



## **‘Entzückend schöne Gegend’**

### **Dutch Travel Writing ‘Langs den Rijn’ [Along the Rhine] around the midst of the nineteenth century**

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**Abstract:** In the aftermath of the ‘Rheinromantik’, roughly speaking the period between 1840 and 1860, travelling ‘along the Rhine’ was a quite popular travel destination for Dutch travellers. Many of them wrote about their journey in diaries, letters, travelogues or even fictional texts. I will focus on the particularities of travel texts by (mainly) Dutch authors, and explore how these authors dealt with the problem that on the one hand their writing covered experiences already widely known and described, and on the other hand they aspired after a personal, original, sometimes literary expression for it. The difference between factual and fictional, between non-literary and literary texts is difficult to discern. The narrative modes typical of the travel guide genre intermingle with devices that strive for a romantic, subjective and literary expression.

**Keywords:** travel literature/reisliteratuur; Rheinromantik/Rijnromantiek; travel diaries/reisdagboeken; fictional travel writing/fictionele reisliteratuur; tourist gaze/toeristische blik

For travelling as well as for travel writing, the nineteenth century was a time of great change. Especially after 1830, when train and steam boats made travel faster, cheaper and more comfortable, possibilities to travel within Europe came within reach of the less well-off. The democratization of travelling and the appearance of middle-class tourists involved 'a fear of the loss of special privilege and exclusive experience'<sup>1</sup> and introduced a dichotomy between the 'tourist' as the vulgar, dilettante traveler and the 'real traveler', who sought ways to distinguish herself from the travelling masses. In the travel literature of this period, we also perceive how a generic divide was introduced between the objective, informative 'guidebooks' (the *Baedekers* und *Murrays*) and the more personal and subjective travel accounts, the impressionistic and romantic 'travel books' or 'travel sketches'.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, I will focus on the particularities of travel texts by (mainly) Dutch authors, who made the then quite popular trip 'along the Rhine' around the midst of the nineteenth century - roughly speaking between 1840 and 1860, the aftermath of the *Rheinromantik*. For decades the Rhine region had been the paragon of a romantic landscape, since it had all that was needed to evoke romantic feelings of rapture or agony: a stately river with charming valleys and lovely vineyards, ominous views with deep gorges and castle ruins, and an inexhaustible reservoir of folk tales and legends. In no way was the Middle Rhine Valley, which is now 'Unesco World Heritage', one of those 'secret precincts 'off the beaten track' through which real 'sensitive travellers' sought distinction.<sup>3</sup> Yet it is my aim to look at these texts from the perspective of the aforementioned processes of differentiation in travel and travel writing. I will explore how these authors dealt with the fact that their writing covered experiences already widely known and described, while they aspired a personal, original, sometimes literary expression of it: '[t]ravel writing is nothing if not an attempt to capture [...] [the personal] impressions before they are extinguished.'<sup>4</sup> The mid-nineteenth century had created a 'self-conscious exhaustion of the genre', writers were 'displaced [...] by the burden of prior travel writing, the completeness of which pre-empts or forecloses the possibility of original description.'<sup>5</sup> In the case of published travelogues a double functioning of the text might have further complicated this problem. Published travelogues did not merely function as a report *after* travel, but also as a *preparation* before, sharing knowledge with their readers and future travellers.

<sup>1</sup> T. Youngs, (ed.), *Travel Writing in the Nineteenth-Century: Filling in the Blank Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2006), p. 58. See also: J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track. European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture', 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); I. Kiefer, *Reisepublizistik und Ent-Privilegierung des Reisens im 19. Jahrhundert, aufgezeigt am Beispiel Baedeker*, unpublished PhD thesis, Salzburg: Univ. Salzburg (1989); S. Müller, *Die Welt des Baedeker. Eine Medienkulturgeschichte des Reiseführers 1830-1945* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 2012); H. Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts. Geschichte, Umfeld und Vielfalt einer Literaturgattung* (Keulen, Univ. Keulen, 1990 (PhD)); T. Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: University Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Buzard, *The Beaten Track*, p. 61. See also A. Baggerman and R. Dekker, 'Changing Places, Shifting Narratives: Nineteenth-Century Dutch Travellers in Germany', in: A.M. Martin, L. Missinne and B. van Dam (eds.), *Travel Writing in Dutch and German, 1790-1930. Modernity, Regionality, Mobility*. (New York/London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 159-181, and Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>3</sup> Buzard, *Beaten Track*, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> C. Broome Saunders (ed.), *Women, Travel Writing, and Truth*. (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> E. Savoy, 'The subverted Gaze: Hawthorne, Howells, James and the Discourse of Travel', in: *Canadian Review of American Studies* 21.3 (1990), pp. 287-300, here 292, cited in Broome Saunders (ed.), *Women*, p. 74.

It is common sense to consider travel writing as ‘a sub-species of memoir’,<sup>6</sup> but crucial aspects of the personal experience of travelling itself – the ‘autobiographical dimension’ – and of the subjective articulation of it, do not always get full attention.<sup>7</sup> By reading travel narratives as personal, autobiographical texts, I will focus on the following three points, that are mutually interrelated:

(1) Tensions between ‘objective information’ (facts) and ‘personal truth’ and their representation modes: Which plain obligatory tourist information is provided in the text? Which travel guide clichés can be found and what (other) kind of (personal) information is eventually conveyed?

(2) The self-presentation of the traveller-narrator and the way he tries to involve the reader cognitively and emotionally. How does he claim distinction from the plain tourist, without offending his readers?<sup>8</sup>

(3) Thirdly, I will discuss what Barbara Korte calls the ‘temporality’ of travel writing.<sup>9</sup> This includes both time experiences as theme (‘objective’ and ‘subjective time’, ‘social time’, reflexive comments on the time experienced and the means of transport, selectivity due to temporal constraints, etc.) and temporality on the discourse level, structuring the narrative (‘order’, ‘narrative tempo’, ‘narrative tense’, distance between the experience and the writing about it, etc.).<sup>10</sup> Many travelogues have or partly take the structure of a diary, a journal or a logbook, in which precise indications of the traveled time play an important part.

My corpus consists of nine texts,<sup>11</sup> which stem from different subgenres, but is just a minute fraction of what has been written on Rhine voyages in the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> After 1750 Germany had replaced France as a favorite travel destination of Dutch travellers, a development

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<sup>6</sup> P. Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> I do not want to focus here on the genre issue: what is travel literature or where does it overlap with or is different from memoir or ‘autobiography’. Both genres share many characteristics, be it only that both have been considered the lower fringes of literature for a long time.

<sup>8</sup> In the description of the tourist one often finds the remark that abroad, the tourist is ‘the relentless representative of home’ (Buzard, *Beaten Track*, p. 8).

<sup>9</sup> B. Korte, ‘Chrono-Types: Notes on Forms of Time in the Travelogue’ in: J. Zilcosky (ed.). *Writing Travel: The Poetics and Politics of the Modern Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 26. Thus, one could speak of the ‘Temporality of the Travelled World’ and ‘the Temporality of Travel Writing’ (Korte, Chrono-Types, p. 28; 32).

<sup>10</sup> This temporal structuring can be looked at in connection with spatial patterns, such as Ottmar Ette’s ‘Grundfiguren reiseliterarischer Bewegung’ (‘circle’, ‘pendulum’, ‘line’, ‘star’ and ‘jump’), in: O. Ette, *Literature on the Move* (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2003, pp. 17-50).

<sup>11</sup> See p. 32. list of primary literature.

<sup>12</sup> Müller (*Welt des Baedeker*, p. 81) mentions the collection by Michael Schmitt consisting of 283 illustrated Rhine descriptions from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. A search in the ‘Repertorium van egodocumenten van Noord-Nederlanders uit de negentiende eeuw’, listing almost 5.000 titles of printed ego documents between 1813 and 1914, resulted in 163 hits with the search term ‘geographical destination: Germany’. See <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/egodocumenten> [accessed 24 October 2017].

that even increased after 1780. Especially the *Kurort Cleef* [health resort Cleef] was a very popular travel destination for the Dutch (although by 1830 it was out of vogue).<sup>13</sup>

The first group of texts which remained unpublished at that moment, concerns the notes for a travel diary from 1827 by John Bake,<sup>14</sup> a university professor for Classical Literature in Leiden and a friend of Jacob Geel, and a diary by François HaverSchmidt (well-known under his pseudonym Piet Paaltjens) about a journey through Belgium and along the Rhine. A second group of texts contains travel notes or travel recollections by Dutch clergymen: *Opmerkingen op eene reis langs den Rijn* (1847) by the socially active pastor Ottho Heldring from Gelderland; a *Reisboeksken* (1861) by the so-called preacher-poet ('dominee-dichter') J.J.L. Ten Kate, who was strongly influenced by Heldring, and *Verhaal eener reis door een gedeelte van Duitschland langs de Rijn met aanwijzing om in korten tijd voor weinig geld veel te zien* by Antonie Willem Meurs (1857) [unidentified], published for the benefit of the 'Evangelisch christelijke Vrouwen-Vereniging te Kampen en Alkmaar' [Evangelical Christian Women Association]. Thirdly, I discuss two publications from the literary journal *De Gids*, which I would call 'literary essays': a short text by the well-known Dutch catholic author Alberdingk Thijm, entitled 'Angela en La Badoni. Rhijnherinnering' (1849) and a peculiar text by one of the editors of *De Gids*, Potgieter, published in that same journal: 'Een dag te Kleef'. The latter is a critical review of an anonymous travel book followed by a long counter-exemplum by the author himself. The fourth and last category contains two fictional narratives. The first is the novel *Reisontmoetingen van Joachim Polsbroekerwoud en zijne vrienden*, which offers a Dickensian satirical portrait of tourism. It is written by Vlerk (pseudonym of Bernard Gewin), a theology student and friend of Nicolaas Beets/Hildebrand.<sup>15</sup> The second book is *Rijnlandsche novellen* by the only Flemish author in this group of texts, i.e. Tony Bergmann, who is also often referred to as 'the Flemish Hildebrand'.

## (1) Personal Truth & Factual Information

Although we might expect quite some intimate information in the diaries, we hardly get to know Bake and HaverSchmidt, the authors of our two samples. Bake wrote down many notes on practical matters, thereby giving favourable and critical comments on people and places. His most personal outpouring is about the pleasure he takes in writing his diary: 'and came home by 10 o'clock to write and to resume our delight'.<sup>16</sup> HaverSchmidt announces that he will write down a short report on his journey 'less to make myself immortal with future offspring, as to prevent the memory of what we saw and enjoyed in foreign countries from dying before we are dead ourselves.'<sup>17</sup> He too hardly commits any personal impression to paper and gives a rather factual

<sup>13</sup> A. Baggerman and R. Dekker, 'Changing Places', p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> Bake was used to taking down notes during his journeys. The University Library of Leiden possesses three of his travel journals (Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur*, p. 122).

<sup>15</sup> On this book, see R. van de Schoor and F. de Hartog, 'Mocking the Mob of Middle-Class Tourists: Dutch Nineteenth-Century Novels Competing with Travel Guides' in: *Journal of Dutch Literature* 8.1 (2017), pp. 1-22.

<sup>16</sup> 'en kwamen tegen 10 uur thuis om te schrijven en ons genot te hernieuwen' (Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur*, p. 312).

<sup>17</sup> 'minder om [...] mijzelven onsterfelijk te maken bij onze toekomstige nakomelingen, als wel om te verhinderen, dat de herinnering aan wat wij zagen en genoten in den vreemde ons afsterve voordat wij zelve gestorven zijn.' (HaverSchmidt, 'Reis door België', p. 1).

and enumerative account. He ends his report on a laconic note: ‘That was the end of this famous journey, that brought me a lot of pleasure, cost me 240 guilder and taught me some things. At least I hope so.’<sup>18</sup>

More autobiographical outpourings are found in the travel account of Ottho Heldring. This pastor and representative of the conservative *Reveil* [religious revival] Movement undertook a Rhine trip for medical reasons. He had been advised to take a treatment with cold baths in Boppard, a perfect opportunity – so Heldring thought – to get acquainted with German people and the Rhine nature and to see how religious life was doing in Germany. Heldring could not write down any favourable impressions in his ‘letters’ home. He hardly saw anything but destruction, unbelief, usury, extravagancy, coming from this [= German] infernal temple and idolatry, but he felt obliged to tell the truth, as much as he could.<sup>19</sup> To convince his readers of his sincerity and of the truth of his missionary narrative, he spoke openly about himself, about his descent, and explained how he had written his letters under the lively impression of the moment itself, since every other depiction could but lack the *truth* of the instantaneous impression.<sup>20</sup>

Heldring will not have been very much concerned if his description of the ruins on the isle of Nonnenwerth well fitted the information in the Baedeker guide, but other travel writers, like Ten Kate, who wrote *Langs den Rijn* both as a personal account and as a guide for other travellers, were. That was also the case with Meurs, who hoped that many would use his travel book as a guide and profit from his useful hints to see a lot for little money in a short time – as is evident from the place-name register in his book. Travel writing by literary authors often displays a hybrid character. These texts are a sort of blend texts, half travel guide, half personal report, a hybridity that we find displayed e.g. in the subtitle of Ten Kate’s *Langs den Rhijn*, which sounds like *Rhijn-herinneringen. – Rhijnlegenden. – Rhijnliederen*. This book shifts from an ironic style on the first twenty pages to rather dull and impersonal travel guide prose in the rest of the book.

This blended character – partly travel guide and partly personal travel report – manifests itself in many different ways. Most of the texts that I have presented here contain what Dean MacCannell calls ‘markers’, small text pieces from travel brochures that help us to recognize a described monument or a place as something worth seeing.<sup>21</sup> They sound like an inserted paragraph of Baedeker prose, and can be easily identified in a text, e.g. when Meurs informs the reader about the population of Bonn, ‘well over 16.000, not including the 900 students studying

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Aldus was het einde van deze beroemde reis, waarop ik een boel plezier gehad, 240 gulden verteerd en ook iets geleerd heb. Dit laatste hoop ik althans.’ (HaverSchmidt, ‘Reis door België’, p. 91).

<sup>19</sup> ‘Helaas! reeds openbaart zich naar alle zijden de verwoesting, die uit dezen schrikkelijken tempel en afgodsdienst moet voortkomen. Doch genoeg — gij ziet hoe het hier toegaat. Het is alles geheel anders, dan gij het u misschien voorgesteld hebt. Maar daarom schreef ik ook mijne brieven, ten einde, zooveel ik kon de waarheid te verkondigen. Ik weet, het zal menig een’ gaan, zoo als het mij hier ging: hij zal met mij leeren, dat het dan toch nog oneindig beter in ons Land is.’ (Heldring, *Opmerkingen*, p. 278).

<sup>20</sup> ‘zoo als ik haar [mijne reis, L.M.] beschreef onder de levendige indrukken des oogebliks in brieven. Elke andere voorstelling mist de waarheid van den oogenblikkelijken indruk’ (Heldring, *Opmerkingen*, p. 4). Potgieter was (in this corpus) the only writer who explicitly presented himself as a spokesman of romantic poetics. In his criticism on the anonymous Rhine hiker Potgieter took a typical romantic position and pleaded for the rendering of personal, subjective impressions as the only way out, ‘off the beaten path’.

<sup>21</sup> MacCannell, D., *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), quoted in Verhoeven, G., ‘Vaut le voyage!? Nieuwe tendensen in het historisch onderzoek naar toerisme (1750-1950)’, in: *Stadsgeschiedenis* 4.1 (2009), p. 68.

at the High School', and tells him about the many factories due to the favorable position of the city along the Rhine, where the traces of Roman culture can easily be found.<sup>22</sup> But a travel guide blueprint can also occur more subtly, as an implicit subtext, e.g. through the selection of what is described and what is not. A striking example is the recurrent one-sentence observation that the Rhine landscape is not interesting nor beautiful until past Bonn (or Köln).<sup>23</sup> It is a remark that one presumes originating from a travel guide. In fact it already dates back to the beginning of the German *Rheinromantik* with Friedrich Schlegel, who wrote in his *Briefe auf einer Reise durch die Niederlande, Rheingegenden, die Schweiz und einen Teil von Frankreich* (1804):<sup>24</sup> 'Bei dem freundlichen Bonn fängt die eigentlich schöne Rheingegend an.' [Close to the friendly Bonn the real beautiful Rhine scene begins] The rest of Schlegel's description sounds very familiar too.

The way that typical tourist information is being treated in literary fictional texts is the most interesting case. Here the writer has the possibility to let his fictional characters spout their historical and geographical knowledge, as the I-narrator in Bergmann's novellas does. Thus authors can give critical or humorous comments through their characters.<sup>25</sup> When the host Birnbaum (in the hotel *Zum Schwalbe*) does not want to take up the travellers in Bergmann's first novella, the I-protagonist ostentatiously takes out his Baedeker and deletes the passage 'Birnbaum, hôte aimable et attentif'<sup>26</sup> [Birnbaum, friendly and obliging host]. The narrator in Vlerk's novel, who admits that 'for some people travelling looks a bit like a roundabout geography class',<sup>27</sup> continuously mocks at tourist attitudes or ridicules tourist information although he often inserts it in the text by means of *paraleipsis*. Thus, the whole novel becomes a parody on the travel guide genre itself.<sup>28</sup>

From this I conclude a paradoxical attitude with these authors, who on the one hand in different ways dissociate from the 'tourist gaze' (John Urry), and on the other hand dare not

<sup>22</sup> Meurs, *Verhaal eener reis*, p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> Ten Kate even starts his memory with the following not further identified quotation: 'Tot Keulen heeft de Rhijn niets schilderachtigs' [Up till Köln the Rhine has nothing picturesque] (Ten Kate, *Langs den Rijn*, p. 3). Thijm writes: 'Men kan in ieder reisboek lezen en van elken toerist vernemen, dat de Rijn te Bonn eigenlijk eerst zienswaardig begint te worden.' [In every travel book and from every tourist one can learn that the Rhine only gets worth seeing from Bonn onwards] (Thijm, 'Angela', p. 358); HaverSchmidt: 'tot hij [de Rijn] bij Bonn weêr meer eenvoudig en bijna eentoonig begint te worden' [until near Bonn he starts to become more and more plane and almost dull] (HaverSchmidt, 'Reis door België', p. 74).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Müller, *Welt des Baedeker*, p. 83. The next lines by Schlegel are identifiable in many travel accounts as well: 'Von da [Koblenz] bis St. Goar und Bingen wird das Tal immer enger, die Felsen schroffer, und die Gegend wilder; und hier ist der Rhein am schönsten' [From there on [Koblenz] until St. Goar and Bingen the valley gets narrower and narrower, the rocks steeper, and the scenery wilder; and here the Rhine is at its best].

<sup>25</sup> Comments are of course also found in non-literary and non-fictional travel accounts: Ten Kate finds that Düsseldorf looks more like a 'Stadt der Kazernen' [city of barracks] with the long rows of stiff ashen buildings, rather than a city of gardens (see Ten Kate, 'Langs den Rhijn', p. 4).

<sup>26</sup> Bergmann, *Rijnlandsche Novellen*, p. 15.

<sup>27</sup> 'Voor sommige menschen is reizen eene eenigzins omslagtige geographie-les. Ik bedoel hier de zoodanigen, die men altijd met eene *Guide des Voyageurs* in de eene, en eene landkaart in de andere hand aantreft.' (Vlerk, *Reisontmoetingen*, Ch. 6).

<sup>28</sup> See Van de Schoor and De Hartog, 'Mocking the Mob'. Tourists are even compared to the 'Flagellantes van de 13de eeuw, die zich ook vrijwillig en in 't openbaar teisterden en kastijdden.' [thirteenth-century flagellants, that voluntarily let themselves be scourged and castigated in public] (Vlerk, *Reisontmoetingen*, Ch.6).

completely leave out this tourist information, be it because they assume with their readership the expectation to be instructed, be it because they can't resist the temptation to show off their erudition. This brings me to the second point.

## (2) Self-presentation

The 'tourist' as a human species – widely spread at that time – was well known to Dutch travellers around the midst of the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Some of the nineteenth-century authors themselves have commented on the changed travel conditions and the affordability of travelling for the middle class, like Meurs and Potgieter<sup>30</sup>, either as a welcome social acquisition or with regret for the loss of an exquisite experience.

A problem they all have to deal with is the fact that it has become almost impossible to tell anything new about a trip to the Middle Rhine. The topos of modesty found in the introduction of several texts is a good illustration of this.<sup>31</sup> Ten Kate starts with such a modesty topos: 'This little book [*Rhijnboekskten*] on the Rhine does not ask more than a humble place [*plaatsjen*] in the travelling case.'<sup>32</sup> As we saw with Heldring the modesty topos can also support the claim of authenticity: 'I gave the letters, as they flew from the pen, inartificial, unembellished, simple.'<sup>33</sup> Thijm, in turn, seeks for compensation for the impossibility of being original: 'I will, on the occasions of my first journey on a steam boat not give a description of a steam boat for the hundred and second time', whereupon he gives a self-citation from a personal letter to a friend.<sup>34</sup>

This example already shows how the travel narrator/writer constructs his self-image in relationship to his reader. In that regard, addressing the reader directly is a common technique

<sup>29</sup> See J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990) on the 'romantic' and the 'collective tourist gaze', with the first one bearing an emphasis 'upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze' (p. 46).

<sup>30</sup> [...] Was het [reizen] voorheen een voorregt, uitsluitend voor rijken en veel vermogenden: thans ook kunnen de minder gegoeden mede dat voorregt genieten, voor weinige kosten zich ontspannen en de schoonheden der natuur in Gods 'wijde schepping bewonderen.' [...] While travelling previously was a privilege of the rich and wealthy, now also the less well-to-do can enjoy that privilege, relax at little expense and admire the beauties of nature in God's wide Creation] (Meurs, *Verhaal eener reis*, pp. 1-2). Potgieter comments on how the health resort Kleef, a very stylish destination in the first half of the nineteenth century got out of fashion around 1840, and from then on welcomes many travellers, situated a few steps lower on the social ladder, who think they have been in Germany if they've just crossed the border. ('zijn er velen, hen, die eenige sporten lager geplaatst op den ladder der beschaving, beweert men, op dien der fortuin zouden wij er willen bijvoegen, zich verbeelden door zulk een stappen over de grenzen in Duitschland, te zijn geweest, ...' (Potgieter, 'Een dag te Kleef', p. 372).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Schott, *Niederländische Reiseberichte*, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup> 'Dit Rhijnboekskten vraagt niets dan een nederig plaatsjen in de reistasch. Het is niet bestemd om de nuttige diensten der Baedekers overtollig te maken, maar wel bedoeld als reisgids voor de lezer: Men zou het des noods met wit papier mogen doorschieten, om het met eigene „souvenirs et impressions” aan te vullen en te verbeteren.' [This little Rhinebook does not require more than a modest place in the travel suit. It is not meant to make the useful Baedeker unnecessary, but it is meant as a travel guide to the reader. One should even be allowed to interleaf it with white pages, as to complete and correct it with own 'souvenirs and impressions'] (Ten Kate, 'Aan den lezer' [To the Reader], *Langs den Rhijn*, V).

<sup>33</sup> 'Ik gaf de Brieven, zoo als zij uit mijne pen vloeiden, kunsteloos, onopgesierd, eenvoudig.' (Heldring, *Opmerkingen*, p. IV).

<sup>34</sup> 'Ik zal u, ter gelegenheid van mijne eerste stoombootreis, niet voor den honderdentweeden maal de stoomboot schetsen' (Thijm, 'Angela', p. 359).

in popular travel genres, as, for example, in Heldring's travel letters or in those travel memories meant for publication, like those by Ten Kate. At a certain point, Ten Kate even addresses the reader as an imaginary fellow traveller: 'But you've already jumped after me, in the impatient wagon that is just about to start its morning ride.'<sup>35</sup> Vlerk and Bergmann, too, often address the reader directly in a way that was common in nineteenth-century prose.

### (3) Temporality of Travel Writing

The development of new forms of transportation, especially the steamship and the railway, is a topic that was often commented upon. The main question here is whether the preferred means of travelling was the steamship or the train, which of the two was quicker and which offered most advantages.<sup>36</sup> Thijm enjoyed the Rhine delight, this Eldorado of all citizens of Holland, although he admitted that it would particularly please those who were old-fashioned enough not to have glided along all the railways of Europe. Generally, it was agreed upon that for a Rhine journey, the slow travel by boat was better than a rail journey, although the preferences of some were special. Bake, for example, liked the boat trip because it caused less dust and he thought it untrue that steamboats travel too fast for enjoying different points of view.<sup>37</sup> Heldring spoke highly of the train, because it could bring the family fathers much quicker home after work and prevent them from spending their earnings in the pub.<sup>38</sup>

But, as mentioned before, the temporality of a Rhine journey also influenced the narrative discourse, especially on a structural level.<sup>39</sup> Most accounts follow the Rhine trip upstream, similar to the descriptions in many travel guides. A problem that arose with this linear structure, which at first sight looks quite straightforward, was: What to do with the return voyage? Some texts tell nothing about the trip back and just end with the arrival in (mostly) Mainz or Mannheim. Sometimes it is explicitly mentioned that a few descriptions will be skipped so that they can be inserted in the narrative about the trip back (Heldring).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> 'Maar, gij zijt mij reeds nagesprongen, in den ongeduldigen waggon, die op het punt staat zijn morgenrit te beginnen.' (Ten Kate, *Langs den Rhijn*, p. 10).

<sup>36</sup> 'Het nieuw genot, dat mij hier ten deel viel, het Rijn-genot, proprement dit, Eldorado van alle Hollandsche burgers, die nog ouderwetsch genoeg zijn, om voor hun twintigste jaar al de spoorliniën van Europa niet te hebben langs gevlogen – die zoo vaak beschreven scenery, waargenomen uit het stoomschip [...] – dit alles bleef niet beneden de verwachting, die ik er mij van gevormd had.' (Thijm, 'Angela', p. 358).

<sup>37</sup> 'de stoomboot heeft dit voor dat men geen stof heeft' (Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur*, p. 300) – 'het is niet waar dat de stoomboot te snel vaart voor het genot der verschillende gezichtspunten' (Schott, *Niederländische Reiseliteratur*, p. 315).

<sup>38</sup> 'omdat dan de huisvader vaak op vele uren afstands, waar veel werk is, zijn brood verdienen kan, en toch 's morgens uitgaan en 's avonds te huis kan komen, en zijn geld niet in herbergen behoeft te verteren' (Heldring, *Opmerkingen*, p. 14).

<sup>39</sup> See also Van de Schoor and De Hartog: 'A boat, be it a steamship or a towboat ['trekschuit'], is also a perfect narrative device for introducing and observing characters as they engage in tedious conversations meant to kill time ['schuitempraatjes']. Passengers are confronted with social situations that they could easily avoid on shore. Some people, the narrator assures us, are only fit to meet on board a steamship, in a carriage or in some other public place.' (2017, p. 14).

<sup>40</sup> Potgieter explicitly comments in his review that the historical information should be inserted at different places in the text and not be saved up till the end.



Interestingly, Thijm in 'Angela en La Badoni. Rhijnherinnering' explicitly mentions the problem of the linear constraint of the journey. His story is a romanticized recollection of a trip, in which he contrasts two romantic female figures: the pure innocent child Angela, not spoiled by any culture or education, who guides them to the Drachenfels, and the Madonna-like Italian guide, La Baroni, whom they have met in Mainz. That Thijm takes these two romantic figures as the main theme of his story becomes evident from the title, in which 'Rhijnherinnering' is put in the second place, while the names of the women come first. Yet, once passed Bonn, where they had met Angela, Thijm regrets first having to go through Koblenz in order to arrive in Mainz, since it would have fitted much better into his story to bring out the contrast between the childlike Angela and the learned and elegant Badoni, who guided them along the monuments of Mainz. However, one cannot travel from Bonn to Mainz without passing Koblenz, the narrator regrets and he eventually decides to force his story into the chronotopical straightjacket.<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

The travel accounts discussed here, which belong to different subgenres of travel writing, show that in different ways – through the relation between personal expression and factual information, self-presentation and the temporality of the narrative – we can trace some continuity. It is hard to discern fictional from factual and literary from non-literary texts. Factual tourist information and descriptions of cities, monuments and landscapes on the one hand, and attempts at a subjective, original or literary articulation of private experiences on the other, can be found in different kinds of texts. In other words, the subgenres do not contrast but constitute a grading scale. The texts display traces of narrative modes typical of the travel guide genre (Baedeker-type), of the ironic-romantic tradition and of lyrical descriptions, although straightforward appeals for a romantic, subjective expression can be heard too. Literary fictional travel texts around 1840 -1860 take distance from the straightforward display of factual touristic information by critical comments, irony, dramatization through the fictional characters, etc., but still stick to a certain amount of touristic information and let the structure of the travelled journey constrain the narrative. Dutch travel writing in the midst of the nineteenth century thus displays the same mixture and diversity as travel practice itself.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> 'Hoe gaarne bracht ik bij het beeldtjen, hierboven geschetst, bij wijze van wedergade en kontrast eene figuur aan, die ons drie dagen later in Maintz te gemoet kwam; maar men gaat van Bonn naar Maintz niet dan over Koblontz, en het is wellicht, ter voorbereiding en aankondiging van de tweede individualiteit, aan het hoofd dezer bladzijde uit mijn reisboek genoemd, ook aesthetiesch niet ondienstig, dat ik met u den Godesberg afwandel, Angela voor een oogeblik vaarwel zeg,' (Thijm, 'Angela', p. 358).

<sup>42</sup> A.M. Martin, L. Missinne and B. van Dam, *Travel Writing*, p. 3.

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