

Jamming – The Traffic Issue

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Factories are now like ships: They mutate strangely, masquerade, and sometimes sail away stealthily in the night in search of cheaper labor, leaving their former employees bewildered and jobless. And cargo ships now resemble buildings, giant floating warehouses shuttling back and forth between fixed points on an unrelenting schedule.

Allan Sekula

“Freeway to China (Version 2, for Liverpool)”

There’s no breath,
There’s no ventilation.
'Cause there’s too much traffic
Telepathic traffic.

Archers of Loaf

“Telepathic Traffic”

ONE OF THE MOST UNCANNY ASPECTS of the start of *28 Days Later* is what it does to London streets. Awakening naked and bewildered amid the chaos of an abandoned hospital, the man we will come to know as Jim stumbles out into the early morning sun, only to find the city deserted. The ensuing sequence confronts us with views alien to the cameras, the film frames, the monitors of CCTV: Westminster Bridge, empty except for some waste paper and a scattered cache of souvenir replicas of the Westminster Clock; a classic red double-decker on its side in Bridge Street; the

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brooding, claustrophobic architecture along Whitehall, free for once of the rush and press of political business; Piccadilly Circus, abandoned but for an ominous archive of missing persons posters. Major arteries in one of the world's most relentlessly congested, riotously fluid cities left vacant, made desolate—what on earth has happened to all the traffic?

Soon enough, the streets come back to a kind of life, as day turns to night and the zombies focal to the plot resume their rampage. The making of zombies in Danny Boyle's film begins with a laboratory accident: animal liberationists aiming to rescue captive monkeys instead manage to release the rage virus on an unexpecting public. Thus the film unfolds its premise through a grim joke about traffic: only zombie apocalypse—the apotheosis of road rage—can solve cosmopolitan congestion. But the traffic question in *28 Days Later* is not merely ironic. As vehicles for the rage virus, Boyle's zombies put contagion, and more pointedly the prospect of contagious feeling, into circulation. At stake is affective traffic, a concept and a problematic decisively consequential in biopolitical times. (It's no accident that the zombie has re-emerged in contemporary culture as a paradigmatic figure for thinking about biopolitics—see Antonio Negri's "The Political Monster" and Chris Harman's *Zombie Capitalism* but also AMC's *The Walking Dead*.) In *28 Days Later*, the traffic in affect not only routes events on screen; it also drives us, putting our attention to work and our affects in motion (as all cinema will; see Beller).

A Small Place, Jamaica Kincaid's celebrated memoir about neo-colonial Antigua, is a very different kind of text from *28 Days Later*, but it too brings rage to bear on questions of movement. Furious, Kincaid's narrative persona directs her tightly wound anger at the narrative's implied reader, a touristic "you" oblivious to the many kinds of systemic violence that produce and maintain Antigua as an island paradise. What rage as a vehicle allows Kincaid to explore are the contradictory dynamics that structure modern mobility—not at all a common experience or shared ontology in the globalizing moment but, instead, a differential regime through which the immobilization or forced mobilization of very many enables, indeed purchases, the free flow of very few. Thus in Kincaid's treatment rage serves more as limit than conduit, interrupting so as to highlight the differentials at play within trafficking cultures.

Both Boyle and Kincaid incite us to face traffic—to reckon what it can mean to move or be moved, to shift, cross, merge, trade, transact, stall, block, slow, stray, infect, break down, erupt. The demands of that challenge also constitute its promise.

Why “traffic” now? The question provokes another: Where would we be without traffic? The papers collected in this special issue of *English Studies in Canada* speak, in various ways and with diverse effects, to such questions. The arguments they venture succeed in mobilizing a reverberant complex of responses. And if the collection’s centre of gravity tends toward the present and recent past, nevertheless its orientation is at once historical and historicizing. Taken together, the essays in this volume conceptualize traffic in what, following Raymond Williams, we might understand as its residual, dominant, and emergent modes.

The question of traffic’s nowness, both topic and problem, finds one answer in the rise of mobility in recent cultural commentary—as an analytic term, a theoretical problematic, and a methodological framework. John Urry illuminates this tendency:

There is we might say a “mobility” structure of feeling in the air ... theorists as well as more empirical analysts are mobilizing a “mobility turn,” a different way of thinking through the character of economic, social and political relationships.... Contributions from cultural studies, feminism, geography, migration studies, politics, science studies, sociology, transport and tourism studies and so on are hesitatingly transforming social science and especially invigorating the connections, overlaps and borrowings with both physical science and with literary and historical studies. The mobility turn is post-disciplinary. (6)

Urry understands the turn to mobility as a sign of disciplinary eclipse. We share his enthusiasm for cross-disciplinary linkage and feel that *ESC*’s special issue will reflect and extend the sort of invigoration he promotes. At the same time, we want to make sure that the place of the literary in this mobile structure of feeling is not simply an afterthought. Literary analysis and cultural critique—key to the currency of *English Studies in Canada*—have a great deal to offer the analysis of mobility, traffic, and exchange, in diverse historical and conceptual registers.

Ian Baucom’s *Specters of the Atlantic* will epitomize the kind of potential we have in mind. The book unfolds a stunning thick description of the 1791 *Zong* atrocity; its mode of historical reckoning presupposes habits of close reading, discourse analysis, and aesthetic inquiry. Baucom’s venture is not literary study in any usual sense, but the approaches and perspectives enabled through literary study make his book possible. *Specters of the Atlantic* exfoliates “traffic”—a term and concept absent from the book’s

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index yet everywhere animating its project. In revisiting the *Zong* atrocity, Baucom not only (“only”!) illuminates the operations of the transatlantic slave trade; he shows as well how an obdurate traffic in knowledge about slavery invests the circuits of financial speculation past and present. At stake is a concept of traffic that will shape yet also vex modernity.

Etymological history underscores this point. As the *OED* reports, “[i]t is clear that the verb and noun arose in the commerce of the Mediterranean,” appearing in English in their common forms by the mid-sixteenth century. Thus commercial exchange underwrites linguistic coinage; the need to denominate “traffic” issues out of emerging networks of capitalist trade. Economic transfer and material transport become inextricable, establishing the busy-ness of business that still lingers in our contemporary colloquial association of traffic with vehicular concentration, congestion, and flow.

Yet if “traffic” originates as a term through which to render, in condensed form, an emergent geo-economic hegemony, it remains haunted by the prospect of its illegitimacy. Traffic continually risks deviance, misdirection, straying: illicit kinds of exchange, or indeed the illicitness of exchange as such. Hence the remarkable “traffickery” included near the end of the *OED*’s definition—a traffic in tricks that will prey upon individual and communal trust. One key to the complexity of traffic is the intimacy not distance between its licit and illicit manifestations: corporate takeover all too like piracy; the rise of insurance, as Baucom demonstrates, inseparable from the slave trade.

And what of communicative exchange? The circulations of discourse provide another register within which to confront the problem and promise of traffic. Circuits, here, can serve to foreground the materiality of traffic—think, for instance, of Roger Darnton’s model of print-culture communication, or Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology of cultural production, or Nicole Shukin’s method of zoopolitical critique. At issue, though, is also an aesthetic and semiotic circuitry, where citation, or allusion, or even plagiarism becomes a vehicle for discursive proliferation. Literature remains inconceivable without these practices; the literary institution depends upon such forms of traffic (see Hurley in this issue).

The communication question makes clear that “traffic” is a mediate concept. Trafficking is primary not secondary—“a positive process of social reality” (Williams 98) that constitutes, in decisive ways, the agents or subjects as well as the objects of exchange. Traffic’s circuitry plays a key part in producing and reproducing the things it channels and transports. And this mediate quality will tend—or at least has tended—to make

traffic strikingly reflexive as well. Trafficking cultures seem characteristically attuned to their own conditions of possibility—what we might call traffickability, the traffic in traffic. The world's fair movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides a rich archive of such reflexivity: exhibits and discourses that collapse space and time by attracting and mobilizing international audiences to marvel at cutting-edge technologies for collapsing space and time. Think, too, of Edward Burtynsky's oil photographs, which put the modern system of petro-traffic into aesthetic circulation and provoke their viewers to wonder what it will mean to find beauty in a tailings pond or a rolling wave of discarded tires. And think, finally, of the ubiquitous mass-cultural souvenir of modern travel, the picture postcard—a form primed to depict and circulate an illimitable variety of perspectives yet typically putting into motion the imagery and textuality of explicitly mobile desires.

Out in traffic, we race: *no time, foot down, move over*. Modern life has become dromological, as Paul Virilio argues, with speed imperative, irresistible, paradigmatic. Yet likewise we drift: *next month, bright sun, call her, great song*. Stuck in traffic, we fume, simmer, mull, yawn—versions of the same. Our perceptions, to borrow Jonathan Crary's phrase, are habitually suspended, muddling attention with distraction in ways that can make traffic go sidelong. The text message, the pay pass, the retinal scan: all feed dromological desire—do they instrumentalize a privileged kind of straying as well? And if so, might it not make more sense to think about traffic, in all its messy manifestations, not just in terms of velocity but also in terms of rhythmic modulation?

The capacity to determine pace is decisive within trafficking cultures. This point will complicate, even as it complements, Virilio's take on dromology: power operates not simply through ever greater speed but, rather, through differential control. Such is the lesson of Zygmunt Bauman's incisive analysis of vagabondage in the contemporary global moment:

Not all wanderers ... are on the move because they prefer being on the move to staying put and because they want to go where they are going. Many would perhaps go elsewhere or refuse to embark on a life of wandering altogether—were they asked, but they had not been asked in the first place. If they are on the move, it is because "staying at home" in a world made to the measure of the tourist feels like humiliation and a drudgery and in the long run does not seem a feasible proposition

anyway. They are on the move because they have been pushed from behind—having first been spiritually uprooted from the place that holds no promise, by a force of seduction or propulsion too powerful, and often too mysterious, to resist. They see their plight as anything but a manifestation of freedom. These are the *vagabonds*; dark vagrant moons reflecting the shine of bright tourist suns and following placidly the planet's orbit; the mutants of postmodern evolution, the monster rejects of the brave new species. The vagabonds are the waste of the world which has dedicated itself to tourist services. (92)

The dynamics of waste outlined by Bauman provide one way to link Boyle's phantasmatic English zombies with Kincaid's polemical Antiguan locals. And the ontology of such human waste, the conditions of such vagabondage, will invite skepticism about depictions of global life solely in terms of dematerialized, virtual flows. As mortgage and banking crises the world over have recently made clear, the holograms of speculative finance tend to inflict brutally material damages—their traffic in futures proliferating human waste as a routine matter of course.

Another kind of matter subtends the immaterialities of contemporary finance capital: the still largely maritime routes of transport, emblemized, in Allan Sekula's analysis, by the cargo container, "an American invention of the 1950s [that] transforms the space and time of port cities and makes the globalization of manufacture possible. The container is the very coffin of remote labor power, bearing the hidden evidence of exploitation in the far reaches of the world" (147). One of the many great accomplishments of Sekula's theoretical and photographic work is to prise open this coffin, laying exploitation's hidden evidence bare while reminding us that labour's power, for all that, is not yet dead. His documentary tribute to striking dockworkers in Liverpool and Long Beach will underscore just how powerful the stalling and blockage—activist, critical, and aesthetic—of traffic's circuits can be.

The papers in this special issue, as they engage with the concept of traffic across a range of practices, conditions, texts, and events, suggest that what is good about traffic—its function as an index of communication, the movement of bodies between two points, travel, mobility, and the exchange of everything—is also what is bad about traffic or, at any rate, what is complicated about traffic. Nick Scott describes this ambidexterity as the "multiple relations of stasis and flow among human and nonhu-

man actors” (149), drawing attention to traffic’s operation as a location or a process of both mobility and immobility, exchange and the control of exchange.

When we circulated the call for papers for this issue through our usual channels (the ACCUTE membership, calls for papers for scholars working in English and cultural studies), we weren’t sure what kinds of responses we would get and how they would be situated in relation to studies in the discipline of English as it is currently operating—in a condition, it might be suggested, of normal flux. We weren’t sure, in other words, where studies of traffic might be disciplinarily situated or how different conceptions of traffic might move between disciplines. We weren’t sure how traffic would be understood and defined in the responses to the call for papers. Recasting “Why now?” and “Where would we be?” in light of such uncertainty, we wondered: How do English studies engage with traffic?

Nick Scott makes narrative the answer in his essay, “Storied Infrastructure: Tracing Traffic, Place, and Power in Canada’s Capital City.” Scott focuses on infrastructure more than bodies in motion, reading the routes and trajectories, as American photographer Catherine Opie has arguably done in her “Freeway” series of images, rather than what is constituted in the movement along them. Opie’s freeways, static, massive, and beautiful, are haunted by traffic and by the narratives of their own imagining and construction; Scott, in his essay, turns to Ottawa’s roads and undertakes to theorize “how narrative approaches to traffic planning can strengthen a mobility politics by foregrounding the agency of streets, avenues, and arterial highways” (153). Positioning and “follow[ing]” roads as a “neglected group of nonhuman actors centrally involved in the production of traffic” (153), the paper traces a dynamic process between human and nonhuman actors, “tracing the lives of five streets in Ottawa” (156) and mapping their stories. The point, Scott astutely indicates, is to take up traffic “not as some outcome variable tied to an abstract level of service” but to consider its more complex cultural work across “multiple relations of stasis and flow” (149).

Nat Hurley takes up questions of this more complex cultural work in “The Queer Traffic in Literature; or, Reading Anthologically.” The essay traces what Hurley describes as a “distinctly literary model of queer world-making at the level of both individual type and queer subculture” (82) by reading accumulations and interactions within and across texts. What Hurley figures as a traffic in literature here is its “circulation among subcultures as well as books’ interactions with each other as if they socialized *as* a subculture” (82). This conception of a traffic in literature is compel-

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ling both in its marking of what is in effect a kind of stasis—books on shelves—and an exchange, between, across, and through books, through their authors, readers, archivists, and critics, an expansive and productive understanding of circulation and of the ways in which bodies, objects, and ideas travel. Hurley’s conception of traffic is also compelling in its attention, as is the case for Scott with Ottawa roads and their stories, to the nonhuman as it interacts with the human. Circulation emerges not only as exchange but also as process, capacious and volatile; the traffic in traffic intensifies but also begins to come undone. And the implications are transformative, for literary as for cultural study more broadly: “the anthological impulse to collect and place side by side, within the pages of individual books, a diverse array of episodes that draw widely on both queer and mainstream literary antecedents makes the case for looking not just at but beyond the usual suspects (like Whitman) for a more robust (queer) literary history” (106)

Isabel A. Moore attends, like Nat Hurley, to matters of literary history and the space constituted in the process of circulation—and its impediments. In her essay, “‘Unapproved Road’: Poetic Roadblocks and Animal Traffic in Paul Muldoon,” Moore situates Muldoon’s lyric poetry, notably his “Unapproved Road,” in the context both of its evocation of the creation of “a land border between the newly formed Irish Free State and Northern Ireland in 1922” (57) and of the “mobilities and immobilities” (58)—human and nonhuman, material and discursive—that result from the instituting of the frontier and the attempt to permit or not permit traffic to cross the frontier on roads already in place. Advancing a situated reading of Muldoon’s text and its relationship to the Irish border, Moore’s essay also makes a case for reading this lyric “to reveal the genre’s inevitable traffic in a larger economy, approved or not”: she focuses, in other words, “on the ways in which poetic and capital traffic in words and goods—especially of the illicit or invisible kind—crosses or remains stalled at the Irish and Muldoonian borders” (58). Moore maps this traffic with particular attention to “illicit” or already well-travelled and complicatedly valued words in Muldoon’s poetry, and her work of “reading [words] back” into the text suggests, as she argues, that “any easy animobility or poetry in motion is thwarted by an ungetroundable roadblock, stopped in and by its tracks at the border of its own contingent logic made visible” (78). The point of its circulation is its resistance to circulation, its “stall[ing]” of traffic at the border.

Erin Wunker, in “O Little Expressway: Sina Queyras and the Traffic of Subversive Hope,” considers, like Moore, the circulation of and in lyric

itself. What Moore describes as Muldoon's "ungetroundable roadblock" Wunker calls "jamming." "Traffic jams," as Wunker compellingly figures them, block transmission but also represent crucial points of theoretical or poetic exchange. "By forging non-linear lyric-jamming narrative," she suggests, "there is a challenge to the totemizing discourses of the nation-state" (38). Wunker "read[s] Queyras's *Expressway* as a reorientation of the lyric, where grammar of verse—emblemized by the voracious road—literally moves its own exchange value" (38). While tracing the operation of the expressway and of traffic itself as a foundational trope for this text and its engagement with genre, language, and representation, Wunker also draws attention to the way in which this work is focused on infrastructure, noting Queyras's observation that the road (much as Nick Scott points out in this issue and Catherine Opie indicates in her "Freeway" photographs) is "a made thing, and a handmade thing at that" (43), not simply a conduit for circulation but itself part of a dynamic exchange or traffic.

Wunker makes the point that expressways—the specific concern of Queyras's text—"are entities unto themselves" in the catalogue of roads and routes, engaged in a particular work that is dynamic but also ambiguous: they "have been credited with bringing communities together ... and they have also been blamed for dividing or even ghettoizing neighbourhoods" (37). This figure of the conduit for traffic or of traffic itself as it both makes community and divides constituencies runs through other papers in this issue. Nick Scott's Ottawa roads, Moore's "approved" and "unapproved" roads crossing the Irish border, Hurley's anthologies and book companions: all engage with a conception of traffic as inherently contradictory, connecting and dividing, controlled and unmanageable, beneficial and deleterious. In slightly different ways, Sarah Blacker, Michele Byers, Jennifer VanderBurgh, and Imre Szeman take up questions of traffic as an exchange that operates primarily to index and affirm particular structures, power systems, and ideologies.

In "Epistemic Trafficking: On the Concept of Race-Specific Medicine," Sarah Blacker tracks a narrative of the approval, by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2005, and subsequent distribution of the drug BiDil, a "race-specific" drug that made, as Blacker observes, the FDA "the first regulatory body to approve a medication for therapeutic use in a specific racial group" (127). Blacker's paper is not primarily focused on a traffic in the drug: although it is the case that controlled and illicit pharmaceuticals and drugs comprise the basis for a global traffic that has made traffic on these terms comprehensible often, first, as the business of circulating drugs, this paper is concerned with "epistemic trafficking" or

the circulation of ideas, meanings, values, knowledge. Blacker is interested in tracing, as she puts it, “the emergence of race-specific medicine and ... the particular discursive constructions through which this practice produces meaning” (128). That this traffic is a matter and an index of power structures is explicit: “The problem of race-specific medicine,” Blacker suggests, “emerges from within a broader framework of a conjuncture in which biopower produces value through the transformation of biology into information at the molecular level” (128). The traffic—or trafficking—that is at stake here, then, is, as is the case for Nick Scott, narrative: what is being circulated—hazardously, this paper argues—are “the ways in which science produces a particular form of narrative that is employed to explain and shape the political organization of social life” (129–30). In this case, as Blacker demonstrates, such organization is “based on an essentialist understanding of race” (130). In dismantling that narrative and mapping this traffic or the “[d]iscursive constructions trafficked through scientific narratives” (147), Blacker does the kind of work on BiDil and its story that Wunker sees Queyras doing in *Expressway*: “jamming” as a “challenge to ... totemizing discourses” (38).

The papers in this issue by Imre Szeman and by Michele Byers and Jennifer VanderBurgh likewise work to challenge or “jam” totemizing discourses and, as Blacker suggests, their “implications” and effects. In “Trafficking (in) the Archive: Canada, Copyright, and the Study of Television,” Byers and VanderBurgh draw important attention to the ways in which a controlled market in DVDs and videoreproductions, that market’s concomitant restrictions on reproduction and use through copyright law, and the absence of a national archive of television in Canada have combined to make a situation in which scholars of television must engage in an illicit traffic in materials for teaching and research: “within the increasingly constricting context of Canadian copyright and privacy laws,” they write, “using, sharing, format shifting, copying, screening, and teaching Canadian television texts are collectively an illegal activity” (109), its records—illegal recordings—comprising what they call “covert archives” (109) of stuff in people’s basements, passed around in “illegitimate” channels, seemingly operating against the nation that is itself the location and the focus of study. “When Canadian scholars need texts to study,” they point out, “they rely on informal networks or, as we call them here, practices of trafficking” (111).

Imre Szeman, while not tracing, as Byers and VanderBurgh do for television, the making of a “covert archive” in Canada for creativity more generally, nonetheless draws urgent attention to the implications for art and culture of the commoditization of creativity in politics and business as

something that is exchangeable, marketable, identifiable, and thus controllable—what he calls, in his title, the “Traffic in Creativity.” The emergence Szeman outlines here of what Richard Florida terms “the Creative Class” is not, as it seems, a “utopian vision” in which “the knowledge provided by social science” (and “Bohemian” intellectual work) “will equally benefit nation-states and the lives of those workers whose creativity is currently being wasted in jobs that fall outside of the Creative Class” (25). Rather, creativity is marshaled and managed—or trafficked—to maintain structure. “When it comes right down to it,” Szeman points out, “the logic of the economy trumps everything” (27). The logic of the economy here is the logic of traffic, mediate and mobile. That logic produces the ideology of race Blacker maps in her paper and the “covert archive” VanderBurgh and Byers outline; in the case of creativity, Szeman argues, “[t]he effect ... is to render mute the critical capacities and political function of art and culture, even as it [creativity] becomes coterminous with human life activity as such” (35).

The arguments of Szeman and of VanderBurgh and Byers suggest that constrictions make traffic, something that is evident in the constitution of objects or ideas in exchange only within or outside of constrictions and in the movement of objects or ideas along particular routes or trajectories. Traffic on these terms is not the free circulation of anything, not the “acts of rogue circulation” (84) that Hurley describes as fundamental to the “socializing” of texts, but is rather a system of making and of limiting value, and thus of controlling commodities—insurable human cargo in the transatlantic 1790s; the bodies of white slaves in the late nineteenth-century British Empire; Canadian televisual materials; creativity itself in the contemporary moment—and of maintaining the structures these commodities work to support economically and ideologically. This is traffic as a process in which we are all caught, making the instruments and the structures that then determine our own circulation, like anyone on a road or highway in a car waiting for the traffic to ease, like the women in Elfrida Jelinek’s grim patriarchal narrative in the 1975 novel *Women as Lovers* (trans. 1994), working long underpaid hours making lingerie that they cannot then afford but still desire in order to make themselves valuable and desirable in the system that is sustained by their labour, in the lingerie factory and in the manufacturing of their own femininity. In *Women as Lovers*, the patriarchal traffic in women makes the traffic in lingerie makes the traffic in women desperately marketing themselves into a traffic in women in which they don’t have to work in the bra factory anymore but aren’t, in Jelinek’s fictionalized Austria, any better off—or

not any longer subject to trafficking in their own bodies as commodities for exchange. In this novel, women undertake to interfere with this traffic and cannot: “sometimes,” we are told, “one of the women tries to join the life that’s passing by and to chat a little. Sadly life then often drives off by car, too fast for the bicycle. Goodbye!” (3).

One of the striking (all but telepathic) convergences of the papers that make up this special issue of *ESC* on traffic is their engagement: their tendency to reckon some possibilities for political and social change, to intervene and interfere in prevailing forms of “traffickery” so as to begin to imagine traffic differently. If, as Erin Wunker suggests here, the work of Queyras’s *Expressway* is a work of “jamming” the conventions of lyric and the discourses of the nation-state, the work that is evident in these papers is likewise disposed to the kind of “traffic jam” Wunker traces. Many of these papers thus call on us to stop or start, to change direction, to attend to the big picture. All of them might be understood to be working against what Imre Szeman describes in this issue as the shift from “what was once dangerous or revolutionary about art” to its full domestication (33). Thus Szeman, in his discussion of the problem of “the Creative Class,” astutely warns us that, “once art becomes universalized through the spread of the discourse of creativity, [its] political challenge ... is diluted” or, worse, “render[ed] mute” (33). Sarah Blacker makes a compelling case in her study of the circulation of the ideology of race-specific medicine for attending to “the particular form of trafficking through which data gets translated into information and information into knowledge—which in turn gets marshaled to do political work—[a]s a process that has not yet received enough critical attention from humanities scholars” (129). Nat Hurley, arguing for a foundational revision of our understanding of queer literary history through a process of reading anthologically, points out, “The time is ripe for us not just to do the painstaking editorial work of excavating the queer traffic in literature but to do the theoretical work as well of explaining why and how that traffic matters” (106). Michele Byers and Jennifer VanderBurgh, drawing attention to the ways in which in Canada “we [have] turned people who want to study Canadian television into fools or, worse, thieves,” rightly maintain that “It’s clearly time to change things and to try and bring a new vision ... to light” (124). Nick Scott, in his tracing of the narratives of five Ottawa roads, gestures toward the ways in which academic work—this traffic in ideas—“may more effectively point toward a different way of living together by including the voices of nonhuman

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agencies” (170). “By reflecting on old city spaces that became compact and diverse out of necessity,” Scott writes, “and translating some of their elements into a topical basis for planning traffic, we may yet open a passageway to sustainable mobility” (170).

The prospect of opening passages—with respect not just to sustainable mobility but also to intellectual creativity and critique, to televisual history, to biopower, to literary circulation and intervention—unites the papers in this issue. Together they demonstrate how critical reflection, stalling and blocking dominant modes of traffic, can carve out all sorts of new passageways. At stake is the unforeseen exchange, the unimagined circuit, the incipient process. The turn toward traffic admits all these possibilities and more; it enables as it demands nothing less than the remobilization of culture.

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