

public bathhouse rather than its concrete and technical aspects, Van Dam manages to gather sources from a wealth of different literary and pictorial genres. This rich collection of knowledge and the data presented enable exploring the meaning and power of metaphors in different contexts, in addition to opening the field for further research in the histories of mentalities. Indeed, the back-and-forth between material and immaterial culture creates a convincing image of the medieval reality, or rather realities, that bathing inhabits. However, this variety of sources, which the author herself qualifies as disparate, results in a complex book that is not always clearly structured around one core argument. This complexity makes the book harder to access for non-specialists, and the variety of subject and contexts discussed can appear protracted, taking the reader far away from what one could expect in a book about bath culture. Still, it is this variety of themes and interpretations that can serve as a very welcome incentive for raising new questions and opening new avenues of research into medieval bathing culture.

Lola Digard, University of Amsterdam

Gijs Mom, *Globalizing Automobilmism. Exuberance and the Emergence of Layered Mobility, 1900-1980* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020). 666 p. ISBN 9781789204612.

DOI: 10.52024/tseg.11106

Dr. Gijs Mom's project is ambitious: outlining histories of mobility as shaped by the rise of automobiles around the world. *Globalizing Automobilmism* is a sequel to his *Atlantic Automobilmism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), which focusses on the development of the car and a car society in the United States and several European countries during the first four decades or so of the twentieth century. *Globalizing Automobilmism* expands the scope of inquiry to countries outside the Western world and to the postwar period. Mom draws on different theoretical frameworks – from mobility studies and literary theory to postcolonial critique and studies of science and technology (Introduction). He argues that the spread of automobilmism from Western countries to other parts of the world did not end up with a homogeneous landscape of car societies. Instead, what emerged is a 'layered mobility' that has been shaped by complex local, regional, and transnational dynamics at specific historical moments.

Such 'layered mobility' is elaborated in three chapters. Chapter 1 ventures into societies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America from the late nineteenth century until World War II, examining various forms of mobility – from rickshaws to trains – which were prevalent in these societies. The account of the rickshaw is fascinating. A Japanese invention, rickshaw use quickly spread to China, India, Singapore, and other societies in Asia and went as far as South Africa along the networks of colonialism, trade, and migration. The rickshaw, adapted for local conditions, became one of the most visible means of mobility for the middle class as well as means of livelihood for the urban poor. Rickshaw drivers, given their work-life conditions, constituted the base for the labour movement, intriguingly, in some places but not in others. In comparison to the extent to which rickshaws had penetrated local societies, the reach of the car seemed more modest in these societies. Introduced in the early twentieth century, the car was mostly associated with privileged colonialists and local elites, which made the car undeniably a status symbol. Colonial officials travelled with the car to different places for official inspections. Local and colonial elites, like their Western counterparts, drove cars for the experience of adventure. The car therefore was an essential but invisible component of the colonial gaze, reflected in the documentations of the passengers and landscapes by the privileged as they moved around. Parallel to forms of mobility enabled by cars and rickshaws were those by rails and roads. While rails and roads served colonial powers for the purpose of governance and resource extraction, local political and social elites often saw roads and railroads as a key component in their pursuit of national prosperity and modernization. All these forms of mobility co-existed and were differently embedded in these colonial and semi-colonial societies.

Chapter 2 returns to car cultures in Western societies in the postwar period through to the 1980s. The car was no longer constructed primarily as an 'adventure machine' for white, middle-class men, which the title *Atlantic Automobility* had vividly captured. Mom zooms in on how the car became the 'fashion machine' and 'social machine' as the car became the object of mass consumption in the age of rapid economic development, along with the expansion of the middle class and suburbanization. Drawing on what he calls an 'autopoetics' that includes novels, poems, songs, movies, and other forms of popular culture and synthesizing other scholars' works, Mom looks into the subjectivities and identity politics of different social groups, especially groups like women

and racial minorities who were excluded from private car ownership or representation of driving or sitting in the car.

Chapter 3 shifts horizons again: it focusses on the infrastructural side of the car system – roadbuilding, which connected different parts of the world, technologically, economically, and politically, in the new sociopolitical order in the postwar period. Development in the Soviet Union demonstrated that motorization could be achieved through trucks and trains. To counter the influence of the Soviet model, industrial countries promoted the idea that development of transport, through roadbuilding and private car ownership, was considered the ‘automatic trigger of modernization’ (473). Despite the violence caused by the car to lives and the environment, this idea was standardized and further developed in academic institutions as expert knowledge regarding modernization and development. Through knowledge transfer and development aids, roadbuilding, with the expectation of growing private car ownership, was incorporated into development agendas and practices for “Third World” countries by international organizations in the Cold War era. With the complex politico-economic manoeuvres and the flow of profits from development projects to developed countries, automobilism became an important force in the remaking of the world order.

It is difficult to do justice to Mom’s nuanced and complex account of the histories of mobility in this short book review. Chapters 1 and 3 are real gems for the outline of a diverse world often invisible in mobility literature, as well as for a detailed anatomy of motorization and development practices. For readers who do not have much experience with or knowledge of popular culture and material lives in western countries in the Cold War period, it might be difficult to gauge the analysis in chapter 2. Its comprehensive bibliography is a great reference for any student interested in automobilities. While the introduction is theoretically dense and each chapter extensive, each of them can, to a great extent, stand alone. For example, for those who are interested in roadbuilding and development, it is not necessary to go through the first two chapters to have a good grasp of chapter 3. Mom’s account also elicits more questions. One of them concerns the use of autopoetics to explore emotions, feelings, and identity, which may lead to bias towards those who could make their voice and experience visible or audible. These issues, though, are for scholars who feel inspired by and can build upon Mom’s works.

Jun Zhang, City University of Hong Kong