

*Gemaakt op reis. Nederlandse jongeren op reis in de zeventiende eeuw* is de publieksversie van het proefschrift dat Alan Moss schreef met als titel *A traveller's identity in Dutch Grand Tour Accounts of the Seventeenth Century*. Hiervoor gebruikte de schrijver overigens dus wél de term 'Grand Tour'. Het is, gezien de academische oorsprong, niet verwonderlijk dat ook deze publieksversie zowel breed als diep van opzet is. Dat blijkt onder meer uit de omvang van het nawerk, dat maar liefst 160 pagina's telt. Voor de algemene lezer is het taalgebruik bij wijlen te specialistisch, wat het leesgemak niet altijd ten goede komt. De breedheid aan thema's, de diepgang en de vele goed gekozen citaten uit brieven en dagboeken die het verhaal illustreren, maken dit boek desondanks tot een bijzonder interessante verhandeling over het thema. Het verdient dan ook een passender en aantrekkelijker omslag en titel dan de voorliggende editie.

Janneke Budding, auteur historische non-fictie

Doris Jedamski and Rick Honings (eds), *Travelling the Dutch East Indies. Historical Perspectives and Literary Representations* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2023). 224 p. ISBN 9789464550450.

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Based on a panel at the International Congress of Asia Scholars, held in Leiden in 2019, Doris Jedamski and Rick Honings have put together this handsome volume with seven chapters examining colonial travel to and within the Dutch East Indies from a range of perspectives. The book is closely aligned, both in terms of themes and personnel, with the Leiden University-based research project *Voicing the Colony*, whose core team all contribute chapters. The publication has also been supported by Leiden University Libraries, and the institution certainly gets its moment in the spotlight, with the book richly illustrated throughout with photographs and prints, many in color, largely drawn from the library's extensive Asian collections.

As the subtitle suggests, the volume is divided into two parts, 'Historical Perspectives' and 'Literary Representations', reflecting the different backgrounds of the authors representing historical research and literary studies, respectively. Broadly speaking, this cleaving of the whole into two proves not be too distracting, as the majority of

the chapters inhabit the same world of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century colonial travel. The odd one out here is Erik Odegard's opening contribution, far removed from the rest in time as it analyses the preparations undertaken for the first Dutch voyage to 'the East' in the 1590s. The framing in Odegard's otherwise very interesting analysis also feels like it serves the purposes of a slightly different historiography, his interest being less in the experience of travel and more in the circulation of 'secret' intelligence about faraway places in early modern Europe.

Among the 'literary representations', Coen van 't Veer's chapter, analyzing depictions of the sea voyage to the Dutch East Indies in novels and short stories, also stands out as the only chapter to deal with explicitly fictional material. Whether or not a distinction between fact and fiction is of operative significance here is a matter of debate; but notably, Van 't Veer occasionally slips, almost as if accidentally, into presenting fictional characters' destinies as evidence, rather than as reflections, of historical tendencies. While justifiable, such bridging could have benefited from more sophisticated methodological discussion. Van 't Veer does, however, ground his analysis in impressively extensive source material (spanning almost a century) and helpful sketches of changing colonial policy over the period considered.

Although the collection thus exhibits some of the lack of cohesion that is often the hallmark of conference-based edited volumes like this, what ultimately brings the whole satisfactorily together is a broadly shared interest among the authors in the importance of infrastructure and technologies: the ocean liner is the focus of analysis for both Van 't Veer and Geke Burger, who analyzes onboard food cultures; Marc Dierikx provides a fascinating and informative discussion of the difficult early years of civil air travel to and within the Dutch East Indies; and Nick Tomberge, in the concluding chapter, examines the significance of the automobile in shaping author Louis Couperus's Indies travel feuilletons. Add in Judith E. Bosnak's study of Java's Great Post Road and Odegard's look at the very physical planning work that preceded a journey, and the materiality of colonial travel comes into focus very pleasingly from a fascinating range of perspectives.

One wonders if the introduction by Jedamski and Honings could not have done more with this confluence of topics, and it would have been intriguing to see more explicit dialogue between the individual chapters where their themes clearly overlap. For example, could Tomberge's insights into the aesthetic dimensions of motorized transport also be extended

to air travel, as discussed by Dierikx? Or how do the real experiences recorded in Javanese nobleman Suparta's shipboard travel diary, analyzed by Honings, relate to the fictional European accounts narrated in Van 't Veer's corpus? It is an unfortunate yet understandable consequence of the academic publication process that such internal interconnections can rarely be explored at length in a volume of this nature, so it remains a task for the reader to ponder and pursue those threads further. Hopefully they may also provide inspiration for future research.

To this reader, the most interesting and original contributions here are those by Rick Honings and Judith E. Bosnak, refreshingly looking beyond the European corpus and analyzing a handful of Javanese sources on colonial travel. These include, first and foremost, the striking travel account of the Javanese nobleman Purwalelana, recently translated into both Dutch and English. Bosnak, in particular, draws a highly impressive socio-cultural history of the Great Post Road as a site of not only travel but also of elite networking and societal reconfiguration, supported by a wide array of sources both Javanese and European, textual and pictorial. Honings, for his part, analyzes two travel accounts by Javanese noblemen and finds plausible traces of colonial counter-narratives but, more importantly, shows how difficult it can be to unpack pro- and anti-colonial motives in such elite narratives.

Theoretically, the chapters by Honings and Nick Tomberge draw heavily on Mary Louise Pratt's work on the ideological function of imperial travel writing. Other contributions, though less theory-based, share an interest in travel as a site where colonial hierarchies, especially ethnic ones, are enacted and reinforced. While this framing, appropriate as it is, is not exactly cutting-edge – Pratt's *Imperial Eyes* was first published in 1992 – Honings rightly points out in his chapter, the most programmatic of the volume, that such postcolonial perspectives have long remained rather neglected in the field of Dutch Studies. In perhaps the volume's most important intervention, Honings suggests that the lack of an extensive Dutch-language tradition of 'writing back' from the empire, such as exists in English and in French, has presented a problem – not for Indonesia with its rich and multilingual literary heritage, but for attempts at self-understanding and critical reflection within Dutch society itself. As a step in that crucial and long-overdue process of reckoning with an imperial past, *Travelling the Dutch East Indies* represents a very welcome addition to the literature.

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