

Editorial

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This issue we mourn the untimely death of John Urry, our much-loved friend and colleague. John's role in the emergence of mobility studies, our robust and multidisciplinary field of scholarship, is well-known. Based at Lancaster for most of his working life, John was central to launching new ways of thinking and researching, not only in his own discipline of sociology but across the social sciences and humanities.¹ The breadth and scope of John's scholarship is evident in his extensive list of publications. They date from the early 1970s, gathered momentum over the past two decades, and will continue into the future with material still in press.²

Beyond that quantitative calculus of John's astounding productivity and global influence, however, is a much more human story. Tributes flowed onto a memorial Web site soon after his death was announced. They stand as testimony to the immense regard in which this man is held.³ Messages came from those who shared a corridor with him and from every corner of the world. Long-term colleagues, close friends, and former students, as well as people who had met him briefly at a conference or even had not met him at all, all recorded their shock, sadness, and disbelief. Over and over, the messages portray John in similar terms. He was a brilliant scholar who had a wide-ranging curiosity and generosity of spirit. He was warm, modest, approachable, kind, funny, encouraging, ready to champion emerging researchers, and always politically committed.

The editors and members of the editorial board of this journal now add our tributes to this heartfelt expression of collective mourning. John is irreplaceable as an intellect, an inspiration, a mentor, and a friend. He will be long remembered for his own work but perhaps even more so he will be remembered for the ways that he brought people and projects together. As Mimi Sheller put it in her tribute, John's seam of productivity has come to a kind of an end, but not the energy it contains and the many sparks that will continue to fly off of it. Rest in Peace John Urry (1946–2016).



In this issue we continue to publish articles that reflect the growing diversity of mobilities research in the humanities. We have two articles in our opening section. Jaime Moreno Tejada, in “Lazy Labor, Modernization, and Coloniality,” takes us to transportation practices in turn-of-the-century Ecuador. Moreno Tejada considers the specificities of modernization in that place through the material practices of indigenous porters and pilots who resisted the mechanistic demands placed on their bodies by foreign modernizers and local elites alike. Ole B. Jensen and Phillip Vannini, in “Blue Sky Matter: Toward an (In-flight) Understanding of the Sensuousness of Mobilities Design,” take us on an entirely different trajectory again. They propose a framework for understanding the entanglements between sensing human bodies, particularly focusing on the kinaesthetic sense, and the material design of aircraft that move them. Their essay works toward fashioning a language for the multiplicity of sensorial capacities and experiences brought into play by the material characteristics of technologies of mobility. The two articles, which bring together historical scrutiny, thick empirical description and theoretical reflection, nicely represent this journal’s mission: developing New Mobility Studies as an intertwining of historical and social science approaches.

Recently, our mission has been extended with yet another approach. This time last year, we announced a series of new *portfolios* designed to solicit submissions to this journal in emerging areas of mobility scholarship (see this journal’s Web page at <http://www.berghahnbooks.com>). Since then, we have published a Special Section on “Settler Colonial Mobilities” (*Transfers* 5, no. 3 [2015]), and one on “Race and the Politics of Mobility” (*Transfers* 6, no. 1 [2016]). In this issue we continue that project of expanding our field and defamiliarizing it from Western perspectives with a special section devoted to “African Mobilities.” This special section reaffirms what we earlier declared as our political and intellectual commitment to take Africa seriously, not merely as “fodder for imported theoretical constructs, as has been the case historically, but as generative of modes of thought and practice that have theoretical value in their own right.”⁴ The section is edited and introduced by Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, Jeroen Cuvelier and Katrien Pype (“Containers, Carriers, Vehicles’: Three Views of Mobility from Africa”), who emphasize the difference that an African-focused perspective makes—not just for scholarship by Africans and about Africa, but for mobility scholars and scholarship more generally. Kudzai Matereke’s Afterword (“Africa, Are We There Yet?’ Taking African Mobilities Seriously—Concluding Remarks”) reaffirms the importance of that project of creating space for the articulation of new conceptions of mobility that go beyond Western-centric paradigms. We commend the three articles in this special section, Alessandro Jedlowski, “All for a Container! Return Migration, Transport Technologies, and Love Affairs”; Harrison Esam Awuh, “Conservation-Induced Resettlement: The Case of the Baka of Southeast Cameroon—A Variation on the Habitual Mobility-Immo-

bility Nexus”; and Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, “Organic Vehicles and Passengers: The Tsetse Fly as Transient Analytical Workspace,” as exemplary papers that will inspire and generate new directions in more than Western mobilities scholarship. We hope you, as a reader, will feel inspired to contribute your scholarship to one of our portfolios.

We also publish our usual feast of reflections beyond the strictures of refereed academic articles. Thomas Birtchnell, in our “Ideas in Motion” section offers up “Mobilities and the Multinatural: A Test Case in India,” which teases out the possibilities of more than human or “multi-natural” ways of thinking about the world. In our “Mobility and Art” section Morten Nielsen, in “Through Different Eyes, a Diversity Project,” describes a performative project that explores experiences of difference. Our “Museum Review” is presented by our editorial team member Chia-ling Lai, with her “‘Floating Melodies and Memories’ of the Terezín Memorial,” which takes us to what has now become an important tourist site in the Czech Republic. Lai highlights the heritage left by prominent Czech musicians who demonstrated the power of art and the will to live during the Holocaust. We consider this to be a personal introduction by Lai, a scholar of museums and global mobilities, to her recently started co-editorship of our “Museum Review” section. Mobilities in cinema is represented in Julia Dettke’s, “Seeing Is Being: Transfer, Transformation, and the Spectatorship of Transgender Mobility in François Ozon’s *The New Girlfriend*.” Finally, our “Book Review” section, including our traditional novel review, will provide inspiration for our scholarship, teaching, and reading pleasure.

Notes

1. Mimi Sheller and John Urry, “Mobilizing the New Mobilities Paradigm,” *Applied Mobilities* 1, no. 1 (2016): 10–25, doi: 10.1080/23800127.2016.1151216.
2. <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sociology/about-us/people/john-urry/> (accessed 26 May 2016).
3. <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/john-urry/tributes/comment-page-3/#comments/> (accessed 26 May 2016).
4. Georgine Clarsen, “Frontiers of Mobility Studies,” *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 114–121.