

The multifaceted life and career of the German naturalist, administrator, and traveler Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn (1809-1864) offers fertile ground for analyses of the relationship between knowledge production and Dutch colonialism in the mid-nineteenth century. Born in the Prussian Mansfeld, situated at the southern rim of the Harz, Junghuhn was socialized in a family with close ties to the region's mining industry. It is therefore not surprising that Junghuhn, like the Prussian naturalist and mining official Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), developed an early interest in studying and investigating wild nature. The region's many caves and tunnels, where one could find cryptogams, especially attracted his attention. After his subsequent studies of botany and medicine in Halle and Berlin, which, owing to an unfortunate duel with a Swiss student, he never finished, Junghuhn departed on an adventurous career as foreign legionnaire in Algeria and physician, traveler, botanist, geologist, writer, map maker, colonial surveyor, and quinine expert in the Netherlands Indies.

Sternagel narrates Junghuhn's career chronologically. After two chapters on his early years in Europe, she provides a detailed reconstruction of Junghuhn's fieldwork in Java and Sumatra. The final chapters focus on Junghuhn's return to Europe and his second stay in Java. Sternagel, who is by training a literary scholar and historian, bases her narrative on a wide array of sources. She draws on Junghuhn's numerous publications as well as archival material collected in Germany, Jakarta, and the Netherlands. The Junghuhn collection of Hans van der Kemp (who passed away in 2005) at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) in Leiden turned out to be a particularly valuable source. In order to illustrate her account, Sternagel also included various reproductions of lithographs, maps, photographs, and portraits which are related to Junghuhn and his work.

However, the fact that Sternagel's monograph targets a wider audience has various implications. First, Sternagel neglects to weave her account into a wider debate in the field of science and empire studies.¹ In particular, Marie Louise Pratt's study (2008) of similar travelers in South America and South Africa would have helped to develop a more critical perspective on Junghuhn. Also, by putting too much analytical emphasis on Junghuhn's subjective experiences, Sternagel fails to historicize her 'hero' adequately. Instead of carefully situating Junghuhn's career in spatial and intellectual contexts which would have shed more light on the complexities of knowledge accumulation in Java and Sumatra, she tends to idealize Junghuhn as a forgotten travelling naturalist (*Naturforscher*) who, similar to Von Humboldt, dared to investigate wild and unknown nature and societies. By placing the historical actor Junghuhn almost exclusively at the center of the narrative stage, readers of Sternagel's monograph are only presented fragments of the intellectual, social, and mate-

¹ For a recent historiographical overview, see Hodge 2011.

rial infrastructure which provided the crucial basis for his fieldwork in the Netherlands Indies. For instance, Junghuhn's survey of Java's volcanoes and the Batak region in Sumatra would have hardly been possible without drawing upon a wide array of local materials, helpers, expertise, and skills. Nineteenth century naturalists like Junghuhn and Von Humboldt tended to erase such agency in their subsequently published accounts written for Europe's growing reading public. Instead of praising Junghuhn as a travelling 'hero', it would have been a fascinating endeavor to say more about the general economic, social, intellectual, and political climate and networks which made 'heroes' such as Junghuhn possible. In her study on Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), Jane Camerini (1996) has shown what we might gain from such an approach. Leaving this criticism aside, Sternagel's monograph provides a well-written and coherent overview of Junghuhn's life and work which might serve as a solid platform for further research on Junghuhn.

References

- Camerini, Jane R.
1996 'Wallace in the field', *Osiris* 11:44-65.
- Hodge, Joseph M.
2011 'Science and empire: An overview of the historical scholarship', in: Brett M. Bennett and Joseph M. Hodge (eds), *Science and empire: Knowledge and networks of science across the British Empire, 1800-1979*, pp. 3-29. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. [Britain and the World.]
- Pratt, Mary Louise
2008 *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation*. Second edition. New York: Routledge. [First edition 1992.]

Wynn Wilcox (ed.), *Vietnam and the West: New approaches*. Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 2010, viii + 210 pp. ISBN 9780877277521. Price: USD 23.95 (paperback).

HANS HÄGERDAL
Linnaeus University
hans.hagerdal@lnu.se

Nine scholars from North American universities explore Vietnamese relations with the West in this volume, which grew out of a 2005 conference. The focus is on history in a broad sense of the word, but the contributors have vari-