

Editorial

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This current issue marks the tenth anniversary of our journal. The jubilee also coincides and clashes with a critical time for all of us as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. Ten years ago, when Gijs Mom's team launched *Transfers*, the journal responded to an urgent need to think through and beyond mobilities scholarship. Today, as our mobilities have been upended and disrupted, it is with a renewed sense of urgency that we must assess the field and the impact of *Transfers* over the past decade. Indeed, many things have changed since the journal's founding.

Not so long ago and yet a world away it seems, Gijs Mom approached me with the idea for this special issue. It was at the annual conference of the Association for the History of Transport, Traffic, and Mobility last year. As is common in conferences, impromptu chats after panel discussions turned from sideshows into main attractions. Sitting in a café in Paris, we discussed bringing together a group of scholars to write about the evolution of the journal since its inception. This was our fourth time meeting in person, face-to-face, each one of us only making the trip for this conference, which was itself a layover between our respective home bases and workplaces. Writing this editorial brings back vivid memories of the conference circuit and its chance encounters, probably tinted with a nostalgia for our pre-pandemic mobility.

Allow me to go back once more and write about a time before COVID-19, at the dawn of the journal. To some extent, I came of (academic) age with the journal. It was the summer of 2011, and I was laboring through the final draft of my doctoral dissertation. The fall would mark the last year of funding for my graduate studies and my first foray into the academic job market. It had been a tough couple of years figuring out where my work on cars and roads in French Colonial Indochina would fit: was it a history of transportation or a study of cultural and literary representations of automobility? Mulling over a decision, looking to buy time and find more funding, I stumbled upon a call for applicants to the T²M Summer School organized by Hans-Liudger Dienel in Berlin. This is how I met some of the contributors to this anniversary issue for the first time and encountered the field of Mobility Studies and *Transfers*. The commitment of the journal to engage mobilities with the arts and the humanities, beyond the perspectives of the social sciences and history, was affirming to a graduate student.

For me, and I hope for a new generation of scholars, there is a time before *Transfers* and a time after. Taking stock of ten years of *Transfers* has been



highly personal for me. From being a doctoral student catching up on the literature of the field to becoming its editor-in-chief, I owe a great deal to the people who have paved the way for my own engagement to thinking mobilities with a growing diversity of scholarship, theories, and methodologies. This is a commitment I wish to pursue with open eyes and a humble heart.

The articles of this special issue retrace the chance encounters and the deliberate efforts that have brought together the journal and they also seek to assess with transparency where *Transfers* has succeeded or fallen short over the past decade. Three main Developments articles by Gijs Mom, Mimi Sheller, and Georgine Clarsen offer personal accounts of the author's scholarly path in relation to ten years of *Transfers*. The seven Perspective articles are responses to these from the viewpoint of their respective fields by Peter Merriman, Cotten Seiler, Noel B. Salazar, Lynne Pearce, Kudzai Matereke, Weiqiang Lin, and Mathieu Flonneau. The illustrations in-between the contributions are all taken from the nine preceding volumes of the journal, except the ones in front of Clarsen's and Lin's essays.

The contributions to this issue are peer reviewed but not through the usual double-blind method. Because we asked contributors to embed their retrospective in a personal narrative of the COVID-19 pandemic, guest-editor Gijs Mom sent their personalized drafts, forgoing anonymization, to one or two other contributors, asking them to make comments. Our role was to make sure that those comments made it into the revised versions, which I am happy to conclude, all of them did without exception. In that sense, this anniversary issue is a truly collective work of scholarship.

Writing from an Andalusian town overshadowed by an impending lockdown, Gijs Mom starts off this collective conversation with an essay rich with numbers, figures, and statistics. Metrics tell the journey of *Transfers* over the past decade from its creation to its current status as a well-established journal for cutting-edge research in mobility studies. His contribution also interweaves personal and professional reflections on the developments of the field, taking stock of his own intellectual journey, and current immobility, opening up potential paths for the journal into the future. Mimi Sheller's essay begins as well with a brief reflection on the disruptions imposed by the current pandemic and shows the importance of the scholarship published in the journal for thinking about the future. Her contribution stresses the essential roles that histories and representations of mobility should play in our understanding of the current situation. It encourages us to cultivate the communication between the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences and harvest their energies in order to create change and push back against the inequities of mobility disruption revealed by the pandemic. Georgine Clarsen's piece also makes clear the significance of the arts and humanities to the mobilities paradigm and to social justice. In particular, her essay highlights the significance of our journal's theoretical commitments for the fields of settler colonial studies

and postcolonial studies and their resonances in the southern hemisphere. Clarsen reminds us that while no journal can save the world, our intellectual work is integral to progressive change.

The Perspectives pieces respond to the themes developed by Mom, Sheller, and Clarsen. Writing from the standpoint of their disciplines (geography, American studies, and anthropology), Peter Merriman, Cotten Seiler, and Noel B. Salazar offer their personal reflections on their own mobilities, now affected by the pandemic. They tell their “origin stories,” revealing how they came to be involved with *Transfers*, and assess the journal’s impact on their respective fields. Their critical and constructive approaches are echoed in the calls to action offered by Lynne Pearce, Kudzai Matereke, and Weiqiang Lin who take stock of the journal’s past engagements in their respective pieces on literary studies, disability studies, and aeromobilities. They make salient the many challenges, remaining and new, faced by mobilities researchers in their theoretical, social, and political commitments. Mathieu Flonneau’s case study of the Paris beltway stands as a defense and illustration of the mobilities scholar’s complicated but necessary engagements with the polity.

The COVID-19 pandemic looms large over the anniversary issue, bracketing our reflections on the past and the future of our journal. In the current context of disrupted mobilities, all these pieces ask with a renewed sense of urgency what mobility studies do. In keeping with the ten-year-old tradition of *Transfers* editorial style, this issue provides a hybrid of views, approaches, and methods and, rather than lamenting them, it celebrates and teases out the frictions inherent to our struggles with mobility.