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Introduction

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Introduction

Rick Honings & Esther Op de Beek

The slowing down of international movement caused by the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic clearly reveals the ethical dilemma travel represents. Research shows that travel has demonstrable positive effects on human beings: It brings new perspectives and knowledge, and gives a sense of freedom and pleasure that enhances the subjective quality of life and well-being.¹ However, the sheer volume of travel today has become a threat, not only to our planet, but also to global welfare, equality, and health. Mass travel causes environmental damage and inevitably leads to the exploitation of people and animals. This insight has not only led to a reconsideration of our responsibility for dealing with other living beings, but has also given rise to a Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, developed by the UN World Tourism Organization.²

For as long as humans have been travelling, they have encountered others: new people, new cultures, and also new animals. These animals encompass the dangerous, the exotic, the unfamiliar, the domesticated, the tasty or, indeed, the helpful. In his highly influential essay ‘Why Look at Animals?’ (1977) – a text that is often seen as foundational to the field of animal studies³ – the English novelist and art critic John Berger described the evolution of the relationship between human and non-human animals. Animals have, since the dawn of time, populated our world, our lives, and our fantasies – the oldest human rock paintings depict them. To Berger’s regret, people seemed to have forgotten how to truly *look* at them. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, under the influence of the industrial revolution and the ever-increasing capitalism, animals became alienated and marginalised, both physically and culturally, Berger argues. As caged attractions or domesticated pets that serve human needs, they have become pale remnants of the beings they once were.⁴

A lot has changed since 1977, albeit not necessarily for the better. The current state of the planet urges us to rethink our relationship with the environment in general and animals in particular. In his essay, Berger examines the alienation of animals, also raising interesting questions about the role of *writing* about animals and animal descriptions. People, Berger argues, have come to see them more as *symbols* than as actual, real living beings. When people think they *know* animals, they in fact interpret them as it suits them: They project meanings onto the animals, who then become signs in a process of self-reflection. Berger gives the example of a woman, Barbara Carter, who won a ‘grant a wish’ charity contest in 1976. She



Two men and an elephant in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), 1935. Collection Leiden University Libraries.

wanted to kiss and cuddle a lion. When she tried to kiss Suki, a lioness in a nearby Safari Park that was supposed to be ‘perfectly safe’, she ended up in hospital with severe injuries.⁵

Whilst this type of misconception, a form of anthropomorphism – attributing human characteristics to non-human things and events – can easily be criticised, anthropomorphism itself has a long tradition in many cultures. Anthropologist Stewart Guthrie argues that our survival depends on our ability to interpret an ambiguous world.⁶ Visualising the world as humanlike may be a smart survival strategy: it may help to categorize observations and experiences, and organise our predictions based on them. Moreover, we cannot simply transcend anthropomorphism, because we cannot separate our experience of reality from being human. Rather, the question here is whether some form of anthropomorphism could maintain the distinction between humans and animals. To a certain extent, human-animal relationships will always remain unequal, since animals do not possess the ability to express themselves in language – to ‘write back’ and offer a different perspective on themselves to that put forward by humans. In other words, they lack representational capacity.

The questions Berger asked about the effects of the representation of animals are just as relevant today: What does it mean to write about animals? To what extent can representations of animals do justice to their actual, living, physical reality? Is

it problematic to represent animals that can think or speak in human language? Perhaps more importantly, in the light of our current planetary crisis: How would our relationship to non-human animals change if we better understood, perhaps even changed, such representations?

Travel writing offers a very rich source of information from which to find answers to these questions. Indeed, it has been described as ‘the most socially important of all literary genres’, since it inherently deals with encounters between people and cultures.⁷ The Australian scholar Elizabeth Leane, in her recent exploration of the appearance of animals in travelogues, suggests that it comes as no surprise that ‘almost any travel narrative read with attentiveness to the presence of animals will yield incidents of some kind every few pages, some trivial, some highly revealing’.⁸ Nevertheless, travel writing is by no means an innocent political, social, and ethical bystander to the issues surrounding the harmful effects of travel on both flora and fauna. Indeed, it is implicated in the consequences of power relations, resonates with colonialism, and contributes to the negative effects of tourism.

In postcolonial approaches to travel writing, much attention has been paid to the fact that well into the twentieth century, travel accounts were mainly written by privileged white men, who invented ‘others’, such as the ‘barbarians’, the poor, women, and/or people of colour, in order to craft a ‘civilised’ (national or European) self-image in comparison with ‘the rest of the world’. However, the question of how they ‘invented’ animals as ‘others’ has, thus far, received much less attention, certainly in the study of Dutch travel writing. It is this lack of attention that this edited volume seeks to address.

In *Animals in Dutch Travel Writing, 1800-Present* we explore the ways in which animals populate Dutch travel stories – how they are described, and what roles and functions are attributed to them. The volume offers a balanced discussion of wild and domestic species, which in itself represents an intervention into prejudices favouring so-called charismatic animals. As a whole, the chapters present a global perspective by attending to the particularities of different regions and nations around the world, analysing voices of the Dutch ‘homeland’ alongside those who observe them whilst travelling both home and abroad.

In the following, we first describe how we define the notoriously slippery term ‘travel writing’ in this collection. Second, we will give a short characterisation of research into Dutch travel writing, which will be contextualised in relation to international developments in travel writing studies. We then turn our attention to the study of animals in travelogues at the intersection of travel writing studies, animal studies, and ecocriticism. The structure of this book is then explained and substantiated, highlighting several common threads that can be recognised throughout the contributions. Finally, we conclude with an overview of the chapters themselves.

The genre of travel writing

The need and the necessity to travel has historical roots. For as long as there have been people to make them, long journeys have been undertaken and written about, from notes in diaries, letters, and reports of scientific expeditions, to journalistic reports and literary travel stories. Travelogues are amongst the oldest surviving texts. Homer's *Odyssey*, for example, has all the characteristics of travel literature. Later, biblical stories such as the exodus of the Jews from Egypt and the journey of Moses and his people to the 'Promised Land', or the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, also share many such elements.⁹ However, such travel stories are only to a certain extent about journeys that actually took place – something that also applies to many travel stories from the Middle Ages, such as the Middle Dutch *De reis van Sint Brandaan* (The journey of Saint Brandaan) from the twelfth century.¹⁰

The early modern period brought some important developments, both in travel and in travel literature. Although the Italian explorer Marco Polo had travelled to Asia as early as the thirteenth century, it was mainly the voyages of Columbus from 1492 onwards that marked the real beginning of the era of European exploration. These texts nevertheless remained relatively unknown in Europe until the sixteenth century, in contrast to the (sometimes fictitious) travel accounts of pilgrims to Jerusalem, such as the *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (1486) by Bernhard von Breydenbach or the famous fictional *Voyages* of Jean de Mandeville (circa 1356).

People no longer blindly trusted classical or medieval sources – they wanted to see for themselves what the world looked like. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama was the first to go to India via the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. In doing so, he discovered a travel route that would be used for centuries. From that moment on, driven by curiosity and the pursuit of wealth, Westerners ventured forth. This resulted in a wave of travel texts, which could be quickly distributed thanks to the invention of the printing press. These later travelogues were based on personal observations and a journey that the author had actually made in person.¹¹ Such characteristics usually define the genre of travel literature.

In subsequent eras, the genre has continued to evolve and diversify. For example, the mid-nineteenth century, a period in which the middle class became more mobile, marked the beginning of modern tourism. Since then, the literary travelogue became a popular genre (especially in Anglo-Saxon literature) and tourist genres emerged. In the twentieth and twenty-first century, new forms of travelogues appeared under the influence of the rise of non-fiction and new journalism, the rise of new media and the democratisation of education and tourism – something as true in the Netherlands as elsewhere. According to the literary historian Hugo Brems, there has been a boom in travel stories in modern Dutch literature since

the 1980s, which he attributes to the rise of mass tourism and consumerism in the second half of the twentieth century.¹²

Today, even given its enormous popularity – everyone probably will have an idea of what is meant by travel literature – it remains a difficult genre to define. There are many sub-genres, such as logbooks, travel diaries, memoirs, expedition reports, reports, ship's journals, imaginary travel stories, travel poetry, travel guides, travel letters, and serials. In addition, there is a great variety of travel texts in terms of the places visited and the themes discussed. Some are mainly descriptive, whilst others are more about the individual experience. Is there actually something that connects all these texts? In this respect, the English writer Jonathan Raban's definition is famous, describing travel writing as 'a notoriously raffish open house where different genres are likely to end up in the same bed'.¹³ Travel literature is, in short, a hybrid genre. It is a simultaneously rich and complex source of information about how travellers define themselves and others, and offers a nuanced view of historical and contemporary ideologies and power structures.

In this edited volume a variety of travel texts are discussed and analysed, however, they all fit the criterion 'based on personal observations during a journey that the author had actually made in person'.¹⁴ Imaginary travel stories do not form part of these analyses, because we want to focus on representations of *actual* encounters between humans and animals.

The field of travel writing studies

Recent decades have seen growth in the international field of travel writing studies, as is evidenced by the numerous monographs, multi-author volumes, overview studies, and research companions that have reached publication. In addition, the scientific journal *Studies in Travel Writing* was founded in 1997. In 2002, the Centre for Travel Writing Studies was founded in Nottingham 'to produce, facilitate, and promote scholarly research on travel writing and its contexts, without restriction of period, locus, or type of travel writing'.¹⁵

In Flanders and the Netherlands, travel writing has received much less attention than in the Anglo-Saxon world. For many years the only Dutch scholar drawing attention to the importance of travel literature was Siegfried Huigen.¹⁶ However, recently, scholarly attention seems to be growing in the low countries. In 2017, the book *Travel Writing in Dutch and German, 1790-1930*, edited by Alison Martin, Lut Missinne, and Beatrix van Dam, was published.¹⁷ Furthermore, the interdisciplinary research group 'Tourism, Travel and Text' has existed at Radboud University Nijmegen for a number of years. In addition, in 2020, the Dutch Centre for Travel Writing Studies was founded at Leiden University.



European woman feeds monkeys in the resort of Wendit near Malang, in the Dutch East Indies, circa 1925. Collection Leiden University Libraries.

The fact that international scientific interest in travel writing has emerged relatively late compared with other genres has historical roots: Travel texts have traditionally been associated mainly with expeditions, journalism and popular adventure stories and not with 'high' literature.¹⁸ This also applies to the Netherlands, where a large audience hungered for exciting stories such as Gerrit de Veer's *Waerachtighe van drie seylagien, ter werelt noyt soo vreemt ghehoort* (1598, translated into English as *A True Description of*

Three Voyages by the North-East Towards Cathay and China). The story chronicles a disastrous journey in search of a northern passage to Asia, which ended at the inhospitable Nova Zembla archipelago in Northern Russia. The detailed account of the time spent in the 'Behouden Huys' (the preserved house) became a bestseller. The stories about bitter cold, bloodthirsty polar bears and Dutch heroism appealed to the imagination, as did the *Journael ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinghe van de Oost-Indische reijse* (1646, Diary or memorable description of the East-Indies voyage) by the Dutch skipper Willem IJsbrantszoon Bontekoe, who sailed to the Dutch East Indies in 1618 and wrote down his adventures. The story of shipwreck, famine, and cannibalism became extremely popular and was reprinted many times up to 1800. Its popularity was predicated on the mix of exciting adventures and edifying morals, with Bontekoe as the exemplary (brave, Christian) hero. Bontekoe's journal fuelled the demand for this type of text, stimulating the growth of the entire genre.¹⁹

Colonial travel literature in particular finds itself at the epicentre of recent scientific interest in Dutch travel literature – not least, from a postcolonial perspective. In recent years, Siegfried Huigen has published extensively on the travel stories of François Valentyn, who is best known for his magnum opus *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën vervattende een naaukeurige en uitvoerige verhandelinghe van Nederlands mogentheyd in die gewesten* (1724-1726, Old and New East Indies containing an

accurate and comprehensive account of the Dutch presence in those regions). Much attention is paid to journeys to and in the Dutch East Indies, the former Dutch colony in Southeast Asia. This is evident, both from two recent theme issues of the journal *Indische Letteren*²⁰ and the book *Een tint van het Indische Oosten. Reizen in Insulinde 1800-1950* (2015, A touch of the Indian East. Travels in Insulinde 1800-1950), edited by Rick Honings and Peter van Zonneveld.²¹ Started in 2020, the research project *Voicing the Colony: Travelers in the Dutch East Indies, 1800-1945*, funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), is now in its third year at Leiden University.

Hugo Brems has drawn attention to the lack of attention and appreciation for the travelogue in Dutch literature after 1945. The fact that the genre hardly appears in literary histories and studies of modern Dutch literature contrasts starkly with its popularity. Particularly from the 1980s onwards, there has been a blossoming of the genre in the low countries. Brems argues that the explosive rise of tourism in this period surely will have contributed to the popularity of travel stories, as well as the corresponding increase in popularity of the travelogue in England: 'No doubt international examples have played a stimulating role, such as the British magazine *Granta*, which has successfully brought together international literature, literary non-fiction, and travel literature since 1979, and the works of Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux, and V.S. Naipaul.'²²

Animals in travel writing

An overview of recent developments in international research into travel writing is given in *The Routledge Research Companion to Travel Writing* (2020), edited by Alasdair Pettinger and Tim Youngs.²³ The handbook pays attention, first, to the diversity of types of framing in travel writing (from migrant or expat experiences to travelling in pairs); second, to modes of writing (from diaries to travel narratives); third, to sensory perceptions in travel writing; fourth, to 'interactions' in travelogues; and, lastly, to the paratexts of travel writing.

In the section on 'Interactions', Elizabeth Leane discusses interactions between travellers and non-human animals.²⁴ In a manner similar to John Berger, Leane observes a tendency to look *through*, rather than to look *at* the textual animals in travel literature, which were considered 'interesting only where they can be read as figures for human qualities'.²⁵ Although the subordinate position of the animal, which follows from the fact that only humans are able to report about these interactions linguistically, was not experienced as problematic for a long time, this has now changed under the influence of scientific disciplines such as ecocriticism and animal studies. Leane demonstrates the new insights that the 'animal turn' can offer the study of travel texts, and vice versa. She proposes a typology of the roles that animals

have traditionally been allocated in travel writing – as quest objects, as instruments of travel, and as companions – highlighting the ways in which such representations both constrain and enable human understandings of encounters with other species.

One of the most basic reasons to study animals and the human-animal relationship is because we simply cannot exist without animals. As Garry Marvin and Susan McHugh rightly say in the *Routledge Handbook of Human-Animal Studies*: ‘Simply put, it is because animals – although not all, and not all equally – are essential in and for human societies. Human worlds are built upon animal lives and deaths, conceptually as well as physically.’²⁶ Moreover, by looking critically at (representations of) animals and human-animal relationships – both past and present – animal studies creates room for future perspectives, and, in this sense, possesses revolutionary potential. It is this insight that fuels much recent research into the representation in the arts of animals that are threatened with extinction and ‘forgotten’ biodiversity,²⁷ instead of studying traditional iconography and metaphors. In that respect, this volume ties in with the structure of *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, which establishes a historical line of representation of animals, whilst at the same time presenting new directions and perspectives that seem urgent in response to current environmental questions.²⁸ By reflecting on the human-animal relationship, the approach of animal studies is to think beyond the ‘Anthropocene’ – the paradigm in which man as an autonomous being is the centre of all existence – and to catch glimpses of how a healthier, more holistic ‘cooperation’ or ‘thought’ can be argued. New ideas and concepts are indispensable here, as are cultural products that destabilise normalised dominant perspectives and/or depict alternative perspectives. The field of Animal Studies invites us to critically relate to the ‘legacy’ of the Enlightenment.²⁹ Values such as physicality, vulnerability, emotionality, dependence, and mortality, traditionally attributed to non-human animals when opposed to human animals as rational, independent and dominant beings, are recognised as important shared factors of all life on Earth. This calls for a deconstruction of the opposition – the violent hierarchy humans have created between animals and themselves. If we want to have more respect for ourselves, for the benefit of our survival, we will have to show more respect for, and interest in, the animals that we are ourselves and with whom we live.

The more activist field of critical animal studies opposes structural violence against non-human animals and the discriminatory, institutionalised attitude towards animals, termed ‘speciesism’ – directly analogous with racism and sexism.³⁰ In *Critical Animal Studies. Towards Trans-species Social Justice* (2018), the editors Atsuko Matsuoka and John Sorenson define ‘speciesism’ as follows:

Speciesism is an ideology that legitimates a particular social order and it is necessary to understand the oppression of animals in terms of a theory that recognizes the necessary

factors of economic exploitation, unequal power, and ideological control. Speciesist ideology operates to justify domination over other animals and our economic exploitation and commodification of them. Academics have contributed to maintenance of this ideology by developing a system of knowledge about animals and theories to justify human domination.³¹

This quote describes a discourse that shows striking parallels with colonial discourse as analysed and criticised in, and with, postcolonial theory. The oppression, instrumentalisation, and mechanisms of exploitation – which depend on (linguistic) ideology – are not aimed at other, ‘non-Western’ people, but at animals. One of the tasks of critical animal studies is to ‘confront this unthinkability, the taken for granted assumptions that form a hidden structure of violence and that make the most unspeakable atrocities seem an acceptable part of everyday life. Part of this effort is to challenge the anthropocentrism of various academic disciplines’.³²

The relative lack of engagement so far between animals studies and travel writing studies may have an explanation in the close ties between the latter and postcolonial criticism.³³ In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2010), Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin state that whilst postcolonialism’s theoretical concerns ‘offer [an] immediate entry point for a re-theorising of the place of animals in relation to human societies’, it is hard ‘even to discuss animals without generating a profound unease, even a rancorous antagonism, in many postcolonial contexts today’.³⁴ In many of the contributions that follow, that relationship and its accompanying ‘inconvenience’ are explored.



Slaughterhouse in Surakarta, early twentieth century. Collection Leiden University Libraries.

Themes and threads

In this edited volume, Elizabeth Leane's typology of the functions of animals in travelogues provided the starting point for the analysis of Dutch travel writing for all contributors. An exploratory typology invites and deserves to be tested and adjusted, since it can be applied in multiple ways to many different types of travel texts, from different theoretical perspectives to human-animal relationships. As Leane argues, and as will become clear in that which follows, studying animals in travel writing demands an interdisciplinary approach, on the intersection of animal studies (anthropomorphism, ecocriticism), tourism studies, and travel writing studies, including postcolonial studies.³⁵ Within this diversity, a number of themes have come to the fore that seem typical of human-animal interactions and their representation in Dutch (colonial) travel literature. Before giving an overview of the chapters in this volume, we will discuss four recurring topics.

A first focus area concerns the fact that travel writers, logically, favour what is newsworthy or attractive to their readers. The presence of, and interactions with, some animals seem so obvious that they are only referred to 'between the lines'. Everyday interactions with domesticated animals, such as the pigs to which Lucie Sedláčková will draw our attention in her chapter, and less conspicuous animals, such as the insects or lizards discussed by Achmad Sunjayadi, have historically received significantly less attention than those animals that count as triumphal discoveries, important encyclopaedic material, form part of adventurous experiences, or as peculiar or dangerous creatures. The presence of exotic flora and fauna was one of the key attractions in colonial travel writing from the Dutch East Indies, and the one that, as Mikko Toivanen argues in his chapter about the Java horse, has attracted the most attention in discussions of the travellers' relationship with the natural environment. It is rather more because of the consciously chosen perspective of the contributors to this book, than because of the travel writers themselves, that we now have our eyes on a broad spectrum of functions and roles. Nevertheless, encounters with these 'underexposed' animals reveal at least as much about the relationship between humans and animals – as does the way in which they are (if at all) described.

Second, the chapters expose the tension between the desire to know and understand animals, and their otherness and unknowability. Their 'gaze back' is ambiguous and difficult to read. The fact that humans cannot know what the animal sees, confirms that it is radically different and therefore cannot be known or dominated. The effect of this observation is that the social opposition between humans and animals, which is presented as natural, is exposed as an ideological construction. This construction turns out to be conditional: It is valid only on grounds devised by man himself and not on the basis of a metaphysical truth that

determines the difference and the hierarchical relationship between man and animal. This post-structuralist reasoning also applies to colonial relationships and the ways in which these can be shaped or destabilised through (narrated) gazes and perspectives. Common, in this regard, is the use of the opposition between ‘civilised’ and ‘barbaric’ qualities, both in the description of the supposed nature of humans and animals, and in the characterisation of the way in which ‘others’ – the native population or the tourists – treat animals.

This opposition between ‘the civilised’ versus ‘the barbaric’ is further undermined in the travelogues discussed herein. The bestial becomes a metaphor for humans, as we shall see in Claudia Zeller’s chapter on monkeys, and Arnoud Arps’ analysis of the animal as a metaphor for violence. Although sometimes, animals are presented as more civilised, reliable, or intelligent, this undermining of the dominant opposition also emphasises the opposition itself, and in most cases, this functions within the advantageous self-presentation of the travel writer. A similar point has been made for the contemporary era by Debbie Lisle, who notes how celebrity travel writers employ self-deprecating humour as a strategy via which to avoid and defuse more fundamental questions of structural inequality.³⁶ This narrative, as Esther Op de Beek shows, at least to a certain extent, accounts for the way in which the travel writer Leonhard Huizinga deals with animals in his stories.

Another focus area is the need to describe (new) animal species abroad, and to gather and share knowledge about them – a process that has been criticised based on the awareness that in doing so, one is appropriating a culture and that this kind of epistemological information forms the basis for domination. Whilst in theory, this is certainly true, in practice it appears that the traveller-scientists described in the chapters that follow often seem to have treated original, indigenous names and sources of information with more respect than a superficial condemnation of the genre of travel writing would suggest – a point argued by Johannes Müller regarding Pieter Bleeker’s naming practices. Bringing the history of nomenclature into dialogue with travel writing – something Rick Honings and Judith E. Bosnak also do in their chapter – reveals another dimension of colonial interactions with the living world that is often hidden behind the rhetoric of scientific discovery. Non-scientific vernacular names can hold important information about human-animal interactions and the ecological history of species whose habitats have been severely impacted by human interference. Despite their intrinsically arbitrary nature, names are always embedded in wider discursive frameworks and can shed light on underlying social practices, mentalities, and ordering systems.

This is related to a fourth constant: the use of legitimising strategies common to colonial discourse in the description of people, animals, and their environments, both in the colonial period and subsequently. It has become clear that in Dutch travel literature, animals were also used as ‘others’ to enhance colonial power

relations. Of course, to a certain extent this finding follows from the focus and layout chosen in this book. Nevertheless, the contributions collectively confirm that, and demonstrate how, animals function in a colonial discourse that resonates strongly in travel (writing) practices to this day.

About this volume

The contributions to this collection are divided into two chronological periods. First, we wanted to investigate how animals play a role in travel stories from the colonial period. Dutch travel literature is teeming with animals, as is the wealth of international travel literature. Nevertheless, travel literature has been given much attention in the Netherlands from a postcolonial perspective, which may have hindered a thorough analysis of human-animal relations to date. Be that as it may, Dutch research into colonial travelogues still lacks any analyses of the role that animals played, both in (travels to) the colonies and descriptions thereof. For this reason, we have reserved a separate section for the colonial era: 'Part I. Colonial Encounters: Framing the Animal'.

In 'Part II. Living Apart Together: Animals in Modern Travel Writing', attention in several chapters is paid to the impact of discursive strategies from the colonial era. However, the focus is now shifted to the modern era, in which travel emerges as a form of leisure, travel and tourism undergo a further democratisation, and travel writers see the world changing rapidly. Central questions here are: How do the functions of animals change under these developments? What, if any, constants remain, in the face of such changes?

In the first chapter, basically two chapters in one, Judith E. Bosnak and Rick Honings undertake a comparative examination of nineteenth-century Dutch and Javanese travel writing. More specifically, they compare the representation of animals by Dutch and Javanese travellers, focusing on three different functions of animals: the animal as a scientific quest object; as a tourist 'curiosity' or pastime object; and, third, as an object of spiritual devotion. Early nineteenth-century Dutch scientists carried out extensive explorations of Java's flora and fauna. For the sake of science, they justified the mistreatment of, and violence against, animals, whilst simultaneously condemning indigenous practices such as cock fights and *rampog macan* (tiger fights) as barbaric and cruel. In comparison, Javanese travellers such as Purwalelana and Sastradarma similarly studied animals – sometimes mythical or symbolic animals – however, they took a different approach, fuelled by an 'encyclopaedic drive'. With their analysis, Bosnak and Honings answer the recent call for a 'decolonisation' of (the historiography of) travel writing, proposing instead an alternative comparative approach to the study of travel and the animal 'other'.

In the second chapter, 'Naming the World', Johannes Müller studies the naming practices and ordering systems used by Dutch naturalists, in particular the nineteenth-century zoologist Pieter Bleeker, to classify the flora and fauna of Southeast Asia. In doing so, Muller lays bare colonial-scientific practices of nomenclature and classification in the context of travelling and travel accounts. Bleeker's descriptions and nomenclatural decisions were deeply indebted to earlier, indigenous interactions with the described species. Bleeker's immensely productive career defies the heroic tropes of scientific fieldwork and exploration into a hitherto unknown nature. His fieldwork did not consist of hazardous expeditions to unknown places, but more typically of visits to local markets, conversations with fishermen, and the establishment of correspondence networks with people who were willing to send him preserved specimens. In contrast to other travelling naturalists and researchers, this rhetoric of discovery is largely absent from Bleeker's work and his dependence on local knowledge, sources, and infrastructures is always clear.

In the third chapter, 'Empire as Horseplay?', Mikko Toivanen examines how Dutch nineteenth-century travel writing represents encounters between European travellers and the Java horse. In its pivotal role to travel on Java in the early nineteenth century, it comes as no surprise that the Java horse features heavily in Dutch travel writing from the island. Toivanen's analysis focuses on how authors discussed the horse as a lens to, or metaphor for, the wider colonial issues of the time: the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, the development of racial thinking and taxonomies, and the introduction of new transport infrastructure as a symbol of modernity. Given meaning through the eyes of the traveller-coloniser, the Java horse appears in many guises in the travel books, although, ultimately, its fate was to be left behind by fashion and technology.

In chapter four, 'The Sound of the Tokkeh and the Tjitjak', Achmad Sunjayadi focuses on animal species that are ubiquitous yet often overlooked: the Tokay Gekko and Common House Gekko. He analyses their modest appearance in Dutch East Indies travel literature. For Europeans, especially the Dutch, who saw and heard the creatures for the first time during colonial times, the tokkeh and the tjitjak were extraordinary little reptiles. Yet these tiny exotic animals appear to have warranted scant description: their presence, whilst surprising, was unwanted and thus worthy only of the briefest passing mention. Sunjayadi nevertheless aims to trace their appearance, physically or just by their sound, and the roles they played in travel accounts from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.

In 'Monkeys as Metaphor. Ecologies of Representation in Dutch Travel Writing about Suriname from the Colonial Period', the fifth chapter, Claudia Zeller uses as her point of departure the fact that monkeys were deemed amongst the most 'relatable' Surinamese species and, of all the animals encountered, are the ones most written about. In her analysis, Zeller focuses on monkeys, not only as a

figure of ambiguity, but also as actual beings, revealing how different ‘ecologies of representation’ are constituted in colonial travel writing about Suriname. Zeller examines strategies common to travel literature as a genre, such as animalisation and familiarisation. Yet she also shows how, at the intersection of race and animality, familiarising strategies appear next to attempts to ‘defamiliarise’ the monkey.

Chapter six, ‘Becoming a Beast in the Long Run’, examines the roles played by animals in Dutch travelogues about the Indonesian War of Independence. Arnoud Arps, in his elaboration on animal metaphors in the representation of violence, also considers the appearance of actual animals in the travelogues – such as deer-pigs, crocodiles, and dogs. From a perspective that draws upon postcolonial studies, animal studies, and perpetrator studies, he argues that, in Dutch decolonisation texts such as *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* (2016, At home nobody believes me) by Maarten Hidskes and *Merdeka!* (2016, Freedom!) by Jacob Vis, Dutch perpetrators are represented as having both human and animal qualities, whereas the latter are solely reserved for Indonesian fighters. In particular, the animal is used as a dual metaphor for representing violence. It is used to describe the transformation of the Dutch from trained soldiers to cold-blooded beasts, whilst, at the same time, it is used to describe the violence committed against the Dutch by Indonesian freedom fighters that for many Dutch soldiers is described as forming the basis of their transformation.

In chapter seven, ‘Do You Really Think a Donkey Has No Heart?’, Peter Altena discusses the representation of the relation between Betsy Perk, a nineteenth-century Dutch travel writer, and her donkey, named Cadette, in Perk’s *Mijn ezeltje en ik* (1874, My little donkey and I). Altena analyses how the perspective used – that of a talking donkey – influences that representation. There is of course no question of real equality, but in the description of Perk’s dealings with Cadette, the boundaries between human and animal are shown to gently shift. In the village of Valkenburg, Betsy Perk thinks about the difference between men and women, and about the special role an animal can play. Several comparisons are made with *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879) by Robert Louis Stevenson, who published his travelogue four years after Perk and whose work has been the subject of much research in the field of animal-human studies.

In chapter eight Paul J. Smith analyses human and non-human animals in Niko Tinbergen’s *Eskimoland* (1934) and Jac. P. Thijsse’s *Texel* (1927). He contextualises *Eskimoland*, placing it in the Dutch tradition of popularising the knowledge of nature. Moreover, as this tradition can also be aptly illustrated in the work of Thijsse, he juxtaposes it with one of Thijsse’s best-known works, *Texel* (1927), with which *Eskimoland* bears unexpected similarities. Smith examines what Tinbergen wanted to achieve with his travelogue, besides positioning himself academically. His text can be read as a scientific plea for field research as an essential element of research into animal behaviour. Moreover, he suggested that the behaviour

of humans and animals is comparable and should therefore also be studied in a similar manner – a taboo subject at the time. His text also raises awareness about the disappearance of what we now call biodiversity and indigenous culture – a narrative also present in Thijsse's *Texel*.

In chapter nine, 'The Land of Living Fossils', Ton van Kalmthout studies travelogues written by Dutch citizens that moved to Australia to start a new life in the 1950s and 1960s. The flow of emigrants was accompanied by a number of publications, including travel stories. Van Kalmthout analyses the representation of Australian faunae in these travel stories, which species are discussed, in what ways, and with what effects. He distinguishes two groups in the animals most prominently described: those introduced to Australia by Europeans – sheep, cattle, rabbits, and horses – and those indigenous to the continent. Although in practice there was little chance that Dutch migrants would encounter Australia's unique faunae in the wild, for various reasons, Dutch-Australian travel literature of the time paid it significant attention. The description of both groups of animals – those well known, and those lesser known – contributed significantly to the portrayal of Australia with its eccentric, exotic, or idyllic features as a land of limitless possibilities, a fascinating wonderland, tempting for emigrants.

In the penultimate chapter, Esther Op de Beek focuses on the functions of animals in the evocation of a lost past: 'A Lesson in Happiness. Animals and Nostalgia in the Travel Stories of Leonhard Huizinga'. In recent research on travel writing, much attention has been paid to the discourse of nostalgia. However, thus far, no attention has been paid to the function that animals can play in nostalgic discourse. In his travel stories, Huizinga depicts himself, the narrator of the stories, as someone who shies away from people and prefers to travel alone through nature with animals as his only source of company. Animals prevent Huizinga from feeling lonely and remind him of an otherwise unspoiled past. The question Op de Beek asks in her contribution is to what extent we should think of the animals that populate nostalgic discourse in Leonhard Huizinga's travel stories as instrumental to a form of nostalgia that serves the narrator, *or* as central to a more reflective form of nostalgia that serves the relationship between human and non-human species. In answering this question, she uses Svetlana Boym's literary theoretical insights on nostalgia and also takes into account the dynamic tension between text and image in Huizinga's travel stories.

In the final chapter, 'Noble Horse and Lazy Pig', Lucie Sedláčková investigates how domestic animals are represented and how their selective breeding and (mis)use are argued – both for, and against. Although according to Elizabeth Leane's classification, domestic animals have typically played the roles of instrument of travel or companion, this article asks how domestic animals can play a role as quest object in travel narratives. Sedláčková studies two books in particular: Frank

Westerman's *Dier, bovendier* (2010, English title: *Brother Mendel's Perfect Horse*, 2012) and Yvonne Kroonenberg's *Alleen de knor wordt niet gebruikt: Biografie van een varken* (2009, literally translated as: Everything but the squeal is used. Biography of a pig). In Westerman's book, the history of the Lipizzaner horse forms the backdrop for reflections on the modern history of mankind, whilst Kroonenberg presents a realistic account of the conditions in which twelve million Dutch pigs live and die.

Together, these chapters present a solid answer to the question originally posed by John Berger: 'Why look at animals?' Textual representations, such as those in travel writing, discursively produce reality. When we look at how historical empires, travellers, and travel writers treated non-human life, we also address the question of how contemporary societies choose to live in the world today. By exposing the discourse on animals produced in and through travel literature, we open a space in which to think critically about alternative models for the world. It is precisely in literature that alternative discourses about animals can be created. The study of travel literature helps us to imagine what our future relationship to animals (both non-human animals and humans as animals) might look like.

Notes

- ¹ Uysal & Sirgy, *Quality of Life and Wellbeing Research in Tourism*, 244.
- ² Ten articles cover the economic, social, cultural, and environmental components of travel and tourism. www.unwto.org/global-code-of-ethics-for-tourism, last accessed 8 March 2022.
- ³ Reesink, 'Er is iets met de dieren...', 65; Markwell, *Birds, Beasts and Tourists*, 2.
- ⁴ Berger, 'Why Look at Animals?', 14-15. Through the years, Berger's text has been criticised in the field of animal studies as well, for instance by Steve Baker, who does not agree with Berger's distinction between 'lower' domesticated animals and 'wild' animals, and argues that his focus on the human experience of the animal gaze is in fact a form of anthropocentric reasoning. Baker, *Picturing the Beast*, 22.
- ⁵ Berger, 'Why look at Animals?', 17.
- ⁶ Burke & Copenhaver, 'Animals as People in Children's Literature', 207.
- ⁷ Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 1.
- ⁸ Leane, 'Animals', 305.
- ⁹ Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 22-23.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Van Oostrom, *Stemmen op schrift*, 185-194.
- ¹¹ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 40-42.
- ¹² Brems, *Altijd weer vogels die nesten beginnen*, 558.
- ¹³ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 1.
- ¹⁴ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 40-42.
- ¹⁵ centrefortravelwritingstudies.weebly.com, last accessed 24 February 2022.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Huigen, 'Reisliteratuur tussen representatie en identiteit'.
- ¹⁷ Martin, Missinne & Van Dam, *Travel Writing in Dutch and German, 1790-1930*.
- ¹⁸ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 2.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Porteman & Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen*, 419.

- ²⁰ Theme issue *Reizen in Indië*; Honings & Tomberge, *Op reis in Nederlands-Indië*.
- ²¹ Honings & Van Zonneveld, *Een tint van het Indische Oosten*.
- ²² Brems, 'Altijd weer vogels die nesten beginnen', 559: 'Ongetwijfeld hebben internationale voorbeelden een stimulerende rol gespeeld, zoals het Britse blad *Granta*, dat sinds 1979 met veel succes internationale literatuur, literaire non-fictie en reisliteratuur samenbracht, en het werk van auteurs als Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux en V.S. Naipaul.'
- ²³ Pettinger & Youngs, *The Routledge Research Companion to Travel Writing*.
- ²⁴ Leane, 'Animals', 305-317.
- ²⁵ Leane, 'Animals', 305.
- ²⁶ Marvin & McHugh, 'In It Together', 1.
- ²⁷ See for instance: Miller, 'Last Chance to See', 605-620.
- ²⁸ McHugh, McKay & Miller, *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, 539-620.
- ²⁹ Marvin & McHugh, 'In It Together', 1.
- ³⁰ Matsuoka & Sorenson, 'Introduction', p. 3.
- ³¹ Matsuoka & Sorenson, 'Introduction', p. 1.
- ³² Matsuoka & Sorenson, 'Introduction', 1-2.
- ³³ Leane, 'Animals', 306.
- ³⁴ Cf. Leane, 'Animals', 306.
- ³⁵ Leane, 'Animals', 305.
- ³⁶ Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 106.

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