai’s (2000) advocacy of a focus on “grassroots globalization” reflect similar assessments. Although citing no scholarship from the discipline, Appadurai (2000) addressed the work of geography:

As scholars concerned with localities, circulation, and comparison, we need to make a decisive shift away from what we may call “trait” geographies to what we could call “process” geographies. Much traditional thinking about “areas” has been driven by conceptions of geographical, civilisational, and cultural coherence that rely on some sort of trait list—of values, languages, material practices. . . . However sophisticated these approaches, they all tend to see “areas” as relatively immobile aggregates of traits. . . . In contrast, we need an architecture for area studies that is based on process geographies and sees significant areas of human organization as precipitates of various kinds of action, interaction, and motion. . . . These geographies are necessarily large scale and shifting, and their changes highlight variable categories of language, history and material life. (6–7)

A practical path for many has been the rise of empirical and theoretical work on transnationalism, which precisely requires consideration of the negotiation and reworking of historical–geographical difference that Chakrabarty argued is necessary to the political and economic life of capitalism. Geographers continue to make a substantial contribution to work on transnationalism, and in the words of a recent review, this

yields “an empirical base for reconfiguring conceptualizations of nations, societies and cultures in the light of globalising processes” (Collins 2009, 1). Rethinking of transnational sites and categories of analysis has been especially prominent in critical work on the histories of “race” as a constitutive element of the world system, areas, and modernity as a spatial-temporal concept (Stephens 2003; Bonnett 2004; Tyner 2006).

But what of scholarship that has neither the scope of multisited research nor the aspiration to investigate transnationalism? Here, the lessons of the veteran political scientist Benedict Anderson offer a template. In writing about his experiences of research in “what I had been trained to imagine as ‘Southeast Asia’” Anderson (1998, 1–2) invoked what he called “the spectre of comparisons” to refer to the experience of seeing places simultaneously from multiple, distant and near, perspectives. He cited his own experiences in Indonesia in 1963, from where he started to see Europe through the same “inverted telescope” that shaped the perceptions of Indonesia’s first generation of postcolonial leadership:

I did not find a good name for this experience till almost a quarter of a century later . . . in the Philippines, stumbling through José Rizal’s extraordinary nationalist novel *Noli Me Tangre*. There is a dizzying moment early in the narrative when the young mestizo hero, recently returned to the colonial Manila of the 1880s from a long sojourn in Europe, looks out of his carriage window at the municipal botanical gardens and finds that he too is, so to speak at the end of an inverted telescope. These gardens are shadowed automatically . . . and inescapably by images of their sister gardens in Europe. He can no longer matter-of-factly experience them, but sees them simultaneously close up and from afar. The novelist arrestingly names the agent of this incurable doubled vision *el demonio de las comparaciones* . . . : the spectre of comparisons. (Anderson 1998, 1–2)

The productive intersection of geography and area studies both invokes and requires similar specters. Moreover, geographers venturing through area studies will become familiar with, and have to negotiate, another comparative specter, between the scholarly space of the area specialism that they enter and human geography. The relatively familiar debates, personalities, and institutions of human geography will count for little when they confer with or seek publication in specialist area studies outlets. Area studies fields thus have their own specialist literatures, disciplinary authority, and specific senses of scholarly value and identity. The experience of these can quickly become as disconcerting as Rizal’s

protagonist found Manila’s gardens on his return. Yet, in all cases, this challenge can be productive, as is the case when categories and approaches to disciplines or areas are transferred. For example, Chari and Verdery (2009) advocated an interdisciplinary traffic between work on “postsocialism,” which has most often been developed in work on East-Central Europe and the range of the territories of the former Soviet Union, and “the set of literatures on “postcolonialism,” signifying both what succeeds empire, in this case the Russian–Soviet imperial formation, and the set of theoretical commitments to interrogate imperial legacies in social sciences and humanities.¹³ In this vein, tracing the spatial ordering of the Soviet Empire’s levels (the USSR itself; the “satellites” and client states in Africa, Asia, or the Caribbean; and parties seeking this status) led them to ask, “How might better understanding the Soviet Union’s satellite periphery provide tools to analyze the spatial dynamics of other empires? Might such comparisons help us understand the imperial qualities of the European Union . . . or China’s increasing presence in Africa?” (16). Questions begin to proliferate, however, about the basis on which comparison proceeds. It was noted early in this article how certain spaces regularly dropped out of the foci of postwar area studies. Thus, it has been more common to compare and contrast the geopolitics and development of East and Southeast Asia than, for example, those of Zomia and the Indian Ocean. Equally, within more historical work, certain territories and formations regularly attain comparative status at the expense of others. For example, noting the relative neglect of Safavid Iran in discussions of early modern Muslim Empires, Matthee (2010, 235) pointed to how and why the Ottoman Empire dominates such discussions and more often in comparison “with the Romans, the Habsburgs, and Muscovite Russia” than with its immediate neighbor the Safavid state. Such cases invite further consideration of the methodology and prospect of comparisons in relation to issues of situatedness and perspective.

Situatedness and Perspective in Geographical Imaginations

In geography, recent debates about situatedness emerged from practical and political (these are often the same) questions that arise in fieldwork (e.g., Sidaway 1992; Katz 1994; Staeheli and Lawson 1994). These debates have tended to echo and follow those in anthropology in their focus on the politics, praxis, and poetics of fieldwork. But there is also something

considerably wider, and arguably more geographical, at stake. Within the geographical tradition there has long been a debate about the problem of how to write geography given that this act must exclude something from the description. Although they crop up in other fields, historical geography, under the influence of debates about historiography, has been a key site for such discussions. In this regard, it is worth quoting here from Baker (1984), who in turn reflected on an earlier statement of the problem by Darby (1962) and Whittlesey (1945). According to Baker (1984):

Grappling with problems and sources led Darby to conclude that “in the writing of historical geography there is no such thing as success, only degrees of unsuccess.” . . . Of strong literary bent, he portrayed a consistent interest in the technical aspects of writing and examined some of them in detail in his essay on the problem of geographical description. His concern there was to consider some possible solutions to Whittlesey’s “puzzle of writing incontestable geography that also incorporates the chains of event necessary to understand fully the geography of the present day.” . . . Darby’s search for a method . . . discovered a diversity of problems, of sources, of approaches and of techniques. (17)

Darby’s experimental and pragmatic solution was limited. Decades later, a wealth of writing on the slipperiness of geographical representation and allied geographies of affect returned to similar ground (Anderson and Harrison 2010), albeit in language and drawing on theories that those mid-twentieth-century geographers would not have recognized.¹⁴

In other words, the impacts of poststructuralist, feminist, and postcolonial *critiques* have reopened and recast the issues of what is at stake in discussing the significance of such questions. Thus, reading Chakravorty’s feminist and Marxist translations and reworkings of Derrida’s writing, for Sparke (2005), geography becomes:

a call to map persistently without totalization or finalization the fundamentally heterogeneous graphing of the geo (always knowing we will fail, always subjecting the failure to the collective critique of others) . . . readable in this sense not just for what it includes, but also for what it overwrites and covers up in the moment of representing spatially the always already unfinished historical-geographical process and power relations of its spatial production. (xvi)

Registering a critique of those geographical debates about positionality that became fashionable in the 1990s (see also Rose 1997) and that tended to assume a transparent position in which the author locates his

or her background and current social and geographical locations as the basis for (re)stating his or her authority to write, Sparke went on to note how any geography:

can be examined in this way for the geographies it elides and yet also assumes and thus by which, at some deep level, it is written. In other words, the geo in geography is always being graphed by processes of social production that are tied to dynamics that, because they are operative at other scales or because they relate to far-off places, people, and ecologies or because they are ignored or tacitly assumed, remain never fully disclosed by the author of the geography in question. (xvi)

Sparke recognized that these insights are not new; feminist geographers have been negotiating such agendas for years. They also figure in a number of other geographies, in material on scale and on landscape, for example. In the former context, a growing literature has reflected on questions of the production of and appropriate approaches to scale.¹⁵ Such questions can usefully also be regarded as problems of narrative and strategy, along the lines that Sparke indicates. Vantage points and scales of resolution are at the heart of perspective¹⁶ and research and writing strategies.

One starting point is to return to the assumptions of comparative work. It has already been noted that comparison has long internalized hierarchies of judgment and reference point. Writing about Anderson’s notion of an inverted telescope, Harootunian (1999) pointed out that the key point of reference, the “original” that is being mirrored elsewhere remains Europe. In a similar vein, Spivak (2009, 609) pointed to the ways that “comparison assumes a level playing field and the field is never level, if only in terms of the interest implicit in the perspective. It is, in other words, never a question of compare and contrast, but rather of judging and choosing.”

The idea of comparative approaches in the humanities, specifically in the field of literature, was given a fillip by the work of European émigrés, key among them Spitzer and Auerbach, who found themselves in Istanbul on the approach of World War II. How this context and with it the perspectives of émigrés in that time and place shaped the field has only just begun to be excavated (Apter 2003). A new comparative history emerged around the same time, in a maelstrom of revolution and war (Rowe 2007). Émigrés would play key roles in these comparative fields and in area studies. The crucial interregnum of World War II lies between the development of comparative literature or allied fields of comparative history and the later formulation of

postwar area studies. But a deeper recognition that they all bear the marks of particular places, moments, movements and powers has instructive lessons for what we take as comparison today in social sciences. It might lead us to move beyond the urge to comparisons per se, toward what, in another context, the feminist historian and sociologist Monghia (2007, 411) has termed “analytical approaches that travel the globe, not in search of comparison, but to trace genealogies of co-production.”

Either way, there is no magic eye or single resolution. Indeed, when these are projected, through the lantern slides of the early twentieth century to the PowerPoint of the early twenty-first century, they need to be understood in context and these contexts must be critically mapped and unmapped. In this move, the interfaces between geography and area studies become cognizant of their historically generated intersections, privileges, and lacunae and of the prospects of stepping outside them.

Conclusions

A resistant, perhaps ultimately subjective component of oppositional energy resides in the intellectual or critical vocation itself, and one has to rely on mobilizing this, particularly when collective passions seem mostly harnessed to movements for patriotic domination and nationalist coercion, even in studies and disciplines that claim to be humanistic. (Said 1994, 49)

Said’s call for vocation and engagement (steering between the temptations and possibilities of partisanship and status quo power, and those of phantom objectivity and detachment) finds echoes in geography. In the preface to *Geographical Imaginations*, Gregory (1994) noted how he had:

become aware of many writers who insist that it is both impossible and illegitimate to speak for or even about others: but as a teacher of geography I believe I have a responsibility to enlarge the horizons of the classroom and seminar. I know too, that there are dangers in doing so—of being invasive, appropriative—and I do not pretend to have any answers to these anxieties. But the consequences of not doing so, of locking ourselves in our own worlds, seem to be far more troubling. (x)

Since he wrote, locking in, out, and up have proliferated. It is partly in such contexts that Toal (2003) called for geography to engage more deeply with grounded knowledge, reworking theory through a critical recommitment to place-bound research. In considering how such a task articulates with area studies, this article has

set out tracks, obstacles, and opportunities. To take any of them is a choice and fraught with costs: the time and effort to listen and learn across languages, to spend time with texts or informants and across cultures, and the tasks of translation¹⁷ into and from a geography that takes place in the world it seeks to envision. There is also an element of bearing witness, to cite one doyen of area studies, the late Fred Halliday (2009), who is worth quoting here at length:

My own moment and point of entry into the region reflected the world of the 1960s in which I grew up: from my family background, an interest in, and curiosity about other peoples, and cultures, from a classical education an enthusiasm for languages, and an aspiration to the meticulousness and rigour that such study entails, and, from the contemporary intellectual and political climate, an interest, both political and cultural, in the “third world,” at that time emerging from colonialism and the bipolar constraints of the Cold War. (172)

He noted that while others engaged with Africa, East and South Asia, or Latin America:

it was my lot, by accident as much as by design, to choose the Middle East, in practical terms the part of the third world nearest Europe, accessible, as in my first visit, by train and bus from Victoria Station [London], two weeks overland to Tehran, in 1965. Of the 25 or so countries of the region, two have a particular place in my life, interest and heart: Iran and Yemen. In regard to Iran I distinguish between the *iranshenas*, a specialist on Iran, *irandust*, the friend of Iran, and *iranparast*, the person who loves Iran. Love it I do not, not least having seen several friends and comrades killed by one regime or another. . . . In regard to Yemen, the southern, socialist, part of which I first visited in 1970 . . . I lament the slide of that now united country into corruption, pervasive violence, and social and religious retrocession. But I retain a great affection for the spirit, the wit, the popular culture of Yemen, and, like a mini Herodotus in regard to the wars of Greece and Persia, I remain committed to recording for posterity the revolutionary experiences and aspirations that I witnessed in the 1970s. (172)

Speaking of *iranshenas*, the New York-based Iranian scholar Hamid Dabashi (2007, 261) advocated something similar to Halliday’s commitment when he pointed to the productive potential and results of “how trespassing from one limiting domain, without abandoning its normative significance, expands and universalizes a cross-current mobilization of sentiments and reasons, agencies and authorities.” Such entanglements and exchanges cannot easily be measured by citation counts and metrics. They also preclude neat

conclusions. Certainly there can be no simple break with or single resolution of the entanglements with power and perspective that invariably mark the past and present of geography within area studies and vice versa. Excavating and reconsidering those can open some fresh tracks, however, as this article has sought to specify. They invite ongoing reflexivity and reappraisals. In one of his last essays (published posthumously), Said (2003) advocated that:

You read a historic writer not for what they failed to see, not for the ideological blindspots of their writing—too easy, too programmatic . . . but for the—as-yet-unlived, still shaping history which their vision—which must mean the limitations of that vision—partially, tentatively, foresees and provokes. (67)

I take it to mean that Said referred here both to past writers and those whose work endures. It is imperative, however, to supplement historic and history with geographic and geographical, signifying spatial comparison, perspective, and position. In so doing, perhaps such texts as passed through Frank Carter's hands could encounter new generations and sites of readership, interpretation, and critical impacts and other eyes.

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Notes

1. For attempts to rethink regional geography, building on some of the theoretical issues that are also being considered here, see Sayer (1989) and Thrift (1990, 1991, 1992) and, more recently, Barnes (2011) and Paasi (2011).
2. Some past and more recent examples include Brookfield (1962), Bradshaw (1990), Gibson-Graham (2004), Mead (1969), Mikesell (1973), Olds (2001), A. Smith (2002), and Wei (2006). Some of these—and a number of others—are reconsidered later in this article.
3. Thus, as Sadiki (2004, 176) noted: "Both *istishraq* (Orientalism) and *mustashriqun* (pl. of *mustashriq*, i.e., Orientalists) have, long before Said adverted to them, been the subject of study by Arab scholars . . . Said did what other disempowered Arab scholars before him could not do through Arabic."
4. For a thoughtful review of how "the idea of Southeast Asia received extensive discussion during its definition as a field of 'area studies'" see Evans (2002, 147). In his review essay considering some of the themes under discussion here, Evans traced this evolution and reevaluated it in the light of globalization studies and postmodernism. See also Goh (2011). It is also instructive to compare Sutherland (2003) and Warren (1997).
5. A detailed account of this is beyond the scope of this article. See the Web sites of Campus Watch and the online response by the Middle East Research and Information Project. See also the chapter by Beinlin (2006) and the introduction by Doumani (2006) to the set in which both appear. There is also a thoughtful consideration in Lockman (2004). The relationship with and role of military funding in contemporary geographical research has recently been debated, regarding the ethical and political issues it raises (Agnew 2010; Bryan 2010). This debate points to the more lively one in anthropology, which has recently seen several books on this theme (Lucas 2009; Kelly et al. 2010) as well as a book-length reconsideration of the American-based anthropologists' World War II and early Cold War roles (Price 2008).
6. Although geography is listed thirty-nine times in the Index to the book, Said does not foreground geography in *Orientalism*. He later (citing work by the historical geographer of empire, Felix Driver) came to acknowledge more fully (in *Culture and Imperialism*; Said 1994) the centrality of and the capacity for struggle over geography to feature in anti-imperialist discourses and postorientalist alternatives.
7. Biography of individual scholars might be a useful approach to charting the course of area studies in geography. Corbridge, Raju, and Kumar (2006, 16) described Farmer (who became the first director of Cambridge's Centre of South Asian Studies in the 1960s) as "never much interested in geography with a capital G," but ranging (like other British geographers working on South Asia such as Oscar Spate) through anthropology and history. They go on to note that there is no detailed account of South Asia's treatment among geographers in and of the region.
8. See the set of papers on "Zomia and beyond" in the *Journal of Global History* (volume 5, 2010) that followed the publication of Scott's book. Michaud's (2010, 206) introduction to the set claims "not to become a flag bearer for such a new Area Studies subdivision but to stress that we have to rethink country-based research, addressing trans-border and marginal societies." Another recent essay taking up the theme of what peoples, places, and

social relations come into vision when Zomia is invoked also begs the question of what and who is obscured (Jonsson 2010).

9. A valuable account of the claims, context, and reception of ideas of Black Athena as developed by Martin Bernal can be found in Berlinerblau (1999).
10. Todorova's (1999) account of "Balkanology" is exemplary in regard of excavating the history of the term Balkans and its functions.
11. On this case, see Ferrer-Gallardo (2008) and van Houtum (2010). More widely, the intersection of states and designation of flows of people and commodities as licit or illicit can be windows into such zones (Abraham and van Schendal 2005).
12. On the incommensurability of some basic concepts in political geography across languages, see Sidaway et al. (2004). See also Kharkhordin (2001) for a thoughtful consideration of the consequences of the ways that the concept of the state is rendered in Russian as *gosudarstavo* (domain of a ruler), contrary to the Latin conceptual term of state. This issue of translation is relevant in all of these cases. Bassnett (2005) provided a valuable account of how cultural and literary traditions influence the strategies of translations of al-Qaida statements. As she noted, "There are historical, extra-textual reasons that determine the choices available to translators" (393). Area studies in geographical traditions other than Anglophone are also largely beyond my scope here. French-language tropical geography and extensive German geography on Africa, Asia, and the Americas (in the tradition of Alexander von Humboldt) are described in Bowd and Clayton (2005) and Wirth (1988).
13. For a book-length exploration of this interface, see the collection in Hann (2002). See also Levin's (1994) essay on reimagining Central Asia.
14. In turn, these carry assumptions about identity, community, and self-expression that turn out to be products of a very particular time and place marked by their whiteness (Tolia-Kelly 2006).
15. See McKinnon (2011) for a useful summary of this voluminous literature.
16. Perspective itself is a product of a strand of Western representation. Other ways of looking and knowing are present, for example, in the Hindu notion of *darshan* (Ramaswamy 2003) or icons in the Orthodox traditions, whereby viewers recognize themselves as the point of view of the object (Ware 1963). Although further exploration of these categories of being and seeing is beyond the scope of this article, they do mark its limits.
17. Arguably, for many in geography and graduate student geographers, the languages of social and cultural theory (in translation) became more central than valuing other languages. Where students wanted to utilize another vocabulary and grammar, a geographic information systems or social theory class perhaps started to look more promising (and marketable) to many than, say, one in Ukrainian, Javanese, Farsi, or Lao.

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