

Zeitschrift: SPELL : Swiss papers in English language and literature
Herausgeber: Swiss Association of University Teachers of English
Band: 27 (2012)

Artikel: Introduction
Autor: Kern-Stähler, Annette / Britain, David
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-389646>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 08.02.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Introduction

All the world seems to be on the move. Asylum seekers, international students, terrorists, members of diasporas, holidaymakers, business people, sports stars, refugees, backpackers, commuters, the early retired, young mobile professionals, prostitutes, armed forces – these and many others fill the world’s airports, buses, ships, and trains. The scale of this travelling is immense. Internationally there are over 700 million legal passenger arrivals each year (compared with 25 million in 1950) [. . .] there are 4 million air passengers each day; 31 million refugees are displaced from their homes; and there is one car for every 8.6 people. These diverse yet intersecting mobilities have many consequences for different peoples and places that are located in the fast and slow lanes across the globe.

(Sheller and Urry 207)

So began Sheller and Urry’s (207) declaration of a “new mobilities paradigm,” a critique of what they called the *sedentarism* of contemporary social theory. In linguistic, literary and cultural studies, however, mobility and movement have been receiving critical attention for at least two decades. *On the Move: Mobilities in English Language and Literature* seeks to harness some of this critique to explore how mobilities, both mundane and dramatic, are represented, narrated, performed and negotiated in literature and discourse, as well as the repercussions and consequences of mobility on language and dialect.

Across the volume, the individual chapters examine some of the diverse manifestations of mobility, such as colonialism (Boehmer), tourism and travel (Heusser) and globalisation (Chevalier, Pfenninger). The

volume also explores literary and cultural consequences of these different forms of mobility, for example language and cultural contact (Ronan, Tudeau-Clayton, Chevalier, Heusser), the diffusion of genres, words and ideas (Boehmer, Ronan) and displacement (Tudeau-Clayton, Buchenau, Heusser, Swift). Just as mobility transports literatures and language, so language and literature also function as carriers of mobility (Boehmer, Ronan, Swift). The papers in this volume usefully remind us that the “dialectic of cultural persistence and change” (Greenblatt 2) and the juxtaposition of sedentarism and nomadism (see Cresswell 26) are key dimensions in the study of mobilities.

Elleke Boehmer, in her contribution “The Worlding of the Jingo Poem,” discusses the jingo poem as catalyst and conduit for imperialist attitudes in the British Empire. The jingo poem traverses colonial borderlines and oceans and migrates between different ways of presentation. Boehmer argues that, until the appearance of the 1950s pop song, jingoist verse was one of the most culturally migrated or “worlded” of literary genres, transporting imperial convictions and British nationalist feelings. She discusses the jingo poem both as carrier of meanings (bearing imperial messages) and a mode of carrying meaning (being an imperialist message itself) and she exemplifies this with a discussion of the operation and reception of two iconic jingo poems, namely Newbolt’s “Vitae Lampada” and Kipling’s “A Song of the English.”

Simon Swift, in his study of political mass movements in Hannah Arendt’s work, argues that the political philosopher resorted to literature to describe mass movements for which she felt Marxist political theory lacked the adequate vocabulary. Working with literary metaphors of stability and fluidity, Arendt claimed that mass movements depend on being perpetually on the move and setting everything (e.g. settled political doctrines) and everyone (e.g. Nazi victims transported across Europe) in motion. In this way the Nazi movement was able to distract from the fact that it was not a fixed political entity respecting the nation state but instead wanted to abolish it. In the second part of his contribution, Swift turns to Arendt’s discussions of later mass movements, including the student movement and Black Power, and focuses on the creative power of violent political emotions (i.e. “being moved politically”), such as rage, hatred and disgust.

Barbara Buchenau addresses “The Goods of Bad Mobility” in her discussion of Pierre-Esprit Radisson’s *The Relation of my Voyage: Being in Bondage in the Lands of the Irokoits*. Against the background of mobility theories, most prominently those of Sheller/Urry and Greenblatt, she argues that the idea of “bad mobility” as defined as too much or too little movement comes alive only in discourse. In a narrative such as Radisson’s, she goes on to argue, the concept of bad movement be-

comes mobile itself; the protagonist's repeated movements in and out of Mohawk captivity undergo several re-conceptualisations. Captivity is first positively re-interpreted in terms of family membership, then, through the eyes of another adoptee, re-interpreted as loss of economic and cultural value and finally transformed yet again into a moment of enlightenment and empowerment when the bad movement of captivity becomes a central asset in the author's commercially motivated self-presentation to the English King Charles II.

Martin Heusser discusses two Mexican short stories by Katherine Porter against the background of her conceptions of Mexico and of her biography. At a time when many American artists were drawn to Mexico as a locus of difference yet strange familiarity, he argues, Porter perceived and literarily constructed the country as a space to explore the missing links of her own life. The construction of an identity-forming past was at the centre of her project, Heusser claims, which is why she both manipulated her own biography and provided her characters with the powerful past of Aztec culture. The murderess María Concepción, as well as the idealised community which protects her, preserve archaic instincts which inform the essentialist version of selfhood that the author craved but ultimately failed to attain in Mexico.

Margaret Tudeau-Clayton discusses Shakespeare's contribution to *The Book of Sir Thomas More* as a propagation of "non-sectarian Christian humanist internationalism." Against the backdrop of a parliamentary debate concerning "aliens" of 1593, Shakespeare's *More*, echoing both Henry Finch's parliamentary intervention and the historical *More's Utopia*, makes a case on behalf of strangers and thus discontinues the line of argument in favour of citizens presented by Shakespeare's "fellow authorial hands." While this discontinuity with the rest of the play-text has repeatedly been attributed to material conditions of production, Tudeau-Clayton argues that Shakespeare's contribution presents "an ethically and politically charged intervention." Where George Abbot's echo of Finch's parliamentary intervention makes reference to a collective memory of persecuted English protestants under Queen Mary, Shakespeare's *More* focuses on "English victims of enclosure," drawing on the historical *More's Utopia*, and thus speaks up in defence of strangers "across religious divides and across the century." Like Finch, he urges the citizens to "imagine themselves in the strangers' case," demonstrating its contingency and denouncing exclusionary violence "as a denial of a shared human condition."

Sarah Chevalier's paper looks into language production of two children who have been exposed to three languages from birth, namely Swiss German, French and English. This study focuses on the production of the paternal language for both children, in this case Swiss Ger-

man and French, where both languages are considered to be “minority” languages within the respective language regions, where the families reside. Chevalier’s study investigates language choice among these children and the underlying factors that contribute to such choices. She employs a social interactionist framework that stresses child-directed speech (Barnes) concerning language development. The data stems from longitudinal case studies of two children, in which recordings were done over a period of twelve months. Chevalier’s findings indicate that the most salient factors have to do with the fathers’ conversational styles, input from the paternal language from other family members and friends, particular exposure patterns to the languages in question and the extent of the community language presence.

Simone Pfenninger’s study looks at the motivation level of Swiss elementary school children with regards to learning English. She considers students’ age and onset of learning as well as the different amount of L2 input students received. Employing Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self-System, Pfenninger’s findings reveal that the major discrepancy found had to do with the motivational area known as the Ideal L2 Self. In other words, regardless of students’ age or amount of actual input received, students were motivated to learn English due to its status and popularity; however, Pfenninger is cautious and argues that such reasons could “wane” in the future and states that the type of motivation concerning SLA is indeed a salient factor for young learners.

Patricia Ronan’s study compares the use of support verb constructions with loan derived predicate nouns in OE. She does this by looking at a sample corpus from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* from the 14th century and contrasting these constructions with an Old English corpus. Her findings indicate a higher use of foreign derived predicate nouns in support verb constructions rather than in non-support verb constructions within the *Canterbury Tales* corpus. Apart from poetic and stylistic reasons for these constructions, Ronan claims that a further factor contributing to the high frequency of support verb constructions with loan derived predicate nouns within Chaucer’s writing stems from the increased amount of language contact contexts in ME as opposed to OE.

Annette Kern-Stähler and David Britain

References

- Cresswell, Tim. *On the move: Mobility in the modern western world*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, with Ines Županov et al. *Cultural Mobility. A Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Mimi Sheller and John Urry. "The new mobilities paradigm." *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2006), 207-226.

