

Dr Juliet Jain

Senior Research Fellow

Centre for Transport and Society

Department of Planning and Architecture

University of the West of England, Bristol

Frenchay Campus

Coldharbour Lane

BRISTOL BS16 1QY

Phone: + 44 (0)117 32 83304

Email: Juliet.Jain@uwe.ac.uk

Web: www.uwe.ac.uk/research/cts

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Review of Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman (eds) (2011). 'Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects.' Ashgate.

As someone who works on the boundary of mobilities and transport I read this book with great interest, but conscious at the same time of the sceptical 'so what' from those uninitiated into such theoretical debates! The book is an excellent synthesis of mobilities research at this point in time from researchers leading the field. It is an ideal introduction for any student or researcher new to mobilities, and connects into wider geographic debates of the body, identity, politics, culture, and the nature of place/space. Its breadth of topics clearly demonstrates why mobility/transport is an important element of any study of society and the human environment. Nevertheless, I have sympathy with those who might struggle to understand the obscure rationale for needing to (or even wanting to) understand the minutia of Laurier's conversational turn-taking about driving practices (chapter 5), Dewsbury's exploration of performative bodily movement (chapter 4), or even the historical evolution of the vagabond from Cresswell (chapter 15). Therefore, drawing on Shaw and Hesse (2010), I have positioned this review around evidence, context, and discourse, to ask - what might this book offer those based in the transport camp?

Starting with evidence (and quickly drifting in context and discourse) one of the challenges of crossing disciplinary boundaries is acknowledging that different types of evidence have validity in seeking/generating different forms of knowledge. Much of the research presented here utilizes one or two case examples, and sometimes detailed exploration of very small pieces of qualitative data, which may challenge those whose understanding of validity is based on large quantitative datasets. Yet these case studies impart important stories about the individual in the social, political, and physical context, as well as developing theoretical considerations important for the field of mobilities research. For example, through analysis of a very small piece of driver-passenger interaction, Laurier (chapter 5) unpacks the complex nature of driving along the shared space of the

road while interacting with the technical (the car) and the social (other passengers) interior. His theoretical point calls for reinstatement of *cognition* in analysing the driving act, arguing that *pre-cognition* may often be overstated. It is the close analysis of the small detail of speech and practice that enables this conclusion to be drawn – the devil is in the detail.

(Auto) biographical detail also provides insight into contextual detail and there is a move in transport research to recognising the use of this type of data in understanding behavioural choices. In telling the personal 'case' stories of migrants (2 of 27 interviewed), Lee and Pratt (chapter 14), illustrate how mobility choices (or decisions) are made within a complex web of personal circumstance, opportunity, and constraints. The harrowing narratives of these migrant labours demonstrate that choice is not always rational or easy (and even may not be perceived as a choice), which is pertinent to all research in how subjects are perceived and represented. Often digging at context is beyond the reach of interviews and focus groups. Increasingly transport researcher is turning to ethnography and go-along interviews to capture 'in-situ' experiences of travelling, especially for walking and cycling. Crang's reflective account of becoming a quasi tourist-researcher (chapter 13) takes the reader on a journey of researcher identity, as much as revealing how cultural constructions of place may impact on the tourist experience. The autobiographical detail of discomfort of finding the boundary between personal travel experiences and observing the actions of fellow travellers resonated with my own experience of observing the contextual use of travel time (see for example, Jain, 2011). For those moving into ethnographic methods there is a need to consider how and why to write oneself into the contextual account, and Crang provides an excellent model here.

Capturing the experience of movement in context has become the classic mobilities narrative.

Lorimer (walking, chapter 2), Bale (running, chapter 3) and Dewsbury (dancing, chapter 4) develop theoretical debates around representing visceral and 'produced' movement. They identify that the body (particularly where it is test to extremes in sport and dance) is often shaped and augmented to

for performance (aesthetic or competitive). Here I want to question how much does the presentation of self and/or bodily aesthetics filter into the wider place of everyday mobility and broader transport discourse? No doubt the metropolitan commuter squeezed into the rush-hour underground carriage learns to manage the physical (and mental) self and social relations with fellow commuters, augmented with book, phone, water, etc for endurance performance, that parallel Lorimer's and Bale's accounts. Such everyday performances of commuting are explored by Edensor in chapter 12. Commuting has obvious compatibility with transport research, and Edensor connects the experience of travelling with the impact of mobility flows on place. Social and economic rhythms produce the temporal dimensions, as Edensor notes, but the design and regulation of conduits palpably control the spatiality of mobility.

The design and regulation emerge across the book in various ways, and is specifically addressed by part 2 of the book. This is where fixity meets mobility. However, as Pinder notes in chapter 11, what is normally assumed to be fixed (e.g. building) in one location has been envisioned by some architects as physically dynamic and fluid. Yet infrastructures and buildings do not always remain fixed in place over time, as Strohmayer reminds the reader in chapter 8, as different ways of inhabiting and moving in and around space are reworked over time. However, regulation also emerges throughout around the discourses of mobility that include the speed of travel and identity of the traveller. Speed, for example, can be reified (e.g. running) and dismissed (e.g. authenticity of slow travel), and it is promoted and contested in spatial design. Usually speed is legitimised, and those travellers who travel slowly or the immobile, like Cresswell's loitering vagabond (chapter 15), are likely to be on the mobility margins. Thus, in presenting voices from the margins, Cresswell and Mountz, remind both transport and mobilities researchers that discourses reproduce assumptions about the 'right to travel', and that access to mobility/transport is unequal (see Graham and Marvin, 2002).

To conclude, there is plenty in this book that should prompt the transport geographer into considering practice, context, and discourse, as much as those with a mobilities identity. It may be that the points I have raised are much more integrated into the practice of transport research than I give credit, especially that which engages with the policy process, urban design, and communities. Whether they are or not, this book should definitely be on your reading list!

References

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