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Introduction: Mobilities in Literature and Language

Migrant “crises”

In May last year, we had the pleasure of organising the biennial conference of the Swiss Association of University Teachers of English (SAUTE) in Zurich. One of the special features of SAUTE conferences is their interdisciplinary character: they bring together scholars from all subfields of English Studies, addressing topics of interest to both linguists and literary critics. The theme of the 2021 conference – and the present issue of *SPELL* – was inspired by the recent “mobilities turn” in the social sciences, which proposes new ways of conceptualising the world. As Noel Castree, Rob Kitchin and Alisdair Rogers phrase it in their *Dictionary of Human Geography*, the mobilities turn, “rather than understanding the world as largely fixed with some movement between locations, views the world as fluid and always in motion” (320). Instead of thinking of people and their material contexts as being “rooted in places,” advocates of the mobilities turn assume that these contexts are constituted by the movements of, and interactions between, people – the “mobile practices” that bring social phenomena into being (320). This entails a shift of focus from the (static) social structures and physical environments that precede and surround us to the movements and activities that we perform within them, a reorientation with obvious relevance to the fields of sociology and human geography, where the mobilities turn first gained traction.

But how does this pertain to the discipline of English Studies? Can the “new mobilities paradigm” (Sheller and Urry) be productively applied to the study of language and literature? Doing so would need to involve more than considering speech and writing as ways of communicating about and conceptualising mobilities, although this is one important contribution that we can make to the field. In a previous issue of *SPELL*, published in 2012, Annette Kern-Stähler and David Britain briefly touch upon the “new mobilities paradigm” in social theory; they observe that, “In linguistic, literary and cultural studies, [...] mobility and movement have been receiving critical attention for at least two decades,” and they go on

to ask how “mobilities, both mundane and dramatic, are represented, narrated, performed and negotiated in literature and discourse” (11). Building and expanding on this question, the present volume draws on the interdisciplinary field of mobilities studies to approach language and literature not just as *reflections of (and on)* mobile practices, but also as *products of* these practices.

Besides its academic significance, the topic of *Migrations and Contact* has an important political dimension. In the public discourse of the last ten years, migration has predominantly been framed in terms of “crisis.” In the summer of 2014, a surge of unaccompanied minors on America’s southwest border prompted President Barack Obama to declare a “humanitarian crisis” in the Rio Grande Valley; between May and July alone, border authorities had apprehended more than 40,000 children there (The White House). At that same time, three years into the war in Syria, the phenomenon that would become known as Europe’s “refugee and migrant crisis” began to intensify, reaching its peak in 2015, when 1.3 million people applied for asylum in the member states of the EU, Norway and Switzerland (Pew Research Center). Since then, hostility to immigration has reshaped national and international politics on both sides of the Atlantic, and it continues to boost right-wing populist parties and movements across the Western world.

In the spring and summer of 2016, the Leave Campaign in Britain successfully played on anti-immigration sentiments. One of its notorious slogans was “Turkey (population 76 million) is joining the EU. Vote Leave, take back control” (see Boffey and Helm). The accompanying poster suggested that remaining in the EU would amount to an open-door policy for Turkish immigrants, with the UK/EU passport representing the metaphorical open door. Justice Secretary and former journalist Michael Gove, one of the figureheads of the Leave Campaign, claimed that Turkey and other Eastern-European countries could join the EU as early as 2020 and that this would lead to an influx of up to 5.2 million people (a population the size of Scotland) arriving in the UK; this, Gove added, would make the UK National Health Service unsustainable by 2030 (Mason). Nigel Farage, the leader of the UK Independence Party, took the xenophobic rhetoric of the Leave campaign several steps further. One week prior to the EU referendum vote, he proudly unveiled a billboard showing a long queue of predominantly male Middle Eastern refugees below the red-lettered headline “BREAKING POINT,” followed by the caption: “The EU has failed us all” (see Hopkins). The photograph shows Syrians on the border of Croatia and Slovenia, but the billboard does not provide

any information about the context. Commentators on social media were quick to point out parallels to a Nazi propaganda film shot during World War II, excerpts of which had recently been shown in an episode of the 2005 BBC documentary series *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the "Final Solution"* (Hopkins).

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Donald Trump made illegal immigration to the US one of the leading topics of his presidency. Continuing in campaign mode even after he had entered the White House, Trump did not tire of repeating the Twitter-friendly refrain "Build a wall," which he later elaborated into the miniature poem (tweeted twice within two minutes) "BUILD A WALL & CRIME WILL FALL" (see "Trump Has a New Rhyming Slogan"). Trump's imaginary wall can serve as a symbol of the anti-immigration backlash of the two-thousand-teens, illustrating the extent to which xenophobic discourse has entered the political mainstream. Calls for a stricter policing of borders imply that mobility can – and must – be limited and that contact with certain people or populations can – and must – be stopped.

Against this background, the present collection of essays aims to approach the issue of *Migrations and Contacts* from a historically and culturally comparative perspective. Scholars in the field of English Studies are well qualified to do so, as both the English language and anglophone literatures provide ample reminders of the crucial role cross-cultural encounters and exchanges have played throughout history – and continue to play in the contemporary world. From the Roman, Viking and Norman invasions of Britain through the expansion of the British Empire to the growth of America's political, economic and cultural sphere of influence in today's globalised world, the English language has continuously absorbed elements from other languages, and it has diversified into a multiplicity of context-derived varieties. This development has produced the "English Language Complex" (McArthur 56) which can be subdivided into distinct classes of native-speaker varieties (standard, regional and social dialects) as well as second- or foreign-language varieties (pidgins and creoles, immigrant and hybridised varieties, etc.). As Edgard Schneider notes, "Language contact has been ubiquitous in the history of English, and it has also shaped the newly emergent varieties of the language in a fundamental way" (148). If English is a "contact language" (Schreier and Hundt), then the study of its historical and regional varieties calls for a mobility-sensitive approach. According to Jan Blommaert, this is now truer than ever: in the current age of globalisation, "We [...] see that the mobility of people also involves the mobility of linguistic and

sociolinguistic resources” (4). For Blommaert, language is “no longer tied to stable and resident communities” but “moves across the globe” (blurb). From this, he deduces the necessity of a new “*sociolinguistics of mobility*” designed for the analysis of “language-in-motion” rather than “language-in-place” (5, emphasis in original).

Similar things can be said about English-language *literatures*. In formerly colonised countries and their diasporas, the emergence of “New Englishes” (Schneider) as second-language varieties went hand in hand with the emergence of “New Literatures in English.” Today, these global anglophone literatures are “no longer simply ‘postcolonial’,” as they have transcended their historical roots in colonialism: “just like the English language they have come to employ as first or second language, [the new literatures in English] are not only shaped by local circumstances and experiences, but also by globalization processes and intricate networks of transcultural connections” (Sarkowsky and Schulze-Engler 177). Even beyond colonialism and globalisation, English-language literature has a long history of contact with literatures in other languages. Literary forms are themselves subject to migrations and spatial and cultural translations, and their relationship to mobility is often multi-layered. For instance, it is possible to view genres such as travel writing as both “agents and products of mobilities,” as a British research centre devoted to the study of literary and cultural mobilities notes on its webpage (Mobilities in Literature and Culture Research Centre).

The field of *theory* provides another area of application for the new mobilities paradigm. As early as 1982, Edward Said observed that, “Like people and schools of criticism, ideas, and theories *travel* – from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another” (226). Said’s essay “Traveling Theory” is an example of the very phenomenon it describes, as its titular concept is itself a travelling one. As such, it reappears in Mieke Bal’s 2002 study *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, even if Bal herself seems to be unaware of the fact (see Frank 61–63). Even before the rise of the “new mobilities paradigm,” literary scholars employed the metaphor of travel to describe the transnational and transdisciplinary circulation of ideas.

The “new mobilities paradigm”

As cultural theorist Doris Bachmann-Medick helpfully points out, “turns” such as the linguistic turn, the cultural turn and their numerous offshoots

not only redirect scholarly attention to a previously neglected phenomenon (such as, in the present instance, mobility); they also establish a new way of *understanding* that phenomenon. In Bachmann-Medick's words, "We can only speak of a turn if [...] the new research focus shifts from the object level of new fields of inquiry to the level of analytical categories and concepts" (16). Turns transform an "initially descriptive term" into an "operative concept" (17). The linguistic turn set the example by using language – or, more precisely, a post-Saussurean understanding of language – as a model to explain various other phenomena. For proponents of the linguistic turn, things as diverse as the unconscious, myth and culture are structured like a language – semiotic systems of meaning-making.

In a similar fashion, the new mobilities paradigm reframes social phenomena through the lens of mobility, assuming that the social world is constituted by a complex interplay of different kinds of mobilities. From that perspective, "mobility" is more than an object of study; it is an analytical category that can be applied to a wide range of phenomena. In his ground-breaking book *Sociology beyond Societies* (2000), John Urry shifts the focus of social mobility studies from the *vertical* axis of movement up or down the class ladder to different types of *horizontal* mobility (3). The most obvious instance of horizontal mobility is what he terms "corporeal mobility," that is, the movement of people on foot or by vehicle; from this Urry distinguishes the "mobilities of objects" such as consumer goods, "imaginative mobilities" enabled by television, as well as computer-based "virtual travel" (see the chapter "Travellings," 49–76; see also *Mobilities*).

The concept of the "new mobilities paradigm" was introduced in an eponymous essay co-authored by John Urry and Mimi Sheller in 2006, in which they assert that prior to what they term the mobilities turn, "[s]ocial science ha[d] largely ignored or trivialised the importance of the systematic movements of people for work and family life, for leisure and pleasure, and for politics and protest" (208). Accordingly, the new mobilities paradigm is designed to challenge the "'a-mobile'" (208) nature of much social science research. The mobilities turn, in the way Sheller and Urry conceive it, builds on and extends the previous "spatial turn." As Sheller explains in a more recent essay, the spatial turn involved a social-constructivist reconceptualisation of space. Whereas formerly, space had been thought of as an entity that precedes social reality, a passive backdrop or container for human activity, theorists like Henri Lefebvre and Doreen Massey advanced a relational understanding of space (Sheller 624). For Massey, space is something that is "always under construction," and it is

“constituted through interactions,” the “product of interrelations” (9). Sheller and Urry hold that despite this emphasis on interactions and interrelations, the spatial turn has not always entailed a consideration of movement. They note a general lack of attention to “how the spatialities of social life presuppose (and frequently involve conflict over) both the actual and the imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event” (Sheller and Urry 2008).

As tends to be the case with “turns,” not everything about the “new mobility paradigm” is new. Rather than constituting clean breaks with the past, turns often lead to a rediscovery and reappraisal of pioneering previous work. To give one example: in 1992, the historical anthropologist James Clifford introduced the concept of “travelling cultures” to argue against the static concept of the “field” (98–99) in traditional ethnography. According to Clifford, an ethnic group is not simply “there” in a fixed geographical location, where the anthropologist can find it and observe it like a feature of the landscape. Rather, the members of the group are constantly moving both within and across the boundaries of their community. Any account of “culture,” Clifford’s essay insists, must do justice to the fact that cultures travel, meaning that scholars need to adjust their observational methods and representational strategies accordingly. Later, Clifford proposed a shift of focus from the territorial “roots” of communities to the “routes” that shape their daily lives. Clifford’s 1997 book *Routes* is based on the “assumption of movement,” setting forth a “view of human location as constituted by displacement as much as by stasis” (2). According to Clifford, cultures need to be understood as being *en route* – or, “on the move,” as Tim Cresswell, one of the most prominent representatives of the mobilities turn in the field of geography, would later phrase it (*On the Move*).

There is a certain danger involved in establishing mobility as a universal norm, however, especially when scholars take a privileged Western lifestyle as the starting point for a general social theory of mobility. In their book *Mobile Lives*, Anthony Elliott and John Urry introduce the concept of the “mobile life” by describing the example of a British-based scholar travelling to a conference in New York (1–2). Peter Adey’s *Mobility* similarly illustrates the “ubiquity of mobility” (2) by describing the author’s own commute to work at different British universities. Adey concludes this introductory section by conceding that “We are all differently abled, and how the world enables or constrains our mobility can be crucial for the living of a good life” (4). Yet his choice of opening example illustrates the extent to which advocates of the mobilities turn identify

“mobile lives” with their own experiences as able-bodied academics in what Elliott and Urry term the “rich north” (3, 5, 7–9, and *passim*), although the cited authors are, of course, well aware of the social inequalities regarding mobility opportunities (see especially the chapter “Politics” in Adey 104–66). Adey notes that while “neoliberal ideology celebrates unfettered mobility for people and things” (Adey 109) – an attitude that mobilities studies needs to be careful not to reproduce – mobility is, in fact, unevenly distributed.

As Zygmunt Bauman has argued, globalisation divides the world as much as it unites it, and one way in which this division manifests itself is unequal access to mobility: “Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or postmodern times” (2). According to Bauman, today’s world is stratified by a “global hierarchy of mobility” (69–76), and the “concentration of capital, finance and all other resources of choice and effective action” goes hand in hand with the “*concentration of freedom* to move and to act” (70, emphasis in original). Mobility, then, is not a global one-size-fits-all phenomenon but a result of localised conditions, needs and opportunities. Scholars of migration have long distinguished between “pull” factors (or economic incentives) and “push” factors driving population movement, with the latter including war, political persecution, natural disaster and famine. If there is involuntary or forced mobility, then there is also “forced immobility,” when migrants become stuck in transit, finding themselves in a “state of rightless being” (Stock 11). Mobility, to conclude, is a “resource that is differentially accessed” (Cresswell, “Towards” 21), and it cannot be understood without its counterpart, immobility.

In an essay on the politics of mobility, Tim Cresswell contends that mobilities are both produced by and productive of power relations (“Towards” 21), which is why they need to be considered in relation to the political and societal structures in which they are enacted. In order to do justice to this fact, Cresswell makes power an integral part of his definition of mobility, in which he distinguishes mobility from mere movement. Thus, if we assume that movement, as such, is the simple displacement of a person or an object from one location to another, then mobility can be understood as movement “imbued with meaning and power” (*On the Move* 4). Movement becomes mobility as soon as we consider it in relation to “contexts of power” (2). For Cresswell, understanding mobility means to examine the representational strategies that surround movement

and endow it with ideological meaning (3). This perspective is of particular interest to scholars of language and literature, as it assumes that mobile practices are informed by cultural representations as much as by corporeal movement. In that regard, mobility consists of both discursive and material, embodied components.

Outline of this volume

Tim Cresswell is also the author of the first contribution to this volume, which builds on his extensive previous work in this field. Cresswell's oeuvre includes both scholarly and creative texts. His three volumes of poetry – *Soil* (2013), *Fence* (2015) and *Plastiglomerate* (2020) – are closely related to his academic work on human geography, which has two main foci: place and mobility. Following in the footsteps of the great Yi-Fu Tuan, to whom it is dedicated, Cresswell's 2008 book *Place: An Introduction* defines place as “space invested with meaning in the context of power” (12). As we just saw, Cresswell later used this definition as the basis for his theory of mobility, according to which “mobility exists in the same relation to movement as place does to location (“Towards” 18). The relationship between space and power was already the topic of Cresswell's PhD thesis, *In Place/Out of Place* (1998), which explores normative assumptions about how particular places can and should be used – as well as transgressive acts that challenge the spatial order by appropriating places for different, deviant purposes.

Tim Cresswell's other field of expertise is mobility. While sociologists like John Urry advocated a “new mobilities paradigm” for the study of human societies, Cresswell developed a parallel version of the mobilities turn for human geography. Besides the previously mentioned *On the Move* – his tour de force through the history of mobility in the modern era – Cresswell has written a history of the American tramp as a social type (*The Tramp*). In his contribution to the present volume, he takes up the “tourist and vagabond” binary introduced by Zygmunt Bauman in his work on globalisation. Bauman originally proposed this dichotomy to distinguish between two opposing but related forms of mobility in the contemporary world: the voluntarily mobility of first-world consumers and the forced mobility of the human “waste” of globalisation (*Globalization* 92; see also *Wasted Lives*). Bauman writes: “The tourists travel because *they want to*; the vagabonds because *they have no other bearable choice*” (*Globalization* 93, emphases in original). As this quotation

shows, Bauman himself employs the term “vagabond” – somewhat anachronistically – to describe a figure of postmodernity. By contrast, Cresswell offers a historical perspective on vagrancy as a form of mobility that has long been perceived as a threat to settled societies. Cresswell’s examples range from the city-state of late-fifteenth, early-sixteenth-century Bern to Malta and the EU during the refugee crisis of the last decade. In each case, the figure of the vagabond was perceived as a challenge to a place-bound conception of identity (i.e. identity as belonging to a spatially defined community). Cresswell concludes that in today’s world, mobility is determined by citizenship and unequal access to citizenship rights; the concept of the “citizen” continues to be defined against that of the vagabond, whose mobility is relegated to the realm of illegitimacy.

The next chapter complements Cresswell’s discussion of the “mobility of the wandering poor” in early modern Bern by offering a sociolinguistic analysis of the “Language and Mobility of Late Modern English Paupers.” In England during the First Industrial Revolution, poor citizens appealed for financial support to their home parishes by sending in so-called pauper letters. Anne-Christine Gardner, Anita Auer and Mark Iten have analysed a sample of such letters written between c. 1795 and 1834. In their contribution to this volume, they explore the relationship between language and patterns of mobility. Their goal in doing so is twofold: on the one hand, they wish to gain insight into the paupers’ motivations for migrating across the English South, often far away from their homes; on the other hand, they are interested in how language variation in pauper petitions sheds light on the English dialect landscape of the period under investigation. Using examples from Dorset and Cumberland as cases in point, Gardner, Auer and Iten demonstrate that it is difficult to reconstruct the authors’ origins based on the language used in their letters. Though local non-standard features do appear in these ego-documents (and are remarkably persistent), there is no clear match between the parish of legal settlement and the place of birth and origin of the writers of the letters. However, the social meta-data indicate how far paupers travelled at the time (on occasion more than 100 kilometres away from their parish, for example from Southampton to London and Cornwall). The presence of non-standard and dialect features in the pauper petitions can be productively interpreted through the lens of dialect contact; descriptive feature profiles illustrate the regional persistence of dialect features at the time.

Following this discussion of “language on the move” is a chapter on “literature on the move.” Travel writing is a literary form that, more than any other, is the product of mobility. In his contribution to this volume,

Martin Mühlheim offers an informative and insightful reading of the 1858 travel diary “Scenes in the Interior of Liberia” by James L. Sims. The nation of Liberia on the west coast of Africa was originally created by the American Colonization Society to provide a new home to formerly enslaved people, far away from the United States of America, where there were fears that the emancipation of slaves would lead to either a rebellion or miscegenation. After three decades as a private colony, Liberia was proclaimed an independent republic in 1847, the second black republic in history. Unavoidably, the colonial origins of Liberia led to tensions between the African American settlers – freed slaves who were suddenly cast into the role of missionaries and colonists – and the indigenous African population. At the same time, there was opposition to the colonisation of Liberia among African Americans in the US. Americo-Liberian settlers such as James L. Sims (who had moved to the colony in 1851) therefore found themselves in peculiar in-between position as “black anti-slavery settler-colonists.” As Mühlheim demonstrates, Sims attempted to navigate this fraught subject position by strategically deploying intertextual references to works as diverse as Torquato Tasso’s *Jerusalem Delivered*, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Lord Byron’s *Don Juan*. Displaying the author’s erudition, these references reinforce the various themes of Sims’ travelogue – most notably, that of the “black-white man’s burden,” that is, the mission of “civilizing” the indigenous population. Even though Mühlheim does not explicitly make that point, Sims’ many references to works from different periods and genres also illustrate the mobility of literary texts, elements of which can be transferred and adapted to new contexts, where they acquire new meaning.

The next chapter introduces the interdisciplinary field of border studies, which is of special relevance to the present volume. Nowhere does the uneven distribution of mobility become more obvious than at national borders, which are zones of selective permeability. Over the last two decades, border studies scholars such as political geographer David Newman have shifted the focus from the “static nature of border lines” (“Borders and Bordering” 172) to the “dynamics of the bordering process as it impacts society and space” (“Contemporary” 73). Newman holds that if we wish to understand the phenomenon of “bordering,” we need to consider the actors and activities involved in the processes of demarcating and managing borders, as well as the ways in which these processes impact the daily lives of those who reside in, or attempt to travel through, the transitional space of the borderland (“Borders and Bordering” 173). Against this background, it is interesting that the 2013 computer game

Papers, Please places the player in the position of a border officer. In this role, the player is compelled to follow instructions and to obey the ever-changing protocols for allowing individuals to cross the border. In an elegant analysis, literary scholar and film critic Alan Mattli argues that while *Papers, Please* successfully dramatises the ethical dilemmas facing immigration inspectors, it conspicuously fails to engage with its own historical moment. The game is set during the Cold War in the fictional Eastern European state of Arstotzka. By choosing an early-1980s setting and resuscitating the “Iron Curtain,” *Papers, Please* avoids the complexities of the current geopolitical situation. Moreover, as Mattli points out, the game relies on a surprisingly simplistic understanding of borders as clear-cut lines of separation rather than areas of contact which are subject to continuous processes of de- and re-bordering.

The topic of migration is also discussed by Gerold Schneider and Maud Reveilhac, who offer a corpus-linguistic perspective on migration discourse on the social media platform Twitter. In the wake of the political developments outlined at the beginning of this Introduction, migration has become a widely debated issue. Schneider and Reveilhac compare data from five English-speaking countries on three different continents to identify both general and local tendencies. Their point of departure is that previous research on attitudes to migration has neglected social media commentaries as sources of public opinion. To address this lacuna, they apply automated content analysis techniques to both opinion surveys and samples of Twitter posts. They consider tweets by random users, interested users and politicians, which they compare to the findings of opinion polls. As they demonstrate, both sets of data show a good correlation between *salience* of migration and *sentiment* towards migration (measured by frequency and tonality in the case of Twitter posts). The authors develop an innovative methodological approach aiming to bridge computational linguistics and cultural studies and to thus work towards a “culturomics” combining digital and traditional analytical tools. Their aim is to enhance our understanding of how the discursive framing of migration impacts public opinion, and to examine the extent to which migration discourse correlates with contextual factors such as immigration policies and elite polarisation.

In his comparative analysis of two recent novels by Kamila Shamsie and Chuck Palahniuk, Niklas Cyril Fischer uses the concept of mobility in a more metaphorical sense to describe “Migrations of Sound.” Drawing on the burgeoning field of “literary studies of sound,” Fischer proposes a reconceptualisation of listening as a mode of intersubjective understand-

ing that is prone to failure. Fischer's main point is that, while it is tempting to follow postcolonial critics in equating listening with attention to, and "ethical openness" for, the voice of an Other, this equation of listening with understanding "neglects the curious foreclosure of intersubjective understanding inherent in the physical act of listening." Addressing listening in its concrete sensory dimension (rather than in a more abstract sense), Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) and Palahniuk's *The Invention of Sound* (2020) feature protagonists who are endowed with "keen auditory sensibility." Significantly, however, this ability to *listen* does not translate into an ability to empathise with, let alone *understand*, others. Instead, the protagonists' concentration on sound makes them deaf to the causes and contexts of these sounds. In Palahniuk's novel, this is made glaringly obvious when the character of Mitzi Ives, who makes a career out of producing screams for Hollywood films, begins to deploy actual torture to satisfy the movie industry's desire for ever more authentic effects. Shamsie's *Home Fire* is more subtle in the way it addresses the ethics of listening. Using motifs from Sophocles' *Antigone*, the novel is set against the backdrop of the war in Syria and the "grooming" of young Muslims by the Islamic State. Shamsie combines her narrative of radicalisation with a critique of counter-terrorism policies in Britain, where the Home Office has the power to revoke the citizenship of any dual national suspected of terrorism. This is another striking instance of the phenomenon of "forced immobility" mentioned earlier in this Introduction: in *Home Fire*, the fictional Home Secretary Karamat Lone decrees that, even after his death, the nineteen-year-old ISIS recruit Parvaiz Pasha cannot return to Britain.

The volume closes with an essay by Andy Kirkpatrick, a leading expert on "World Englishes." Taking his cue from the work of Braj B. Kachru, Kirkpatrick argues that English has become an indigenous Asian language. In the context of trade and colonialism, English took root in various regions of the Asian continent, where it came into contact with and was shaped by local languages. In the process, it diversified into a range of regional varieties, or "Asian Englishes." At the same time, English developed into a *lingua franca* within Asia, enabling transnational communication between multilingual speakers. In his reconstruction of these processes, Kirkpatrick focuses on the different creative and functional purposes that the English language has served, and continues to serve, within Asia. He emphasises that English has taken on several unexpected roles, in domains that traditionally used to be reserved for local languages, such as religion and law. His examples include the teaching of English at Islamic religious schools, or madrassas, in

Indonesia, as well as the influence of British Common Law on the legal systems of Asian countries from Bangladesh to Singapore. While this is a legacy of imperialism, Kirkpatrick is convinced that Asian Englishes are able to authentically reflect their speakers' cultural experiences, histories and identities by adapting English to their needs. Kirkpatrick draws on Asian Anglophone literatures to illustrate this creative appropriation of English.

The three contributions from English linguistics thus offer different yet complementary perspectives on the relationship between language, migration and contact. Applying sociolinguistic and corpus-linguistic methodologies, they demonstrate that the study of the English language can make important contributions to the mobilities turn. It allows us to scrutinise the role of framing in the public discourse on migration, and it shows that language itself is shaped by mobility: varieties move along with their speakers, and they are transformed in situations of language contact. Similarly, the three contributions on English-language literatures and the computer game *Papers, Please* illustrate that texts from different genres and media not only engage with the issue of migration by *thematizing* (or, in the case of the computer game, simulating) forms of mobility and forced immobility; they can also be seen as the *products* of mobile practices such as travelling. Most importantly, perhaps, all case studies collected in this volume provide evidence of a key point made by Tim Cresswell in his chapter, namely that mobility is “totally wrapped up in power and politics.” The various contributions discuss extreme forms of social inequality (such as pauperism), colonial and postcolonial power relations, discriminatory border policies and social media discourses on migration in which the voices of the migrants themselves remain inaudible. Language and literature give meaning to material and embodied forms of (im)mobility; at the same time, they remind us that “Movement, like space, is both an outcome of power and a tool in the production, reproduction and possible transformation of systematically asymmetrical hierarchies of power and privilege.”

* * *

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