

Call for Abstracts for a thematic issue of the open access journal
Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal

Travel writing is characterised by the interplay of text and the visual which marks its form and aesthetics and transports its ideology. Mobile Culture Studies invites to submit proposals for contributions on these aspects in its next edition:

Travel writing – on the interplay between text and the visual
Guest editors: Sandra Vlasta und Birgit Englert

“To travel is to see”¹ notes Bernard McGrane, and writing about travels is thus the attempt to grasp what was seen – in words and/or in visual form. Accordingly “travel literature” not only deals with written texts, but also with visual elements, be it images, drawings, sketches, (out)looks, view points, or others, regardless whether they are drawn with words or also displayed visually. An arbitrary listing of some titles of travel writings (and travel blogs) underlines this: *Pictures from Italy/Italienisches Bilderbuch/Sketches of Spain/Impressions de voyage/Reiseaufnahmen/Blickgewinkelt*. Illustrations like maps, sketches, drawings, photographs, and film which were produced on the road, as well as visual materials which were added later on, has been part of travel writing since the beginning of the genre. Visual material can serve to convey information that cannot be verbalised. The visual further may give authenticity to what was experienced and narrated and underlines the credibility of the traveller/narrator. At the same time, the visual guides the view of the reader and tends to strengthen certain viewpoints even more than texts do, although visual depictions only seem to be more realistic, as Giorgia Alù und Sarah Patricia Hill remind us: “[visual representation] distorts rather than reflects social reality”². Illustrations in travel writing thus partake in the construction of difference, of images of the self and the other and consequently in the emergence of stereotypes and clichés.

This thematic issue of *Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal* >mcsj> is dedicated to the relation between text and the visual in travel writing. The latter is defined as narratives about travels which the narrators/authors have actually undertaken. We understand travel as a specific form of mobility which is characterised by certain elements and thus distinguishable from other forms of mobility – even though the exact delimitation may sometimes be blurred. In the context of Mobility Studies we are therefore also interested in the question how travel can be distinguished from other forms of mobility and how this is realised in the writings about it. Structural categories such as gender, generation, class, race and others have an impact on any form of mobility, thus also on travel. We look forward to analyses which deal with the repercussions of these categories on the experiences of travelling and their descriptions and draw on the historical as well as contemporary political, economic and social contexts of the respective cases.

¹ McGrane, Bernard: *Beyond Anthropology. Society and the Other*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, 116.

² Giorgia Alù/Sarah Patricia Hill: “The travelling eye: reading the visual in travel narratives”, in: *Studies in Travel Writing*, Vol. 22/1 (2018), 1–15, 1.

Narratives about travel can take very different forms. We welcome contributions which focus on printed forms of travel writing that have generally also been edited (for example classic travelogues, graphic novels or illustrated books). Furthermore, we are also looking for analyses of formats such as the travel diary which in the last two decades has often been published in the format of blogs. Often, these are available instantaneously to a broad readership and have been authorised only by their writers. These examples also illustrate the broad timeframe of this issue which reaches up to the present.

We have a comprehensive understanding of “text” and “visual” – the focus is on the interplay between what is verbally formulated (text) and visually presented (e.g. sketches, drawings, images, maps, photos, films etc.) in travel writing. These two elements can obviously also overlap, for example in the form of *ekphrasis* or of texts which are inscribed into images such as in comics and graphic novels.

Analyses for the thematic issue could deal with one or more of the following aspects:

- (joint/alternative) functions of text and the visual and their relation to each other
- ideological aspects of the relation between the visual and the text
- changes in the relation of the visual and the text in travel writing in historical perspective
- aspects of the production of the relation of the visual and the text
- aspects of the reception of the relation of the visual and the text
- the (literary) market/ the literary field and the relation of the visual and the text
- (images of) the self and the other and the relation of the visual and the text
- the relation of the visual and the text and the construction of difference
- text, visual and landscape in travel writing
- the picturesque and the relation of the visual and the text
- positioning of authors/narrators and the relation of the visual and the text
- questions relating to power and hierarchy in the relation of the visual and the text: who is the one who represents/pictures? Who is being pictured?
- postcolonial and decolonial discussions of the relation of the visual and the text
- gender and generation in the relation of the visual and the text
- stereotypes and the relation of the visual and the text
- (re)production of the visual
- the space between image and text

Further approaches and research questions are welcome!

Besides traditional scientific articles, we also welcome contributions in other formats which are facilitated by the online format of the journal. Among possible formats are, for example: (scientific) interviews, the dialogic writing of contributions (i.e. no joint authorship in the traditional sense but rather polyphone contributions in which the voices of the individual authors remain clearly audible/visible), audio data such as podcasts, but also creative examinations of the topic (such as narratives, poems or illustrations).

The Open Access journal *Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal ›mcsj›* started its activity in 2015. It has evolved from the homonymous international transdisciplinary platform active since 2010. Grounded in the humanities, it covers the trans-disciplinary field of mobility and publishes research-based contributions on the cultural and social phenomena of mobilities and their counterparts, on historical evidence of people's mobile practices, representations of mobility in oral, written and visual culture, and on changing concepts of mobility.

mcsj› is a multilingual, peer-reviewed, academic open-access journal without author fees being published by the Karl Franzens University Graz (Austria) in the form of a yearbook.

It has evolved from the international trans-disciplinary platform Mobile Culture Studies (MCS), active until 2014. The annual journal, with alternating key subjects and guest editors, aims to publish original articles from research at the forefront of the trans-disciplinary field of mobilities.

›*mcsj›* is grounded in the humanities, whilst maintaining a close dialogue both with the social and technical sciences and the artistic field.

›*mcsj›* encourages the submission of a variety of sources, texts (letters, diaries, novels) as well as images (drawings, paintings, photographs) or sound (soundscapes, songs, music). Consistent with ›*mcsj›*'s mission articles can be submitted in any language (see: <http://www.mobileculturestudies.com/mcsj/submitting.pdf>). Non-English contributions should be accompanied by an extended English summary. The contributions are peer reviewed. The average length of articles can be up to 8,000 words.

Suggestions, including a title, an abstract of approximately 350 words and a short CV, should be addressed to the guest editors:

birgit.englert@univie.ac.at, Associate Prof. Dr. Birgit Englert, University of Vienna, Austria, and

savlasta@uni-mainz.de, Dr. Sandra Vlasta, Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany.

The deadline for abstracts is December 1, 2019.

Notification about acceptance will be given by mid-December 2019.

The full manuscripts are to be submitted until March 15, 2020.

Thereafter the manuscripts will be peer-reviewed and, if necessary, revised.

Publication is scheduled for December 2020.