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## Becoming a Beast in the Long Run

### Travelling Perpetrators and the Animal as Metaphor for Violence

*Arnoud Arps*

#### Abstract

In Dutch war-themed travelogues on the Indonesian War of Independence, representations of human and nonhuman animals are conflated through the animal as a dual metaphor for representing violence. On the one hand, the animal metaphor is used in describing the transformation of the Dutch from trained soldier to cold-blooded beast. On the other hand, it is used to describe Indonesian freedom fighters' violence as non-human which is considered to be the basis for the Dutch soldiers' transformation. Moreover, distance is created between the perpetrators as agents of violence and the violence they commit through the animal metaphor. The result is that both the 'animal Other' and the 'animal Self' act as post-colonial barriers to processing the perpetratorship of the Self.

**Keywords:** War-themed travelogues, Indonesian War of Independence, animal metaphors, violence, Othering

In war-themed travelogues on Dutch colonialism's violent end in Indonesia, the indigenous fauna of the country returns time and again in forms similar to those described by travelers in the Dutch East Indies. Carabao meat is, for example, a key ingredient in 'the best *rendang* in West Java' and 'caramelised and simmered with a mysterious blend of spices' to create a desirable dish for eaters from far and wide.<sup>1</sup> The animal as food also stands for warfare preparation, as barns stacked with fish indicate the presence of the enemy.<sup>2</sup> The animal is thus sustenance for the soldier, but in other instances is used to signal the hunger and running wild of the Indonesian people, who are ostensibly taught how to boil and roast rats to combat a hunger that has led to people dying beside the roads.<sup>3</sup> Horses are repeatedly used as means of transportation for the living as well as the dead, although elephants are preferred during one recovery mission of dead bodies.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, even though the material animal is encountered and described as food and transportation, it is much less important in these travelogues than the metaphorical animal: how they are meaningful to humans, disclosing an anthropocentrism in

the use of animals. As Barbara Creed and Maarten Reesink write, ‘contradiction lies at the heart of media representations of and responses to nonhuman animals and other creatures’, especially within anthropocentric discourse and particularly ‘the representation of human and nonhuman animals as totally separate entities’.<sup>5</sup> As I will illustrate in this chapter both are conflated through the animal as a metaphor for violence. Of particular importance is how animals symbolise the animal within humans in Dutch decolonisation literature.<sup>6</sup>

When Maarten Hidskes, the author of *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* (2016, At home, nobody believes me), imagines his father’s state of mind as a soldier during the war, he provides a brief insight into the mechanisms at work: ‘Superfluous bodily functions, such as memory and conscience, have been shut down, soldier number 220522000 functions exclusively mechanically. The decision centre is paralysed, animal instincts take over my father’s body.’<sup>7</sup> This description of how ‘animal instincts’ have taken over his father’s body is in reality an interpretation of his father’s writing, about which Hidskes continues: ‘The violent world my father finds himself in must be hidden in those letters.’<sup>8</sup> Since his father does not address this violent world directly himself, Hidskes creates an imagined world for him. In it, as the foregoing quote illustrates, the metaphor of the animal plays a central role.

The use of the animal metaphor is also striking in the opening sequence of *Merdeka!* (2016, Freedom!) by Jacob Vis. The protagonist of the novel, Jan Bax, is walking through the jungle of Celebes in 1948 when he smells the disgusting, all-pervading smell of decomposing bodies:

I pulled myself together, tied a handkerchief in front of my nose, breathed as lightly as possible and lifted a partly eaten forearm. I couldn’t find out who it belonged to. Nor did it matter. Nothing mattered to the three unfortunates anymore. They had been ambushed and killed in a beastly manner.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, as *Merdeka!* similarly underscores, there is a particular appetite, albeit to differing effect, for ascribing animal qualities to the violence of the Indonesian War of Independence.

During the Indonesian War of Independence, more than two hundred thousand Dutchmen, both volunteers and conscripts, fought in the war of independence.<sup>10</sup> The events of this violent struggle reverberate to this day, and these travelling perpetrators are represented in both fiction and non-fiction alike. Indeed, decades later, in 2015, there began a heated public debate about Dutch participation in the Indonesian War of Independence. News items and scholarly articles were continuously published on the matter, stressing not only the sensitivity of the Dutch colonial past, but also the urgent need to examine it critically. Especially in the light of the wealth of contemporary literature on the matter, this ongoing public debate



Picture of Raymond Westerling in 1948.  
Collection Wikipedia Commons.

calls for a critical reassessment of the colonial period more generally – its representation in past and present literature on the Dutch East Indies.<sup>11</sup> Scrutinising the relation between the literary arts and society is especially fruitful for mapping out the process via which the Netherlands is trying to come to terms with its colonial past. A literary work, by its very nature, creates an opportunity to understand how it is shaped by, and indeed shapes, this very reality through its

representations.<sup>12</sup> The reciprocal relation between sociocultural forces and literary texts offers a chance to understand the shared emotions, moods, and thoughts of the Dutch in the current post-colonial historical moment as given evidence in decolonial literature.<sup>13</sup>

The beginning of this period of critical reflection saw the publication of several books dealing with the violent end of the Dutch colonial presence in Indonesia. In July 2016, the Dutch author Maarten Hidskes published *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* (At home no one believes me), a book that he wrote on the basis of research conducted into his father's (Piet Hidskes) military past during the so-called 'South Celebes affair' (1946-1947). The second independence war-themed book of 2016 was *Merdeka!* (2016, Freedom!), which was published a month later. This latter fictional novel by Jacob Vis (1940) centres on a soldier, Jan Bax, who similarly joins Raymond Westerling's troops. As Indonesian resistance against the Dutch re-occupation grew in Southern Celebes (present day South Sulawesi), captain Raymond 'The Turk' Westerling (1919-1987) was sent there in 1946. He became known for the 'Westerling Method' – night-time raids that ended in summary executions. This arbitrary violence led to the killing of at least three thousand Indonesians.<sup>14</sup>

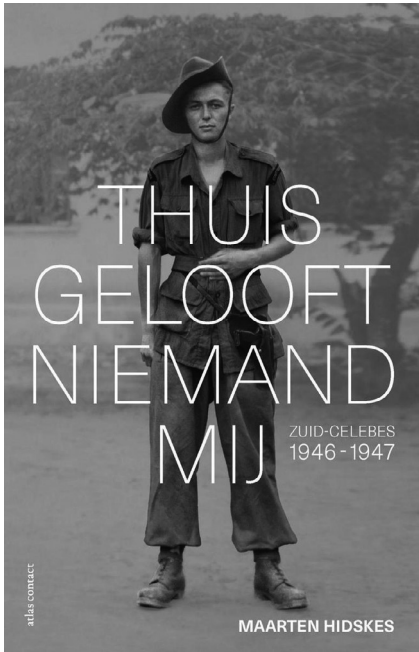
*Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* have been selected to act as case studies here because, in both works, the protagonists exemplify the centrality of travelling perpetrators to fighting that takes place beyond national borders. These war-themed travelogues, set during the Indonesian War of Independence, form part of the wider sphere of Dutch decolonisation literature.<sup>15</sup> Other notable publications within the genre are Alfred Birney's 2016 *De tolk van Java* (The interpreter of Java)

and Tomas Ross's *Indië-trilogie* (Dutch East Indies trilogy), published between 2015 and 2018. Together they form part of a broader cultural development that reflects how the Netherlands is currently processing its colonial past. In addition, the recurrent focus on animals gives insights into how the historical perpetration of violence, here in an Indonesian context, is processed in the postcolonial Netherlands through a barrier mechanism. Despite the fact that, in their descriptions of the war, neither book shies away from depicting its violence, a disjuncture is observable in their representations of violence – one that creates a safe distance from which this past can be addressed. The animal assumes a pivotal role in this.

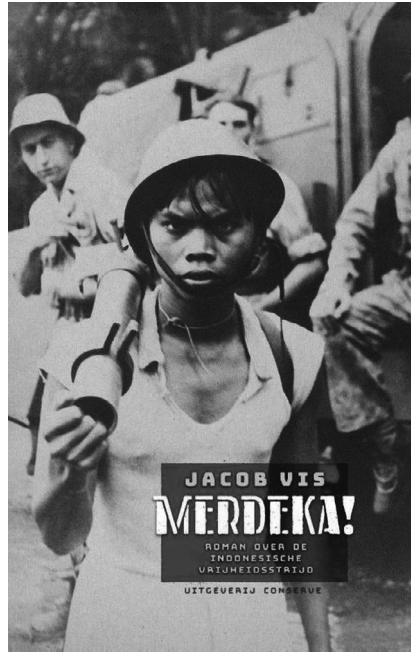
In postcolonial studies and travel writing studies alike, the animal has gained increased interest as an object of study. Postcolonial studies, for instance, deals with concerns over how humanity has been defined through the non-human: the animal and the animalistic.<sup>16</sup> Whilst, in travel writing studies, non-humans are often instrumental, for example as a means of transport.<sup>17</sup> This chapter adds to these analyses of the instrumentality of non-humans, here, in their use as metaphors. Such metaphors have a charged meaning in the context of the colonial past, as they can simultaneously legitimise colonial systems whilst masking the suffering of those over whom those systems preside.<sup>18</sup> The case studies chosen combine these different interests to answer the underlying question of this chapter: What roles do animal metaphors play in contemporary Dutch decolonisation travelogues?

This chapter thus analyses the roles played by animals in Dutch decolonisation literature written about soldiers who travelled from the Netherlands to Indonesia to fight during the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949). Over the course of the war, the protagonists of the books travel from island to island – a form of 'violent island hopping'. In their representations of these travels the violence committed and encountered is often metaphorically described as bestial. However, in my elaboration on animal metaphors I also take into account the appearance of actual animals in the books – such as deer-pigs, crocodiles, and dogs. In their metaphorical context, I will discuss them in conjunction with, and focus on, the broader animal metaphor as a whole. Analysing *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* from a perspective that draws upon postcolonial studies, animal studies, and perpetrator studies, I argue that, in Dutch decolonisation literature, the animal is used particularly as a dual metaphor for representing violence. On the one hand, it is used to describe the transformation of the Dutch, from trained soldiers to cold-blooded beasts, whilst on the other, it is used to describe the violence committed against the Dutch by Indonesian freedom fighters (Dutch soldiers have been 'killed in a beastly manner') that for many Dutch soldiers is described as forming the basis of their transformation.

I will first briefly discuss the contents and structure of both books and argue how they can be understood as part of the broader genre of travel writing. Subsequently, I propose that, similar to the distance created through colonial



Front cover of Maarten Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* (2016). Private collection.



Front cover of Jacob Vis *Merdeka!* (2016). Private collection.

‘Othering’, distance is created between the European perpetrators as agents and the violence they commit through the metaphor of the animal. However, unlike in colonial literature, animal traits are here attributed to European soldiers to indicate a transformation. This differs from the representation of Indonesian soldiers, as I will show, as the violence of the Indonesian enemy is described as inherently non-human in the same way as the native ‘Other’ is metaphorically represented as animal-like in colonial literature. The result, I conclude, is that both the animal ‘Other’ and the ‘animal Self’ act as post-colonial barriers to processing violent acts perpetrated by the human Self.

### The two books

*Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* are not traditionally considered travel writing as they are neither based fully on ‘true accounts of actual travels’, nor are they first-person travel accounts ‘undertaken by the author-narrator’.<sup>19</sup> Even so, Tim Youngs has recognised the mutability of this definition and the ‘borrowing’ of

literary form that occurs between fiction and travel texts.<sup>20</sup> As I focus on metaphors – which are themselves perceptual constructions that ‘carry meaning across, to unfamiliar and unlikely contexts’<sup>21</sup> – questions of verisimilitude are less important to this chapter than precisely how ‘manipulation and [the] invention of detail’ are central to the imagined travels and those represented in them.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, in this chapter I follow Jan Borm’s broader notion of travel writing as ‘a collective term for a variety of texts both fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel’.<sup>23</sup> In both *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* travel is essential to the power dynamics and representations they convey, thus constituting travel as (one of) their main themes.

Before becoming an author, Maarten Hidskes worked as an editor in chief and researcher for several Dutch television programmes. *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* was his literary debut, written sporadically over a period of twenty-five years. His father had travelled to multiple islands of the Indonesian Archipelago during his military service. Banka, Bali, Java, Sulawesi, Sumatra, Sumbawa, and New-Guinea, his father used to recall, albeit never specifying what he had done there.<sup>24</sup> Rather, always being wary when asked about his activities in Indonesia, in these enumerations Celebes was ‘stripped of the “South” prefix, and, moreover, safely embedded in an image of *island hopping*’.<sup>25</sup> Thus never directly connected to the war violence of the euphemised ‘South Celebes affair’. Although Hidskes’ father had a three-year military career in Indonesia, the period of twelve weeks in which he joined Raymond Westerling’s Depot Speciale Troepen (Special Troops Depot) was the one that stood out. Hidskes tried to reconstruct his father’s war history on the basis of interviews with veterans, military intelligence reports, and eyewitness accounts. Hidskes has described the book as non-fiction, although, in reality, it is an amalgamation of historical research and fictional interpretations constructed into a narrative. It thus leans towards *postmemory fiction* – the way in which he imagines his father’s experiences are informed by his father’s own personal cultural traumas.<sup>26</sup>

*Thuis gelooft niemand mij* received mixed reviews, exemplified by Chris van der Heijden’s appraisal as one of ‘those books that constantly make you doubt between yes, no and well’.<sup>27</sup> In a different review, Maarten Reijnders concludes that Hidskes refrains from making easy judgements about the war, since ‘it was another time’.<sup>28</sup> Reijnders, sketching how he understands this dynamic, suggests that the Dutch soldiers operated in a terrorised society where they were cut into pieces if they fell into the hands of insurgents. He concludes by stating that the Dutch soldiers must have had traumatic experiences as they were young boys who were thrown in at the deep end without proper training.<sup>29</sup> Of roughly 220,000 troops active in the region between August 1945 and December 1949, about 160,000 were Dutch and 80,000 locals. Unlike – or in some cases, possibly in addition to – the situation that Reijnders sketches, the soldiers that were sent or travelled to Indonesia were not simply juvenile victims

or bystanders. Rather, as earlier research has proven, war crimes perpetrated by the Dutch became a structural element of warfare during the independence war – a subject about which many soldiers wrote in later ego documents.<sup>30</sup>

It is strange that Reijnders arrives at this interpretation when Piet Hidskes, the main figure in *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, is clearly one of these perpetrators. He was one of the troops that used intimidation, violence, and terror in order to achieve what Westerling himself has called ‘the pacification of the Celebes with astonishing rapidity’.<sup>31</sup> A soldier who served with Piet Hidskes in Indonesia furthermore described him as always being the first to step up when volunteers were needed. During such jobs things happened of which they were not proud.<sup>32</sup> However, the ways in which the violence is represented in the book through use of the animal metaphor help us to understand how some readers might establish a detached reading of these events.

Just as in *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, the central protagonist of *Merdeka!* becomes part of the Depot Speciale Troepen. It is not surprising that Jacob Vis has set this novel during a pivotal moment in the Dutch colonial past, as he is known for thrillers that contain a historical element.<sup>33</sup> Vis has a familial past in the Dutch East Indies, about which he writes in the novels *Tandem* (2012) and *Moerta* (2013). The former follows Vis’ grandfather, the plantation owner Dirk Sanders, on his tobacco plantation Tandem in Deli, Sumatra, in the early twentieth century. *Moerta* is a historical novel about Vis’ grandmother, the Javanese doctor Moerta Tjondronego. *Merdeka!* can be considered the epilogue of this Dutch East Indies triptych. Unlike his novels *Tandem* and *Moerta*, no familial relation exists between the fictional protagonist Jan Bax and Jacob Vis and, unlike *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, this is an entirely fictionalised thriller.

Kester Freriks reviewed the book as ‘a brutal boys’ book’, written in an ‘unabashed style’ in which Vis ‘notes the trials and tribulations of Westerling’s elite corps’.<sup>34</sup> ‘It impresses’, Freriks states, ‘because it reflects the heat of battle and even makes clear that the soldiers, caught in the guerrilla trap, had nowhere to go. In a way, it even promotes understanding. Without saying so, Vis seems to be engaging in a polemic with a new trend: the accusation of war veterans.’<sup>35</sup> Freriks sees *Merdeka!* as a book that counters the so-called accusation of war veterans, yet this observation seems difficult to sustain as, in both *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!*, it is clear that the main protagonists have witnessed war crimes.

Jan Bax, the protagonist of *Merdeka!*, is a student who was born on Java and returns to Indonesia as a soldier. He eventually ends up with Raymond Westerling’s commandos on South Celebes, where he observes various atrocities. At one point in the novel he is given the assignment of investigating the ways in which the Depot Speciale Troepen has ‘restored peace in the insurrectionary part of Southern Celebes’.<sup>36</sup> The main goal of his assignment is to ascertain if war crimes have been



committed. Bax affirms that this is indeed the case, stating that the summary executions of civilians and soldiers; the torture of civilians and prisoners of war with the purpose of eliciting information from them; the rape of women and girls; the burning of homes; and the destruction of property have all taken place.<sup>37</sup> Both novels thus acknowledge war crimes, citing Westerling as the ringleader. The opening line of *Merdeka!*'s first chapter leaves nothing to the imagination: 'Every war has excesses. Hitler had the camps, Pol Pot the *killing fields*, we had Captain Westerling.'<sup>38</sup> Although Westerling is positioned in this sentence in the same framework as those responsible for the deaths of millions, his representation in the novel itself is much more ambiguous. The way in which he is represented can even be considered as a preeminent example of a Dutch East Indies celebrity figure. Westerling is depicted as an extraordinary man with unique personal qualities.<sup>39</sup>

In recent non-fiction decolonisation literature, a picture is painted of war crimes being fully acknowledged. Yet there seems to be a threshold preventing such books from entering into any dialogue about the colonial past. Instead of fully raising the curtain on the violent acts of the Dutch soldiers, the protagonists are enveloped in a shroud of ambiguity, and the first step in creating this ambiguity is how the individual is transformed from a trained soldier into a cold-blooded beast.

### From trained soldiers to cold-blooded beasts

The first use of the animal metaphor concerns the representation of European soldiers. As previously mentioned, in June 1946, Piet Hidskes, the protagonist of *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, volunteers for the elite unit Depot Speciale Troepen under the command of Raymond Westerling. Then, in his mid-twenties, he begins a six-month training programme, after which he is deployed to South Celebes. On 11 December 1946, at half past three in the morning, he is part of a platoon approaching a village called Bardja. On the southern edge of the village, they lie down and advance in a leopard crawl. In the book, the description of the raid is interspersed with various contextualising information, although at times the source of this information is not entirely clear. For instance, when Piet arrived on Celebes – as the book narrates in between descriptions of the night-time raid – he witnessed horrible events:

On arrival, Piet saw a woman who was seven months pregnant, whose head, arms and legs had been cut off and whose remaining body had been hung from a tree with a bamboo stick through the abdomen. Murdered by Indonesian *rampokkers* [gangs] because soldiers had rested at her home. The streets were full of corpses when he arrived in Celebes. Some had laid there for days. Nobody cleaned up those bodies.<sup>40</sup>

It remains unclear where the narrator has obtained this information. Therefore, it creates a strange interjection because it interrupts the unfolding horrors being committed by the Dutch soldiers, thus framing the raid as a legitimised counter measure to the observed horrors. When Maarten Hidskes interviews a former colleague of his father, Peter, he asks him if it could be possible that his father became nauseous after seeing someone cut into pieces. Peter answers that he once saw a whole village, whole families including women and children, massacred by the enemy. 'When you see that as a white man', he states, 'then you start to think differently'.<sup>41</sup> Here, 'thinking differently' is one of the manifold ways the veterans say that they changed during their period in Indonesia. However, to the question of changing into what precisely, Peter explains how he could witness the brutal killings: 'You are a beast in the long run. An outsider won't understand. When you see someone laying like that, your heart turns around. You are human, but you become a beast. I was really a beast there. That was what I was known for.'<sup>42</sup>

The transformative aspects of the events in South Celebes are underscored when Piet Hidskes returns to Jakarta three weeks later. His best friend, Harry, waits on the quay as part of an arrival committee that also includes a band. Harry boards the boat to welcome his friend on deck. On the boat, Harry takes a photograph of the band on the quay, yet he does not take a photo of Piet, as his friend unnoticeably 'radiates something almost animalistic'.<sup>43</sup> The end result of the beastly violence during the Indonesian War of Independence is the transformation into the animalistic of those involved.

The above stands in stark contrast to the book's description of Piet before he went to Indonesia. Growing up, Piet Hidskes was a 'simple boy in a simple world', described sitting in class with a tuft of hair that repeatedly popped up even though his mother had tried to flatten it with her spit. He was the second youngest in a family of seven children and came from the city of Nijmegen close to the German border. Every day he walked to school with his brother Rudi, with whom he also camped along the river Waal in summer.<sup>44</sup> During the Second World War – Piet was eighteen years old when it started – he worked in a Dutch margarine factory in Germany. His best friend Harry was rounded up and deported to Poland. After escaping, Harry crossed the German-Dutch border with the help of Piet. Maarten Hidskes writes the following about his father's journey into manhood:

I try to pinpoint where, during the years of occupation, my father is situated on the route from boyhood to manhood. His youth is not quite over yet, but the occupier does not wait until Piet is an adult to deport best friends and neighbours. On closer inspection, Piet's childhood was filled with war violence and expressions of power.<sup>45</sup>

In 1944, Piet signed up as a war volunteer in the Netherlands, 'hair blonde, eyes blue, rifle number 95719'.<sup>46</sup> However, shortly after his first battles against the Germans, the Third Reich ceased to exist. 'What to do with all this energy, all this adrenaline?'<sup>47</sup> Piet's best friend Harry clarifies: 'Everyone felt: Something had to be done in the Dutch East Indies. We had signed up for a fight against an occupier, but now that had fallen away. Our goal was extended without even being asked about it. The decision had already been made. And everyone agreed.'<sup>48</sup> In his letters to his family, Piet never mentions whether he has killed someone during the war, nor did he clarify this afterwards. Many of the veterans deny they ever did. Maarten Hidskes, both author and omniscient narrator of *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, does imagine his father in the midst of the battles.

During his second raid, Piet is on board a small and slow boat when it comes under fire from archers. 'With a salvo from his Sten gun, Piet probably fires at the shore; a woman is hit in the back, pieces of her bone marrow spatter away.'<sup>49</sup> The use here of 'probably' shows how the author does not fully commit to this interpretation and imagines it with a degree of reservation. This hesitancy can be ascribed to the familial bond, the father-son relation, and that between author and protagonist. As the author confesses, every attempt to discuss the war violence with his father would have failed and ended in superficiality, both because of unwillingness on his father's side, and also because of the author's careful questions: 'To protect him, because I loved him.'<sup>50</sup> The author is unwilling to condemn his father. This leads to a conclusion in which Piet Hidskes is described as someone who has lost much in the transformative period of the war: 'He has left school, he has left the Church, he has left his parental home. He doesn't have the words ready, this sympathetic tough dyslexic stuck boy. With the best of intentions, he was up to the ankles in blood and after that no one wanted to listen to the explanation.'<sup>51</sup> This is his transformation, from a simple boy in a simple world with good intentions, to someone who is later described by his best friend as a person with animalistic qualities who stood up to his ankles in blood. He is a man who returns broken, who did not have to travel on a military train because of his mental condition, as written in an official statement by the Military Neurosis Hospital in Austerlitz.<sup>52</sup>

Far from Piet's 'simple background', the fictional protagonist Jan Bax in *Merdeka!* grew up in colonial wealth in the Dutch East Indies. 'It was a childhood in Paradise, I have no other word for it', comments Bax.<sup>53</sup> Born on a sugar plantation outside of Bandung on 25 November 1924, just two years after Piet Hidskes, Bax lived there the first fifteen years of his life. Before their move to the Netherlands, his father worked as an administrator and his mother was a teacher. Unlike Piet Hidskes, he was not a volunteer, but a conscript who departed for Indonesia in 1946 as a radio operator. As the only one in his squadron fluent in both Malay and Javanese, he was increasingly used as an interpreter. A reluctant Bax joins the

army, because he would be seen as a traitor if he did not. His intention, therefore, was to not shoot anyone:

I wondered how I would be able to shoot people with whom I had played, been in school, played football and got into mischief. I could clearly bring to mind my classmates and the people at the plantation and the thought of facing them with a rifle was unpalatable. I made up my mind not to fire a shot, no matter what happened.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the novel, Bax witnesses the war crimes committed, but does not participate. When he refuses to aid in an execution, he is placed under arrest. However, as the novel proceeds, he gains the respect of the military because of his brave actions during battle. One of these actions forces him to diverge from his initial intention not to shoot anyone. When he and a colleague are attacked by people armed with knives and machetes, they empty their submachine guns, taking out half of their attackers. When they run out of ammunition, however, the attackers return fiercer than before. This violent situation forces them to turn into a 'two-headed monster': 'We were fighting with the *klewang* [bladed weapon], back-to-back like a two-headed monster against a tenfold majority. The fear of death gave us superhuman powers and once more we took out a number of opponents, but there were too many. Too many!'<sup>55</sup> The animal within is invoked again later in the novel when, during a reconnaissance mission, he needs to approach a camp of the Indonesian army within fifty meters. He is able to do so because he hides in the fast-growing young trees surrounding him, 'to a soldier and a predator, the young forest is a blessing, because it is so dense that you can hide invisibly and approach your prey within a few yards'.<sup>56</sup>

In *Merdeka!*, Bax is sometimes pushed to the limits of his humanity. Similarly, the soldiers in *Thuis geloof niemand mij* behave in a transgressive manner. In both books, initially, the Dutch soldiers were not beasts; rather, they became them. They are constantly 'negotiating the actual and metaphorical complexities of [the] species boundary'.<sup>57</sup> Violence, eventually, is what makes them cross this boundary. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin have argued, 'bad behaviour on the part of humans', such as murder, 'mark the outer limits of the human'.<sup>58</sup> Yet, the Dutch soldiers never truly cross the boundary, because 'the "real" basis has been exiled to the animal (the "beast")'.<sup>59</sup> It is in the form of the beast that they commit these acts of violence. Huggan and Tiffin show the mechanics of this in the context of human cannibalism. Replacing cannibalism with 'murder', however, lays bare the workings in Dutch decolonisation literature:

[Murder] turns people into 'animals' or 'beasts', but without jeopardising human distinctiveness since the deed has already been categorised as 'animal': humans can thus behave

*like* animals or beasts while at the same time the species boundary, with its operational distinction between animals and non-animals, is kept firmly in place.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the books, ‘the animal’ represents a way to be killed, dirt, swear words, betrayal, threats, danger, the monstrous, and murder. It is, therefore, unfavourable to be labelled ‘animal’: Animals are not only reduced to metaphors for humans, but specifically to the very edge of what it means to be human.

When actual animals are represented, they are always connected to death: a herd of *babirusas* (deer-pigs) is eating naked bodies; on many occasions people are threatened with being thrown to the crocodiles; whilst guard dogs can betray you when you try to sneak up on people.<sup>61</sup> The animal thus becomes ‘a sacrificial symbol of violence’ – a symbol of death, as it is through the animal that violence or even death arrives.<sup>62</sup> Human distinctiveness is affirmed in the case of the Dutch soldiers, because their initial ‘human’ background clearly differs from their ‘animal’ behaviour as soldiers. The negative metaphorical connotations of ‘the animal’ thus apply to their behaviour *like* animals, although they *are* not animals. This is different for the Indonesian freedom fighters, who are from the very beginning presented as bestial.



Photograph of executions of residents of an Indonesian kampong by soldiers of the Depot Special Troops in kampong Salomoni. Collection NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam.

### The violence of non-human freedom fighters

The previous paragraph has established that the metaphor of the animal functions as an end point of the transformation that Dutch soldiers undergo. However, as I will now illustrate, this is not the case for Indonesian soldiers, who retain their animalistic nature throughout their representations. As such, this exemplifies the use of animal metaphors in a colonial context. In colonial literature and politics, the native inhabitants of the colonised country are represented stereotypically and occupy a position subordinate to the European coloniser.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to Western society, they are seen as primitive, uninhibited, hedonistic, wild, uncivilised, and dumb.<sup>64</sup> Through a juxtaposition between a 'superior' Europe and 'lesser' colonised peoples, European individuality is defined.<sup>65</sup> This 'symbolic complex of the other' was so fundamental to colonisation that it became 'the keystone of colonialist ideology' – the comparing of native inhabitants to animals one of its key features.<sup>66</sup> In a postcolonial context, the meaning attributed to the former coloniser and the formerly colonised shifts.

Yet, in both *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!*, a form of 'Othering' can still be observed. Key in these texts is how the transformation that was the focus of attention in the previous paragraph has its roots in the violence of the Indonesian freedom fighters. When the native 'Other' was described as 'lesser' than Europeans in colonial literature, one of the ways this was achieved was by ascribing them the status of animals.<sup>67</sup>

In the context of cross-cultural travel such as the travelogue, this has implications for how the body – both human and animal – has been described. Travel writing is a corporeal literary genre, as the travelogue represents the body in motion. In the context of colonialism, this meant 'the travelling of the Western body and the bodies of the "travellees" encountered en route', where often these 'travellees' were denied their humanity.<sup>68</sup>

As in colonial Dutch East Indies literature, this can also be read in decolonisation literature where the metaphor of the animal is negatively utilised. Monkeys, for instance, are used to describe Indonesians: They are 'monkeys', 'half-monkeys', a 'monkey gang', use 'monkey language', and have 'monkey houses'.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, when a Chinese shopkeeper who informed the Indonesian army of Dutch military actions has been captured, Sergeant Van Pijkeren says: 'We have to decide what to do with this rat: hang it, shoot it or feed it to the crocodiles' – about which Bax gets to make the final decision.<sup>70</sup> Negative connotations are further typified in both books by the manner in which two of the Axis powers that fought against the Allies during the Second World War, Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan, are described as 'beasts' and animals.<sup>71</sup> In *Merdeka!*, Bax's family moves to the Netherlands after his father retires. Less than a year later, the Nazi German

occupation of the Netherlands occurs. Faced with the choice of remaining in the now occupied Netherlands or returning to the Dutch East Indies, Bax explains:

Going back was also not an option, because a year later the Japs overran the KNIL and all the Dutch were interned in camps that were admittedly less horrific than the German extermination camps and in which, if you kept a low profile, you would not be threatened with death day after day, but in which life was extremely unpleasant. And whether you were bitten by the dog or by the cat, as my father would say after the war: either way it hurts like hell.<sup>72</sup>

When, after the liberation of the Netherlands, the war for the Dutch moved from the European mainland to the overseas colonies, the colonial metaphors for the native inhabitants and those for the enemy folded into each other. When Jan Bax travels through the jungle in 1948, he encounters massacred Dutch soldiers. The sergeant-major accompanying him asks about their native inhabitant guide. After Bax tells him that he has run away, the sergeant responds: 'Cowardly dog ... You see, you can never trust those natives.'<sup>73</sup> The dog metaphor returns also in the description of the soldiers of the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Armed Forces).<sup>74</sup> In addition, the *pemoeda*'s (young revolutionaries) first sprout from the ground 'like mushrooms', after which they disappear 'like moles in the ground'.<sup>75</sup>

The veterans interviewed told Hidskes that Westerling was ultimately successful in countering the attacks from the Indonesians. Westerling radiated calm and control, and he was the right man in the right place, exemplified by a statement repeated by a veteran: 'If you chop off a piece of a snake's tail, that snake just crawls on. You have to cut the head off.'<sup>76</sup>

The animal traits ascribed to native society in colonial literature, in decolonisation literature translate into negative traits such as unreliability, cowardice, and the violence Indonesians commit. When Indonesian freedom fighters kill their enemy in the books, they slaughter them like animals: 'Twenty people were butchered like *carabaos* [water buffalos] and their bodies thrown in the river.'<sup>77</sup> Comparably, Dutch soldiers who had fallen in an ambush had been killed in a beastly manner.<sup>78</sup>

However, these metaphors do *not* signify a transformation. There is no similar development from human to animal, as described in the previous paragraph regarding Dutch soldiers. Although the animal metaphor does connect Indonesians to violence, just as natives and violence were connected in colonial literary traditions, a transformation such as those from a civilised European to someone who 'begins to equal a "native"' is absent.<sup>79</sup> Here no transformation takes place for the Indonesians.

What becomes clear is that the animal as a metaphor for violence has a double articulation: first, it shields the Dutch perpetrators from the violence they commit

as humans, because they have a history that affirms their humanity; and second, as the veteran Peter in *Thuis geloof niemand mij* underscores, the supposedly primal Indonesian violence is portrayed as the initial root for this transformation. Indonesians and Indonesian freedom fighters are often presented as behaving in an animal-like manner. The animal metaphor thus creates a distance between the agency of perpetrators and the violence they enact. This is particularly visible through the metaphor of ‘the beast’.

### Distance through the animal metaphor

The subordinate relation between the coloniser and the colonised in colonial literature in many instances created an unbridgeable difference between the two. In the decolonisation literature under scrutiny here, distance is still created between the European soldiers and their enemy ‘Other’. Strikingly, this is done by using the same metaphor to describe both the Dutch soldiers and the Indonesians: that of the bestial.

The discourse created when representing this violence as bestial roughly follows that of naturalised anthropocentrism: ‘The absolute prioritisation of one’s own species’ interests over those of the silenced majority.’<sup>80</sup> By considering ‘Others’ as animals, not only are they ‘excluded from the privileged ranks of the human’, but their killing is also considered non-criminal.<sup>81</sup> Within a postcolonial ecocritical context, this leads to the idea that ‘in assuming a natural prioritisation of humans and human interests over those of other species on earth, we are both generating and repeating the racist ideologies of imperialism on a planetary scale’.<sup>82</sup> As Huggin and Tiffin (2010) assert: ‘The effectiveness of this discourse of species is that “when applied to social others of whatever sort”, it relies upon “the taking for granted of the institution of speciesism; that is, upon the ethical acceptability of the systematic, institutionalised killing of non-human others”’.<sup>83</sup>

An underlying theme in *Merdeka!* is based on the childhood friendship between the main protagonist Jan Bax and Karim Kelong. The latter later becomes a captain in the Indonesian army. They meet several times during the war, helping each other with favours, and discussing the attacks committed on both sides. When Bax accuses two young Indonesian soldiers of being psychopaths, Kelong replies by asking: ‘What do you think of the guy who committed the beastly murder of Sarina’s father?’<sup>84</sup> Soon after, Kelong describes how he gave Engelbert, the successor to Bax’s father on the sugar plantation, and indeed his entire family, a ‘mercy shot’. The *pemoeda*’s, not much older than fourteen, arrived at the plantation. They raped, tortured, and murdered Engelbert’s wife and daughters. Engelbert himself was bound to a tree and used as a living target. Kelong tells an angered Bax that he



put the family out of their misery: 'That murder was a turning point for me. I intend to do what is possible to prevent these events of beastliness in my area.'<sup>85</sup> Kelong then appeals to Bax's conscience when he says that all the pair of them can do is to try to avoid beastliness on both sides, for example by correctly treating prisoners of war.<sup>86</sup> Bax replies by saying: 'Karim, we are not animals. Needless to say, these people have received care.'<sup>87</sup> Beastly slaughters return throughout the novel, as they are described as occurring 'on both sides'.<sup>88</sup>

Towards the end of the novel, Bax evaluates his time in Indonesia and describes his most unhappy weeks there. He has counted more than three thousand deaths, of which at least twelve hundred were civilians on Celebes and Sumatra, especially in Djambi and Rengat. 'In that last town, we raged like animals', he explains.<sup>89</sup>

Despite using the bestial metaphor for both Dutch and Indonesian violence, the meaning of the term 'bestial' differs depending on the perpetrator. As Rashné Limki points out in the context of contemporary human rights, 'the perpetrator is approached as a transgressor against an established moral order'.<sup>90</sup> She argues that in the case of violence perpetrated against subaltern bodies, the violence forms part of a long history of killing – one in which 'rationality flows from the description of the subaltern as expendable'.<sup>91</sup> Subaltern lives are similarly expendable in decolonisation literature as acts of violence against the Indonesian subjects 'are a repetition of killing as *constitutive* of the moral order'.<sup>92</sup> Yet, as the previous paragraphs have illustrated, the use of bestial violence by and against the Dutch does not function as a framework for *their* expendability. The reason for this is that the history of being killed – taking place through centuries of colonialism – does not apply to them as they are, in a temporal sense, quite literally an extension of the former coloniser.

An animal 'Other' is thus created to encompass Indonesians. Where the Dutch have both a 'human Self' (the one before the war) and an 'animal Self' (the one during the war), the Indonesian lack this pre-existing humanity. In this way, discursively, a post-colonial barrier is constructed behind which the acts perpetrated by the Dutch remain safely distanced.

## Conclusion

Whether postcolonial writers are actually able to subvert the colonial genre of travel writing has been subject to debate, particularly in the context of travel writing and the environment.<sup>93</sup> Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argue that an emphasis on the human and social change remain characteristic of the postcolonial novel 'at a time when ideas of the human are increasingly being challenged, and where the place of human beings within a broader, ecological network of relations is now widely

accepted if not always adequately informed'.<sup>94</sup> The post-colonial authors of the war-themed travelogues *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* seem unable to go beyond the emphasis on the human within broader networks of relations. Despite the fact that animals return continuously in both books, they mainly function as metaphors for the human or as symbols of death. Yet, the non-human has always been important to how 'human societies have constructed themselves in relation to other societies, both human and non-human'.<sup>95</sup> In this process, humans 'have built barriers between themselves and the "others" they have effectively created as a means of defining their own identities and defining their social norms'.<sup>96</sup>

Philip Armstrong writes that human-animal relations have been central to the mission of modernity as both a resource for thought and knowledge, and the expansionism of modern cultures.<sup>97</sup> Part of Armstrong's focus is 'the relationship between human-animal narratives and the social practices and conditions from which they emerge'.<sup>98</sup> In the context of the postcolonial Netherlands, these practices and conditions are embedded in a contested memory culture of the colonial past, showing the emergence of an anthropomorphic discourse in which the animal metaphor is used as a barrier.

In colonial literature, these barriers were often created by equating native inhabitants with nature and animals. For the postcolonial books analysed here, the animal metaphor is a way to process the past and represents an artificial barrier. The question of agency comes to mind here, which is a problematic issue for postcolonial studies because, even if 'Others' are able to speak, 'their speech is often pre-positioned so as not to be heard by those in power'.<sup>99</sup> As an animal 'Other', the Indonesian freedom fighters, like animals, are not seen as independent actors and thus they do not have agency: They are neither human nor non-human.

Analysing *Thuis gelooft niemand mij* and *Merdeka!* from a theoretical angle drawn from postcolonial studies, animal studies, and perpetrator studies, I have specifically focused on how the animal metaphor is utilised in both texts. The chapter examined the context in which the animal returned and to what effect. Although different in their structure, the books have been analysed alongside one another in order to create a comprehensive analysis. From the outset, both books have laid bare the horrors of the Indonesian War of Independence, including its extreme violence and war crimes. However, neither succeeded in overcoming a prioritisation of the human over the animal. This in turn prevented the books from having a transnational perspective on the war.

The perpetration of violent acts, the central theme throughout both books, employs a distanced approach. Dutch perpetrators are represented as having both human and animal qualities, whereas only the latter is reserved for the Indonesian fighters. This leads to a transformation from Dutch trained soldiers to war-time beasts, whereas the Indonesians function as non-human fighters. This difference

also creates a distance between the violence perpetrated and the possibility of victimhood. It is the difference between being solely the animal ‘Other’, and being a ‘human Self’ with a destructive ‘animal Self’.

For the Dutch soldiers, the ‘animal Self’ can take the blame for violence – a narrative within which good intentions can even find a place. Such is the affordance of a fictional travelogue over a conservative view of travel writing as ‘factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator’.<sup>100</sup> This is made particularly clear in the epilogue of *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, where Maarten Hidskes fabricates a conversation which his father could have had with him. This results in a reflexive moment in which a sense of remorse, reparation, and arguably even justification of his father’s deeds are constructed. As Piet Hidskes tells in this fictional conversation, good intentions have made space for bad ones, but crucially, it is an act of transformation that has led to this. After all, he used to be someone else:

Yes boy, I have once shot someone, more than once even; yes, even in situations that had nothing to do with fighting, but felt more like retaliation; yes, I started this job with the best of intentions and in the beginning, I did not feel guilty about anything at all, even though it did feel amiss [...] Killing becomes easier when you first change clothes and paint your face. And yes: I was someone else before I allowed my voluntariness to turn into compulsion [...] In this country, I have become someone else, because here I have seen how good intentions can become ill-intent.<sup>101</sup>

### Notes

\* This chapter contains graphic descriptions of acts of violence that some may find upsetting. All English translations of periods, terms, and citations have been made by the author unless otherwise specified.

<sup>1</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 231: ‘We zaten in de eettent van Mama Dee, waar je de beste *rendang* at van West-Java. Het karbouwen vlees was gecarameliseerd en met een geheimzinnige mix van kruiden gestoofd tot een gerecht dat eters van heinde en ver aantrok.’

<sup>2</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 181-182.

<sup>5</sup> Creed & Reesink, ‘Animals, Images, Anthropocentrism’, 97-98.

<sup>6</sup> Reesink, ‘*Er is iets met de dieren...*’, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 68: ‘Overbodige lichaamsfuncties, zoals geheugen en geweten, zijn stilgelegd, soldaat nummer 220522000 functioneert uitsluitend mechanisch. Het beslissingscentrum is lamgelegd, dierlijke instincten nemen mijn vaders lichaam over.’

<sup>8</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 68: ‘De gewelddadige wereld waarin mijn vader zich bevindt moet in die brieven verstopt zitten.’

- <sup>9</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 7: 'Ik vermande me, bond ook een zakdoek voor mijn neus, haalde zo licht mogelijk adem en tilde een aangevreten onderarm op. Van wie hij geweest was kon ik met geen mogelijkheid meer achterhalen. Het was ook niet van belang. Niets was meer van belang voor de drie ongelukki- gen. Ze waren in een hinderlaag gelopen en op een beestachtige manier afgemaakt.'
- <sup>10</sup> Oostindie, Hoogenboom & Verwey, 'The Decolonization War in Indonesia', 255.
- <sup>11</sup> Honings, Van 't Veer & Bel, *De postkoloniale spiegel*, 12.
- <sup>12</sup> Honings, Van 't Veer & Bel, *De postkoloniale spiegel*, 12-14.
- <sup>13</sup> Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, 4.
- <sup>14</sup> Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, 275.
- <sup>15</sup> As war-themed travelogues, their predominant focus lies on the experience of violence during the travels, unlike, for example, the very different focus of picturesque travelogues.
- <sup>16</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 5.
- <sup>17</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 4; Leane, 'Animals', 310-313.
- <sup>18</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 21.
- <sup>19</sup> Hulme & Youngs, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, 31; Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 3-4.
- <sup>21</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 15.
- <sup>22</sup> Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 3-4.
- <sup>23</sup> Borm, 'Defining Travel', 13.
- <sup>24</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 14.
- <sup>25</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 14: 'In deze opsommingen was Celebes ontdaand van het voorvoegsel 'Zuid' en bovendien veilig ingebed in een beeld van *island hopping*.'
- <sup>26</sup> Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.
- <sup>27</sup> Van der Heijden, 'Dit loopt niet goed af'.
- <sup>28</sup> Reijnders, 'Thuis gelooft niemand mij. Het Nederlandse My Lai'.
- <sup>29</sup> Reijnders, 'Thuis gelooft niemand mij: Het Nederlandse My Lai'.
- <sup>30</sup> Oostindie, Hoogenboom & Verwey, 'The Decolonization War in Indonesia', 255-256.
- <sup>31</sup> Westerling, *Challenge to Terror*, chapter XVIII.
- <sup>32</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 27.
- <sup>33</sup> His debut novel *Prins Desi* (1987), for instance, is set during the Surinamese civil war with key actors Desi Bouterse and Ronnie Brunswijk.
- <sup>34</sup> Freriks, 'Een vuile oorlog'.
- <sup>35</sup> Freriks, 'Een vuile oorlog'.
- <sup>36</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 162: 'de rust herstelde in het opstandige deel van Zuid-Celebes'.
- <sup>37</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 162.
- <sup>38</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 12: 'Elke oorlog kent excessen. Hitler had de kampen, Pol Pot de *killing fields*, wij hadden kapitein Westerling.'
- <sup>39</sup> Arps, 'Een omstreten koloniale beroemdheid', 463.
- <sup>40</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 20: 'Bij aankomst heeft Piet een zeven maanden zwangere vrouw gezien, van wie hoofd, armen en benen waren afgehakt en wier resterende lichaam met een bamboestok door de buik aan een boom was opgehangen. Vermoord door Indonesisch rampokkers omdat soldaten bij haar huis hadden gerust. De straten lagen vol lijken toen hij op Celebes aankwam. Sommige lagen er al dagen. Niemand ruimde die lichamen op.'
- <sup>41</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 69: 'Als je dat ziet als blanke man dan ga je ander denken.'

- <sup>42</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 69: 'Je bent een beest op den duur. Een buitenstaander kan het niet begrijpen. Als je iemand zo ziet liggen, dan draait je hart om. Je bent een mens, maar je wordt een beest. Ik was echt een beest daar. Daar stond ik om bekend.'
- <sup>43</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 131: 'Ongemerkt straalt die namelijk iets bijna dierlijks uit.'
- <sup>44</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 33.
- <sup>45</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 35: 'Ik probeer scherp te krijgen waar, in de bezettingsjaren, mijn vader zich bevindt op de route van jongen naar man. Zijn jeugd was nog helemaal niet voorbij, maar de bezetter wacht niet met boezemvrienden en buurjongens deporteren tot Piet volwassen is. Piets jeugd zat, bij nader inzien, vol met oorlogsgeweld en machtsuitingen.'
- <sup>46</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 36: 'Haar blond, ogen blauw, geweernummer 95719.'
- <sup>47</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 36: 'Wat te doen met alle energie, alle adrenaline?'
- <sup>48</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 36: 'Iedereen voelde, er móét iets in Indië gebeuren. Wij hadden ons aangemeld voor een gevecht tegen een bezetter, maar die viel nu weg. Ons doel werd verlegd, zonder dat ons daarvoor ook maar iets gevraagd was.'
- <sup>49</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 32: 'Met een salvo uit zijn stengun vuurt Piet waarschijnlijk naar de oever; er wordt een vrouw in haar rug geraakt, stukken van haar ruggenmerg spatten weg.'
- <sup>50</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 147: 'Om hem te beschermen, omdat ik van hem hield.'
- <sup>51</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 135: 'Hij heeft de school verlaten, hij heeft de Kerk verlaten, hij heeft zijn ouderlijk huis verlaten. Hij heeft de woorden niet paraat, deze sympathieke stoere dyslectische vastgelopen jongen. Met de beste bedoelingen stond hij tot de enkels in het bloed en daarna wilde niemand meer naar de uitleg luisteren.'
- <sup>52</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 135.
- <sup>53</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 15: 'Het was een jeugd in het Paradijs, ik heb er geen ander woord voor.'
- <sup>54</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 20: 'Ik vroeg me af hoe ik zou kunnen schieten op mensen met wie ik had gespeeld, op school gezeten, gevoetbald en kattenkwaad uitgehaald. Mijn klasgenoten en de mensen van de onderneming stonden me helder voor de geest en de gedachte dat ik met het geweer tegenover hen zou komen te staan was onverteerbaar. Ik nam me voor geen schot te lossen, wat er ook gebeurde.'
- <sup>55</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 10: 'We vochten met de klewang, rug aan rug als een tweekoppig monster tegen een tienvoudige overmacht. De doodsnood gaf ons bovenmenselijke krachten en weer schakelden we een aantal tegenstanders uit, maar ze waren met te veel. Te veel!'
- <sup>56</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 204: 'Maar voor een soldaat en een roofdier is dat jonge bos een zegen, want het is zo dicht dat je onzichtbaar kunt schuilen en je prooi tot een paar meter kunt benaderen.'
- <sup>57</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 173.
- <sup>58</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 172-173.
- <sup>59</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 173.
- <sup>60</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 173.
- <sup>61</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 143; Vis, *Merdeka!*, 7, 27, 35, 62, 63, 126, 251, 291.
- <sup>62</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 189-190.
- <sup>63</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 75-76.
- <sup>64</sup> Van 't Veer, 'De duivel hale dat door en door in weelde en luiheid opgegroeide volk', 23.
- <sup>65</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 75-76.
- <sup>66</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 75-76.
- <sup>67</sup> Boehmer, *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature*, 76.
- <sup>68</sup> Forsdick, 'Body', 22-23.
- <sup>69</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 21, 52, 65, 67, 146, 174.
- <sup>70</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 126: 'We moeten besluiten wat we met deze rat gaan doen: ophangen, doodschieten of aan de krokodillen voeren.'

- <sup>71</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 144.
- <sup>72</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 16: ‘Teruggaan was ook geen optie, want weer een jaar later liepen de Jappen het KNIL onder de voet en werden alle Nederlanders geïnterneerd in kampen die weliswaar minder gruwelijk waren dan de Duitse vernietigingskampen en waarin je, als je je gedeisd hield, niet dagelijks met de dood werd bedreigd, maar waarin het leven uiterst onaangenaam was. En of je nu door de hond of door de kat gebeten werd, zoals mijn pa na de oorlog zei: in beide gevallen deed het verdomd pijn.’
- <sup>73</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 8: “Laffe hond”, gromde hij. “Je ziet, je kunt die inlanders nooit vertrouwen.”
- <sup>74</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 124.
- <sup>75</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 29, 95.
- <sup>76</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 42: ‘Als je van een slang een stukje van de staart afhakt, kruipt die slang gewoon verder. Je moet de kop eraf hakken.’
- <sup>77</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 28: ‘Waar in Tolo twintig mensen werden afgeslacht als karbouwen en hun lijken daarna in de rivier werden geworpen.’
- <sup>78</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 7
- <sup>79</sup> Honings, ‘Kampong Smells’, 10.
- <sup>80</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 5.
- <sup>81</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 5.
- <sup>82</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 6.
- <sup>83</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 6.
- <sup>84</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 111: ‘Wat denk je van de kerel die de beestachtige moord op de vader van Sarina pleegde?’
- <sup>85</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 114: ‘Die moord was voor mij een keerpunt. Ik heb me voorgenomen te doen wat mogelijk is om deze beestachtigheden in mijn regio te voorkomen.’
- <sup>86</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 115.
- <sup>87</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 115: ‘Karim, we zijn geen beesten. Natuurlijk hebben die mensen verzorging gekregen.’
- <sup>88</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 252: ‘Van weerskanten vonden beestachtige slachtpartijen plaats.’
- <sup>89</sup> Vis, *Merdeka!*, 265: ‘In dat laatste stadje zijn we als beesten tekeer gegaan.’
- <sup>90</sup> Limki, ‘Notes on the Subaltern’, 182.
- <sup>91</sup> Limki, ‘Notes on the Subaltern’, 182.
- <sup>92</sup> Limki, ‘Notes on the Subaltern’, 182.
- <sup>93</sup> Didur, ‘Walk This Way’, 33.
- <sup>94</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 214.
- <sup>95</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 214.
- <sup>96</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 214.
- <sup>97</sup> Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, 1.
- <sup>98</sup> Armstrong, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity*, 2.
- <sup>99</sup> Huggan & Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, 191.
- <sup>100</sup> Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 3-4.
- <sup>101</sup> Hidskes, *Thuis gelooft niemand mij*, 146-147: ‘Ja, jongen, ik heb wel eens iemand doodgeschoten, ja, meer dan eens zelfs; ja ook in situaties die niets met vechten te maken hadden, maar meer als vergelding aanvoelden; ja, ik ben aan deze klus begonnen met de beste bedoelingen en ik heb me in het begin helemaal nergens schuldig over gevoeld, ook al voelde het niet zo fris; [...] Doden wordt makkelijker als je je eerst verkleedt en je gezicht beschildert. En ja: ik was iemand anders voordat ik toeliet dat mijn vrijwilligheid omsloeg in dwang. [...] In dit land ben ik iemand anders geworden, want hier heb ik gezien hoe onfris goede bedoelingen kunnen uitpakken.’

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