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Arne Koch (Waterville)

## Transnational Zoographies

### Colonial Goods, Taxidermy, and Other Repercussions

Wer sich [über Säugetiere] ausführlich belehren will, findet Hand- und Lehrbücher genug, welche ihn in verständlicher oder dunkler Weise mehr berichten können, als er vielleicht selbst wünscht. *Unser* Zweck ist, das Leben des Leibes und der Seele, das Leben des ganzen Thieres kennen zu lernen [...].<sup>1</sup>

Any careful discussion of the history and popularization of science and knowledge in Germany would simply be incomplete without considering the larger than life persona of Alfred Edmund Brehm (1829-1884). Without too much exaggeration, the name Brehm is perhaps among the most recognizable in modern German culture. A household name still today, the majority of scholars in the far reaches of German Studies will to some extent be aware of at least a handful of Brehm's accomplishments. If not on account of Brehm's undertakings as ornithologist, cultural geographer, or as director of the Hamburg Zoo before Carl Hagenbeck's reign, scholars' familiarity with Brehm will as a minimum stem from the opus magnum forever linked to his family name: *Brehms Illustriertes Thierleben*. In its various colorful reincarnations, this thirteen-volume zoological encyclopedia has been listed, ever since its original six-volume edition in 1864, among the most widely read and popularized texts of its kind in Germany and beyond. Affecting in various ways not only future cohorts of zoologists and educators (among them Heinrich Dathe and Bernhard Grzimek) but also literary luminaries, including Alfred Döblin, Gerhart Hauptmann, Franz Kafka, and Paul Celan, Brehm's influence on the popular and cultural imagination of entire generations has actually been compared by some to that of his contemporary Karl Marx.<sup>2</sup> Despite general agreement that *Brehms Thierleben* can no longer be

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1 Alfred E. Brehm. "Ein Blick auf das Leben der Gesamtheit". *Brehms Thierleben. Zweite umgearbeitete und vermehrte Auflage. Kolorirte Ausgabe*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1884. 7.

2 See Andreas Schulze. "*Belebrung und Unterhaltung*". *Brehms Tierleben im Spannungsfeld von Empirie und Fiktion*. Munich: Utz, 2009. 29ff. Here: 41, 48, 40.

regarded as a scientifically appropriate study of animals, still today, for many readers, his masterpiece continues to serve as an educational and equally entertaining introduction to the greater *world* of animals.<sup>3</sup> Ongoing translation projects as well as a myriad of illustrated and digitized editions, lest one forgets a variety of special volumes focused on select animal groups, together highlight Brehm's enduring popularity. Roger Willemsen's 951-page 'selection' of animal tales from the *Thierleben* in 2006 or his subsequent, much shorter, twenty-page booklet for young readers (*Für die Kleinsten*) in 2008 may serve as two exemplary publications that continue to spark the interest of scholars and general audiences in Brehm's life work.<sup>4</sup> And while such a steady posthumous publication flood of Brehm's oeuvre has spurred a variety of inquiries into Brehm's monumental project – ranging from simplifying celebratory to discretely semiotic to far more insightful intercultural readings<sup>5</sup> – our critical attitudes require a far more careful consideration of the presence and function of what readers might today view as the deficiencies of Brehm's zoological practice or what some would define as non-scientific, even non-appropriate elements in Brehm's project.

As a study of zoological writings from the period between 1847 and 1864 in which Brehm's ethnographic, literary and zoographic penchants came together as interconnected, marketable tales for readers engaged in processes of constructing a sense of national and personal identities, this article

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Schulze also provides a useful biographical sketch for readers not familiar with Brehm (15ff.). See also Andreas W. Daum. *Wissenschaftspopularisierung im 19. Jahrhundert. Bürgerliche Kultur, naturwissenschaftliche Bildung und die deutsche Öffentlichkeit, 1848-1914*. Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998. 241.

- 3 This essay applies the traditional reference to non-human animals as 'animals' for the purpose of maneuvering more smoothly through complex issues in this discussion of Brehm.
- 4 *Die schönsten Tiergeschichten aus Brehms Tierleben*. Ed. Roger Willemsen/Klaus Ensikat. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2006; *Brehms Tierleben für die Kleinsten*. Ed. Roger Willemsen/Klaus Ensikat. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 2009.
- 5 See Hans-Dietrich Haemmerlein. *Der Sohn des Vogelpastors*. Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1985; Sebastian Schmideler. "Das Leben der Vögel (1861) – Zur Anthropomorphisierung bei Tiervater Alfred Brehm (1829-1884)". *Kodikas/Code. Ars Semeiotica* 28 (2005): 345-378; Sibylle Benninghoff-Lühl. "Das Reich der Tiere und ihr Interpret (zu Alfred Brehm)". *Mit Deutschland um die Welt. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Fremden in der Kolonialzeit*. Ed. Alexander Honold/Klaus R. Scherpe. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004. 36-40.

considers therefore initially the question by what means vastly different accounts could introduce provincial German readers to a 'scientific' view of the 'natural' and 'exotic' world of North Africa and other parts of the globe. Via comparison of Brehm's Africa expeditions from 1847 until 1852, published originally as *Reiseskizzen aus Nord-Ost Afrika* (1853; subsequently as *Brehms Reisen im Sudan. 1847 bis 1852*), with his *Ergebnisse einer Reise nach Habesch* (1863) and the *Illustriertes Thierleben*, this article probes just how ethnographers' and zoologists' adaptive borrowing from different popular and scientific genres as well as frequent intertextual references and insertions of translations (fairy tales; travel writings from other national traditions, etc.) helped facilitate readers' simultaneous glances at the inside and the outside.

Zoology and ethnography in the 1840s and 1850s were still often interchangeably viewed as natural sciences and natural history respectively and even assigned to the medical and philosophical faculties at many German universities. This absorption came despite the fact that Berlin and Breslau had already created professorships in zoology as early as 1811 and that many disciplines followed a move toward a methodologically refined empiricism.<sup>6</sup> Not unlike Brehm, contemporary zoographers, among them Lorenz Oken, Carl Christoph Vogt and Emil Adolf Roßmäßler (with whom Brehm subsequently published *Die Tiere des Waldes* in 1867 and whom he both thanks for their positive reviews of his *Thierleben* in his introduction to the first edition in 1864 – Brehm's acknowledgement was no longer included in the second edition) as well as popular 'ethnographers', including Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl and Wilhelm Raabe, fulfilled important mediating functions in a process of popularizing scientific fields beyond the confines of higher education (for transfers into narrative prose in this situation of popular 'mixture', see Christoph Schmitt-Maaß's contribution in this volume).

What role then, for example, did the semblance of ethnographic authenticity play in the process of narrating a variety of "contact zones"?<sup>7</sup> How

6 See Andreas Daum. "Wissenschaft and Knowledge". *Germany 1800-1870*. Ed. Jonathan Sperber. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 152.

7 I apply Mary Louise Pratt's term "contact zone" in reference to "the space of imperial encounters [...] in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict." (Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, 2008. 8).



could Brehm's narratives create the necessary comprehensible input for their "Laienpublikum"?<sup>8</sup> And what was the ultimate material and ideological impact of these tremendously popular accounts on the German public?

Informed by scholarship on systems of ethnography, on animal studies as well as on German (post)colonialism, this article argues thus principally that Brehm's increasingly popular tales of exotic locales, soon included in high circulation magazines such as *Die Gartenlaube*, in the end stand out not so much for their cultural engagement and educational-formative representation of human Otherness and difference.<sup>9</sup> Instead, what makes Brehm's works most remarkable is their simultaneous and until now unnoticed popularization of non-human animals – both exotic and domestic – as part of a discursive formation of 'Germanness' and a European self-understanding.<sup>10</sup> This article highlights in this context the extent in which readers find themselves wondering, given the sheer abundance of animal observations alongside a pervasive absence of humans, whether Brehm's travels constitute a failed foray into ethnography<sup>11</sup>; or whether he intentionally shifted the

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- 8 I freely adopt Stephen Krashen's applied linguistic notion of 'comprehensible input' to underscore how a process of acquiring knowledge requires comprehensibility and a set of relatable references. See Stephen Krashen. *Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003. Brehm must have developed his own sense for such an input theory when he acknowledged the following in an 1864 letter to a contemporary ornithologist in Mecklenburg: "Wer das Laienpublikum haben will, muß es ihm recht machen." (Quoted in Daum. *Wissenschaftspopularisierung* (FN 2). 257).
- 9 Excerpts from Brehm's writings not only appeared in *Die Gartenlaube* as early as 1858 ("Zwei Weihnachtsabende", "Eine Rose des Morgenlandes") and continued to be featured through 1877 ("Wildschafe der Steppe", "Jagden in der Steppe"), but they were also included in other popular family magazines such as *Aus der Heimath* (1859) as well as scientific periodicals, such as the *Ornithologisches Zentralblatt* (1862), *Meyers Universum* (1863), and *Globus* (1864). See Alfred E. Brehm. *Kleine Schriften. Mit 26 Abbildungen auf 8 Tafeln*. Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1921. 7.
- 10 See Daum. *Wissenschaftspopularisierung* (FN 2). In his seminal study of the popularization of science, Daum systematically underscores the preponderance of natural-scientific knowledge and its wide political implications in Germany. Regrettably, questions regarding Brehm's dual emphasis on humans and animals are absent not only in his discussion of *Brehms Thierleben*. Cf. 257ff.
- 11 For a discussion of a similar minimization of a human presence in Africa in Dutch and British accounts, see Pratt. *Imperial Eyes* (FN 7). 56ff.

narrative emphasis from humans to animals in order to strategically stage his explorations as a preparatory text for audiences of his later animal tales. What will ultimately be revealed in place of such seeming opposites is how the modes of perception of a German audience for both Brehm's human and animal subjects were affected through his works by almost interchangeable modes of ethnographic and zoographic representation.<sup>12</sup> As a result, Brehm's works raise central questions about the synchronic and diachronic reception of his views on animals as humans and vice versa, all of which culminated in a distinct sense of superiority shared by Brehm and a receptive German audience. What impact this perception may then have had on ensuing German discourses on race, nation, and colonial expansion will be a final consideration of this article as it looks at Brehm's contemporary relevance in widely publicized events in Germany and the United States.

### Ethno-Zoographies: Borderlessness of Text and Species

In part because of the overlooked discourse on national identity in Brehm's works, more broadly designed approaches to the *Thierleben* must draw for comparison on Brehm's surprisingly interrelated writings in which he explores the proximity of ethnographic and zoological narratives. His 1855 *Reiseskizzen aus Nord-Ost Afrika* as such combine a range of familiar narrative practices for a broad reading audience occupied, at the time, by a continuing intra-national process of constructing a sense of self.<sup>13</sup> In approaching

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12 Much of the enduring appeal of Brehm's *Thierleben* and his subsequent animal narratives stems largely from his anthropomorphizing characterizations of animals. His zoological sketches of exotic and domestic animals alongside ethnographic accounts from Africa, Asia, and Europe all contributed to setting him apart as an early behavioral scientist. A discussion, however, of the extent in which Brehm's sweeping characterizations of humans and animals may have been a conflation of 1830s and 1840s satirizing physiognomies and hard science will not be the focus of this article.

13 To a large degree, the conservative reaction to the revolutionary efforts of 1848 had forced an intensification of identificatory processes among the reading public. As I argue elsewhere, these processes are widely seen as "products of pseudo-scientific yet authoritative narratives [...] generated through intricate descriptive processes that relied heavily on reader's double exposure to narrative and visual 'truths' about Germany and the world." See Arne Koch. "The

Brehm's travel account then, the question of how Brehm could render successfully the exotic world of North Africa to his provincial German audience is one directly related to the central function of the semblance of ethnographic authenticity in processes in which humans were related to readers by means of animal characteristics. What could readers gain in regards to his treatment of non-European humans from what has been investigated as the anthropomorphization of animals – or as Brehm beautifully puts it in this article's epigraph, "[...] das Leben des Leibes und der Seele, das Leben des ganzen Thieres kennen zu lernen [...]":<sup>14</sup> Brehm's gradually successful narratives about exotic lands, peoples, and animals, soon plagiarized by writers like Karl May<sup>15</sup> and, in due course, adapted by high circulation illustrated magazines<sup>16</sup>, in the end stand out for more than just an experimental engagement with human Otherness and cultural difference.

Instead, Brehm's travels to Northern Africa as well as his subsequent sojourns to the Middle East, Scandinavia and Asia reveal an until now under researched attempt at depicting, even popularizing a seeming *borderlessness* between humans and animals. This borderlessness is notable even if done originally for purposes far removed from most of the ecocritical or animal rights ambitions articulated both in present day fringe politics and

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World According to the Region; or How to Read the Globe as a Familiar Text". *Globalizing Literature and Culture in German-Speaking Europe: Theory and Practice*. Ed. Elke Frederiksen/Katrin Komm. Oxford, New York: Berghahn (forthcoming). Brehm's travel accounts thus directly relate to popular projects like Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's and *Die Gartenlaube's* "Land und Leute"-series that commenced in the 1850s. For a related historical sketch of the "liberal and democratic impulses [after 1848 for] a broad movement to professionalize the popularization of science" see also Andreas Daum. *Wissenschaft* (FN 6). 158.

14 See Schmideler. *Anthropomorphisierung* (FN 5). 345ff. What may appear on the surface as a psychologization of animals dating back to the Enlightenment, in Brehm's case merely serves to extend his ethology as accessible to his audience. Behavioral scientists, including Klaus Immelmann, have for that reason argued that Brehm had a true engagement with animals' psychology.

15 See Fritz Maschke. "Karl May und Alfred Brehm". *Mitteilungen der Karl-May-Gesellschaft* 7 (1971): 19-21; Helmut Lieblang. "'Der Inhaber dieses Buiruldu ...' Alfred Edmund Brehms Orient in Karl Mays Frühwerk". *Jahrbuch der Karl-May-Gesellschaft* (1997): 232-271.

16 See FN 9.

in cultural theory.<sup>17</sup> After all, even a nineteenth-century animal advocate like Brehm, who struggled to rebuff the Eurocentricity of a Judeo-Christian world, had to stop well short of suggesting anything that would approximate a notion of present-day animal rights. While Brehm concludes his introductory chapter on *Säugethiere* with remarks that implicitly condemn humans' abuse of animals ("[...] traurig, daß der Mensch vergessen kann, daß die höheren Thiere sehr wohl zwischen guter und schlechter Behandlung unterscheiden lernen!"), he does so in the end only to set up what resembles a liturgical finale as to why animals fully deserve to be used (and dominated) by humans whom he places prominently as God's creation and thus worthy rulers at the very top of the food chain: "Aber nicht bloß die wenigen Haustiere, welche hier aufgeführt wurden, müssen dem Menschen zollen mit Leib und Leben [...]."<sup>18</sup>

To focus in that case exclusively on Brehm's *Tiergeschichten*, as some have done, to underscore through a chain of semiotic appropriations<sup>19</sup> but a vast number of examples of how Brehm humanized or anthropomorphized animals, in order to conclude that present-day depictions in the media and in *Sachliteratur* continue his *Vermenschlichung*, seems futile and predictable at best. As such, even efforts to salvage this anthropomorphization as something potentially constructive for its utility of fostering a bond between mankind and nature seems simply a little too idealistic.<sup>20</sup> In both cases, readers encounter merely confining principles that stop well short of considering how Brehm utilized both humans and animals as subjects. Yet, precisely

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17 On the theoretization and politicization of animal rights, see the following influential studies: *Zoologies. The Question of the Animal*. Ed. Cary Wolfe. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003; *Animal Rights. Current Debates and New Directions*. Ed. Carl Sunstein/Martha Nussbaum. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; Donna Harraway. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

18 *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1). 35, 36.

19 Schmideler (FN 5) outlines biomorphic, poetomorphic, sociomorphic, scientiamorphic, and mythomorphic examples for Brehm's *Leben der Vögel* (1861) and other representative texts.

20 Much of the marketing campaign for the 2006 Willemsen edition idealized Brehm's humanization of animals in this way. See in contrast Christine Gerhardt's argument against "the pitfalls of idealism" (178) of this sort. Christine Gerhardt. "The Ethics of Animals in Kafka and Adorno". *New German Critique* 97/33.1 (Winter 2006): 159-178.

this shared position as subject is central for understanding Brehm's explorations as ethnographer and zoologist because, in the end, the lamented moral valuations in Brehm's animal and travel accounts together with his personal statements of sympathy and antipathy for animals and humans alike more often than not have readers perceive animals as approximate to humans and vice versa. By looking therefore first at the introduction to Brehm's *Reise-skizzen* and afterwards at select passages from his *Thierleben*, the proximity of humans and animals becomes more evident and ultimately leads toward evaluating its potential function within a more broadly conceived formational process – a process which left ample room for both a creation of a sense of 'Germanness' and as well as for transnational postures.

It is quite easy to imagine how Brehm's journeys provided him with so much rich material for adventurous tales and scientific treatises. Brehm, not unlike other travelers before and after him, encouraged and inspired in different ways to adapt the well-known image prominently employed by Susanne Zantop, namely the arm-chair colonizers and explorers of German-speaking Europe.<sup>21</sup> Brehm brought back to Europe what became to many readers "a new world so near to [everyone]", as the American journal *The Popular Science Monthly* declared in an 1885 obituary for Brehm.<sup>22</sup> For readers in Brehm's native Thuringia, for example, it was thus feasible to imagine as near and comprehensible what was in reality far away and for many German readers impenetrable – ethnographic novelties and zoological particularities were equally foreign lands for provincial German audiences. A need for comprehensibility explains in part why Brehm himself always readily acknowledged to have relied on previously published accounts for his *Reiseskizzen* and the *Thierleben*.<sup>23</sup> While the latter, as a proclaimed natural-scientific account, methodologically necessitated the authority and credibility created by path breaking ornithologists and famous crocodile hunters, the ethnographic practice of his day of quoting at length from long gone travels might strike modern-day readers possibly as odd. These previous journeys, however,

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21 Susanne Zantop. *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. 99.

22 "Sketch of Dr. Alfred E. Brehm". *The Popular Science Monthly* 27 (June 1885): 263-268, 264.

23 See Alfred E. Brehm. *Brehms Reisen im Sudan. 1847-1852*. Ed. Helmut Arndt. Stuttgart: Edition Erdmann, 1983. S. 44; "Aus dem Vorworte zur ersten Auflage". *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1).

were equally indispensable for any serious ethnographer as they underscored expertise with established and reliable cultural experiences and expectations as well as with their scientific – and therefore objective – engagement with their subjects.

Partly with help of such older accounts and through time-honored devices created throughout the eighteenth and earlier-nineteenth centuries by means of endo-ethnographic practices, provincial readers could make sense of the unknown before the proverbial competition for a place in the sun occupied nearly everybody's mind in Germany.<sup>24</sup> For the self-stylized *Tiervater* Brehm, who was zoologist, explorer, and hunter in one, as many of his photographs and portraits that accompany his works illustrate, it must have been clear that his works could evoke “images as distorted re-activations of collective memories [that] thematise and preserve what is virtually present in the (sub)consciousness and memory of people.”<sup>25</sup> Popular science and popular literature were thus strategically connected for the ambitious goal of reaching the broadest possible audience. An excerpt from a letter to his father all too clearly articulates Brehm's proud aspirations: “Der Name Brehm soll mit Gottes Hülfe recht berühmt werden...”<sup>26</sup> And while Brehm's early *Reiseskizzen* may not have accomplished this ambitious goal, his travels from 1847 to 1852 enabled him at least to break ground for a zoological-literary

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- 24 Brehm followed established ethnographic practices by juxtaposing his observations with those recorded often long before him by other travelers. Through intertextual reference to or direct insertion of, for example, widely discussed accounts by Arnold von Harff (*Pilgerfahrt* 1860) and Karl Richard von Lepsius (*Denkmaeler aus Aegypten* 1849) he relied and built on recognizable and established narrative patterns. For a general discussion of the authority of ethnographers as travelers as well as the role of older accounts, see Birgit Tautz. *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment: From China to Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 117ff. For a discussion of the role of endo-ethnographic practices in this process of generating authority, see Koch. *How to Read the Globe* (FN 13).
- 25 Peter Wagner. “Introduction: Ekphrasis, Iconotexts, and Intermediality – the State(s) of the Art(s)”. *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*. Ed. Peter Wagner. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996. 1-40, here: 37.
- 26 Bernhard Schneider. “Drei Briefe von A.E. Brehm und Carl Bolle im Zusammenhang mit dem Entstehen des *Thierleben*, geschrieben im Jahre 1861 von Leipzig aus”. *Veröffentlichungen Naturkundemuseum Leipzig* 5 (1988): 51-64 (Quoted in Schmideler. *Anthropomorphisierung* (FN 5). 353).

project via the by then ubiquitous and marketable genre of ethnographic storytelling.

Brehm's reflections in the *Thierleben* and the *Reiseskizzen* underscore to what extent the scientific fields of ethnography/zoology and the literary practice of storytelling had long been inherently linked rather than juxtaposed as contraries. Brehm expressly notes the ethnographer's self-understanding as writer and entertainer. Importantly, such a self-understanding did not conflict with the ethos of the scientific subject; that is scientists' desire to be objective, what Daston and Galison define as searching for a "truth-to-nature"<sup>27</sup> still fell squarely within acceptable practices of aesthetically transforming the truth's representation. And whereas, historically speaking, this duality outwardly began to fade in the late 1800s with the ascent of science as "a conservative ideology"<sup>28</sup>, the indistinguishability of narrative conventions in ethnography and literature should not be viewed as a reinvention by late-twentieth-century scholars. Clifford Geertz suggests in this context that "anthropological writings are themselves interpretation [...]. [T]hey are, thus, fictions; fictions in a sense that they are 'something made.'"<sup>29</sup> It remains crucial, however, not to misread these theories in a way that turns ethnography into fiction. As Camilla Mortensen argues: "The idea that ethnography is re-creation and an interpretation of an actual event or culture is far different from the idea that ethnography deals with things not actually real."<sup>30</sup>

Several of the general ideas about a possible combination of ethno-zoographies first surface in Brehm's *Vorwort* to the *Reiseskizzen*. Readers can immediately make out the traveler as a self-declared expert who announces with some confidence that he may have gained access to his subjects, even membership:

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27 Lorraine Daston/Peter Galison. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books, 2007. 55ff.

28 Daum. *Wissenschaft* (FN 6). 161.

29 Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. 15. Others who persuasively examine ethnography's fictionality include James Clifford. "Introduction". *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Ed. James Clifford/G.E. Marcus. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. 1-26. 6f. and Mary Louise Pratt. "Fieldwork in Common Places". *Writing Culture*. 27-50, esp. 35f.

30 See Camilla Mortensen. "(Eco)Mimesis and the Ethics of the Ethnographic Presentation". *Journal of American Folklore* 118/47 (2005): 105-120, 112f.

Meine Mitteilungen sind die eines schon fast Eingebürgerten. In der langen Zeit meines Aufenthaltes daselbst habe ich gelernt, Beschwerden, welche dem Neuling unerträglich scheinen, erträglich zu finden, ein Volk, mit welchem er sich nicht befreundend kann, zu achten, und Gegenden, welche für ihn Orte des Schreckens sind, ihren Reiz abzulauschen. Das Schwere, was ich erdulden mußte, das Entsetzliche, was ich gesehen habe, das Betrübende, was ich kennenlernte, gebe ich unverhüllt; aber ich habe mich auch bemüht, das wirklich Erhabene in treuen Umrissen zu zeichnen. Ich spreche von den Lastern und Untugenden der Nordostafrikaner, verschweige aber auch ihre Tugenden nicht. [...] Der einzige Zweck, welchen ich bei meiner Arbeit zu erreichen gesucht habe, ist *strenge Wahrheit dessen, was ich erzähle*. Es ist möglich, daß ich mich hier und da, vielleicht betrogen von meiner individuellen Anschauungsweise, geirrt habe; wissentlich habe ich aber niemals eine Unwahrheit berichtet. (emphasis in original)<sup>31</sup>

Most people will quickly extract bits and pieces from this excerpt to place Brehm squarely within an ethnographic tradition that increasingly drew on a mid-nineteenth-century literary self-understanding. Almost paradigmatic in its implicit audience address and its reliance on established ethnographic parameters of narration, Brehm's introduction culminates in a playful combination of ethnographic-scientific accuracy with the fictionality and half-truths of literary narration. Brehm thus readily declares his awareness of a tension between the deception of his "individuellen Anschauungsweise" alongside the reporting of scientific truths – a Rankean notion of *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. It is possible, even expected, for the narrator to bestow great importance upon his engagement with his objects, to the point of highlighting the excruciating pains which he had to endure. Particularly because of Brehm's emphasis on the unsightliness of his hardships and his adventures – an unsightliness, however, he never fully elaborates in his account – one might instead distinguish in this account a prefiguration of the early poetic realist program of *Verklärung*, which maintains the fundamental idea of being able to mimetically represent the world. Brehm eagerly underscores the "*strenge Wahrheit dessen, was ich erzähle*." Despite explicit declarations of the verisimilitude of Brehm's ethnographic reporting, scientific accuracy now openly appears side-by-side with and even as fiction.<sup>32</sup>

31 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 30-31.

32 For an insightful discussion of the constructed nature and the poetics of ethnography, see Paul Atkinson. *The Ethnographic Imagination. Textual Construction of Reality*. London: Routledge, 1990. 35-56.



Eventually, this quality evolved into a central element in comparable renderings in the popular press. And while Brehm's *Reiseskizzen* thereby readily underscore how narrators would not only cross borders between genres but also between fact and fiction, as ethnographic content grew into a popular element of realist narration, it remains crucial for present-day readers to unearth the underlying ideological elements that surface in his *Reiseskizzen* and in the later *Thierleben*. For it is within Brehm's concentration on the unabashed truth of showing human vices in Egypt and among Sudanese tribes ("Ich spreche von den Lastern und Untugenden der Nordostafrikaner") that he begins to generate the complicated image of humans. To be fair to Brehm and any claims that this article may stake about his ethnographic projects, his descriptions of northeastern Africa do not significantly alter previously established and abundantly investigated practices. Readers may already be familiar with older accounts about the Sudan by Arnold von Harff, James Bruce, Ludwig Burckhardt, to name a few, or with other related research, for example, about the *Gartenlaube's* illustrations of Egyptian harems<sup>33</sup>, or, more generally speaking, in terms of ethnographic theories, about the "modes of perception and representation" in narratives of Self and Other since the Enlightenment.<sup>34</sup> Still, what stands out as most intriguing about Brehm's project is the effortlessness with which he eventually moves from humans to animals in this particular ethnographic project; thus confusing his readers, on more than one occasion, as to which subject he might be referring to at a given time.

What commences in his *Reiseskizzen*, for example, quite poetically-transfigured with Brehm's arrival in Alexandria – "Das Märchenland der Tausendundeinen Nacht liegt vor uns", as he writes<sup>35</sup> – quickly evolves into an all too recognizable and for present-day sentiments always unsettling nineteenth-century social-Darwinist, male Eurocentric depiction of natives ("Ureinwohner").<sup>36</sup> After first upholding the established ethnographic

33 Cf. Antje Harnisch. "Der Harem in Familienblättern des 19. Jahrhunderts: Koloniale Phantasien und Nationale Identität." *German Life and Letters* 51/3 (1998): 325-341.

34 Cf. Tautz. *Reading and Seeing* (FN 24).

35 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 44.

36 Gender is a dominant category throughout Brehm's writings but shall not be further considered in this reading. Especially in his brief depictions of family structures in the *Reiseskizzen* but also in the *Thierleben* men are, on more than one occasion, hierarchically elevated and described as the only ones capable of training animals: "Nur Männer können Thiere erziehen; dies beweisen oder

practices of his times to the tee and describing objectively, maybe in unexpectedly positive fashion, harvest rituals, artistic peculiarities, economic and political achievements, clothing customs, social structures and preferences for hair styles<sup>37</sup>, Brehm's journey further south and deeper into central parts of Northern Africa brings with it a notable shift. While still continuing detailed descriptions of human subjects, readers now cannot help but detect an increasing sense of moral righteousness and superiority in the tone of Brehm's observations as the native population's behavioral and social characteristics begin to preoccupy the ethnographer: Lies, betrayal and stealing; laziness and foolishness. As attributes and behavioral traits here applied for humans, comparisons with content and structure of his *Thierleben* suggest that it is now the taxonomic mind of the zoographer in conjunction with the poetic qualities of the narrator that clearly open up with Brehm's arrival in Chartoum:<sup>38</sup>

Schon seit mehreren Jahrhunderten haben sich die Ureinwohner des Sudan [...] vermischt, weshalb man von einer reinen Rasse nicht mehr sprechen kann. [...] Sie sind im Grunde genommen kerngute Menschen [...] aber die Sudanesen lügen, betrügen und stehlen, wo sie nur können; sie sind sinnlichen Genüssen sehr ergeben, faul, leichtsinnig, arbeitsscheu und liederlich [...] Ich will es versuchen, noch einmal seine Verteidigung zu übernehmen, indem ich einen großen Teil seiner Sünden dem Einflusse des Klimas zuschiebe. [...] Der Europäer kennt die Macht des heißen Klimas, er kennt die Folgen der Verweichlichung seines Körpers: und dennoch beugt er beiden selten vor; um wieviel weniger wird dies der Sudanese tun!<sup>39</sup>

Far from its very descriptive entirety, which goes on in excess of four pages, this passage was thus not selected to make a point about how Brehm's mid-nineteenth-century narrative may have continued *or* prefigured racializing

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bewiesen alle Mopse, dies zeigen die Hunde und Katzen einsamstehender Frauen oder Jungfrauen; sie sind regelmäßig verzogen, nicht erzogen." *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1). 24.

37 See Kirsten Belgum. "A Nation for the Masses: Production of German Identity in the Late Nineteenth-Century Popular Press". *A User's Guide to German Cultural Studies*. Ed. Scott Denham et al. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. 166.

38 See Joachim Illies. *Zoologie des Menschen. Entwurf einer Anthropologie*. Munich: dtv, 1977. 40-41.

39 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 128, 132-133.

accounts that tangibly culminate in the prominent chasm between European Self and African Other.<sup>40</sup> Obviously, these and other forms of denigrating images led notably to what Alexander Honold has termed the “‘Rückwirkung’ der Exkursionen.”<sup>41</sup> As merely one example of Brehm’s non-scientific, certainly unsystematic, yet popular and thus educational-formative influence on the bourgeois collective images of man and nature<sup>42</sup>, the repercussion of these images is not limited to serving the reinforcement of classifications of humans and animals which dates back to the Enlightenment.<sup>43</sup> Images such as these instead also continued to presage what some have identified as an ideological foundation for later imperial conquest and dominance.<sup>44</sup>

Of particular interest to this article’s inquiry is then to emphasize just how the mode of perception of German-speaking audiences for both Brehm’s human and animal subjects were effected by essentially interchangeable modes of representation in ethnography and zoography. It does not suffice merely to acknowledge that Brehm intertwined descriptive passages with first-person narration and impressionistic accounts as well as detailed zoological explanations with travel and adventure tales.<sup>45</sup> Instead, readers must recognize, how at times outwardly scientific, at other times completely removed from even a semblance of science, Brehm plays with his *Reiseskizzen* as he already begins to veer into his later fortitude of classifying and minutely describing various “Reihen”, “Ordnungen”, Familien”, and “Sippen”<sup>46</sup> – prefiguring

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40 This and other examples from Brehm’s *Reiseskizzen* support what Pratt has identified as “standard apparatuses of travel writing [that] produce non-European subjects for the domestic audience of imperialism. [...] [T]he initial ethnographic gesture is the one that homogenizes the people to be subjected, produced as subjects, into a collective *they*, which distills down even further into an iconic *he* (= the standard adult male specimen).” Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes* (FN 7). 62.

41 Alexander Honold. “Das Fremde verstehen – das Verstehen verfremden: Ethnographie als Herausforderung für Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft”. *Trans: Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 1 (September 1997): n.p.

42 See Daum. *Wissenschaftspopularisierung* (FN 2). 413ff.

43 See Alexander von Humboldt. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to the Equinoctial Regions*. Translated by Helen Maria Williams. London: Longman, 1822. Vol. 1. vii.

44 See Zantop. *Colonial Fantasies* (FN 21). 9ff.

45 See, for example, Daum. *Wissenschaftspopularisierung* (FN 2). 257.

46 See *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1). 1ff.

more than just the spirit of his *Thierleben*. Thus almost a decade before formally recording endless animal taxonomies for his *Thierleben* – which in Brehm’s mind had potentially less appeal for a wider audience because of its singular scientific-educational draw and thus had him underscore the educational *and* entertaining at the outset of that work – Brehm experiments with humans as his subjects. And although Brehm’s *Reiseskizzen* do not make use of visual caricatures or parodying visual clichés in the representation of his human subjects, Brehm is nonetheless on his way toward this lifetime project of studying animals by animalizing, at least categorizing in zoological fashion, various human animals through verbal representations, including Africans, Europeans, and, more specifically, Germans. The accompanying lithographic illustrations of the *Reiseskizzen* are mostly notable for the absence of humans and thus never really intensify the “dynamic relationships between image and text” that Martina Lauster discusses for social relations in scientific discourses of mid-nineteenth-century sketches.<sup>47</sup> Important in light of questions regarding identity politics then is how Brehm’s account over time repeats these taxonomic distinctions of humans, between European humans and other human subjects. In short, Brehm’s taxonomy hierarchically sets Europeans as *less animal* than non-Europeans. Brehm leaves no doubts about this crucial distinction:

Der Mensch gleicht in jenem Lande auch in körperlicher Hinsicht *den übrigen Säugetieren* in höherem Grade, als der auf Unkosten des Körpers geistig verfeinerte Europäer. Das Kind wächst *wie ein Tier* auf; ungewohnt an sorgsame Pflege und Wartung, kriecht es in wenigen Monaten im Sand herum und lernt seine Glieder viel eher gebrauchen als ein Kind europäischer Eltern. *Wie dem Tier* sind ihnen viele Krankheiten, welche unsere Kleinen dem Grabe zuführen, fremd: wird es aber von einer Krankheit befallen, dann teilt er auch die

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47 Martina Lauster. *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century. European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830-50*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 20. Brehm’s visual illustrations in the first edition of his *Thierleben* had similar neutral content. In part, the disjuncture between text and image came from the fact that these illustrations by Robert Kretschmer were based either on Brehm’s notes (“nach dem Leben gezeichnet”) or, as was more often the case, they were simply re-illustrations of already broadly circulated images from Richard Carl Illner or various *Brockhaus* encyclopedias. Kretschmer had previously worked for the *Illustrierte Zeitung* and also illustrated the travel account of Herzog Ernst II of Saxony-Coburg to Egypt in 1861.

Hinfälligkeit eines kranken Tieres. Er unterliegt einer Krankheit, welche der Europäer leicht übersteht. (emphasis in original)<sup>48</sup>

Readers who follow Brehm can now begin to properly situate Europeans and, among them, Germans since the narrative also accounts for distinguishing characteristics for various European “Ordnungen” as “Fremde” and “Landsleute.”<sup>49</sup> These positions are fully articulated vis-à-vis Brehm’s human African subjects *as* animals, and also infantilized as children.<sup>50</sup> Brehm’s outwardly suggestion of the proximity of animal and human and with it the inability of children to avoid certain health dangers ultimately leads to a less than veiled juxtaposition of nature and civilization. His African human subjects – “wie ein Tier” – may not get sick as often as Europeans, but should they ever get sick it is their lack of civilized care (“Pflege und Wartung”) that will prevent them from overcoming their certain demise. In an interesting process, Brehm’s ethno-zoographic project thus leaves room for two coexisting modes of categorization, namely one of a gradation from more-to-less-animal and one that distinctly contrasts human vs. animal. And it is precisely at that point of Brehm’s excursions that his project contributes elements to an idea of Germanness found and reinforced far beyond the narrow confines of the nation<sup>51</sup>, beyond “Deutschlands Gaue”, as Brehm explicitly notes.<sup>52</sup>

### *Kolonialwaren*: From Taxidermy to Human Trafficking

Notwithstanding the focus of Brehm’s accounts on images of difference and on extra-territorial realms, it does not by default culminate in an expression of aggressive notions to colonize. Instead, throughout his *Reiseskizzen*, Brehm returns to include the far away experience of being German as something that could *involve* transterritorial parameters, however, not unavoidably in order to *replace* these as “a potential extension of the nation.”<sup>53</sup> Although not all of Brehm’s ethnographic examples include references to

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48 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 160.

49 *Ibid* 163.

50 See Tautz. *Reading and Seeing* (FN 24). 19ff.

51 *Ibid* 33.

52 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 33.

53 *Belgium. For the Masses* (FN 34). 174.

what is German, they do materialize frequently as shared moments with fellow travelers from Germany. Still, the experience is never one that is defined narrowly by national or ethnic parameters. Brehm's experiences are therefore more often than not different from the familiar discourse of the ethnographic "Land und Leute"-series in the *Gartenlaube* and other illustrated magazines in which Germanness became a transterritorially expanded idea.<sup>54</sup> And not unexpectedly, Brehm's observations increasingly began to involve in this process the proximity of animal and human during his excursions. One of the more memorable moments in which Brehm reflects explicitly on his "nach der Heimat schweifenden Gedanken" takes place one Christmas evening deep in the Sudanese jungle during an elephant hunt. Animals of all kinds quickly become a part of an imagined German Christmas festivity where nature provides an unusual chorale and on top of it bestows Brehm and his fellow hunters with exotic riches and holiday presents:

Uns hatte niemand einen Christbaum angezündet, aber der Urwald selbst wollte uns Weihnachtsfreuden beschenken. [...] [E]ine *Elefantenherde* [...], *Löwen* [...], ein *Nilpferd* [...], einige *Scherenschnäbel* [...], *Eulen*, die *Hyänen* heulten im Chor und Silberglöckchen gleich erklang das Gezirp der tropischen *Grillen* oder *Zikaden* harmonisch durch das allgemeine Chaos der Stimmen und Töne. Das war die Musik der Urwälder in der heiligen Weihnacht; die Freude, gerade heute zuerst die Elefanten zu hören, war unser Weihnachtsgeschenk. (emphasis in original)<sup>55</sup>

During this and similar episodes, Brehm not only downplays or entirely eliminates any human presence in his account. Instead, he chooses to underscore the anthropomorphized characteristics of animals as positive and enriching features that inherently clash with human-led celebrations he had previously enjoyed in civilized and Christian cities in Europe. It is a noteworthy juxtaposition of nature/animals and civilization/humans to experience Christmas "mitten im Urwald" instead of "unbekannt in der großen Stadt": "Ich weiß es, welcher von beiden Christabenden würdiger gefeiert worden ist. Den

54 See Koch. How to Read the Globe (FN 13).

55 See *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 309-310. For an excellent analysis of similar accounts of German travelers reporting about the Christmas festivities in the Brazilian jungle, see Kirsten Belgum. *Popularizing the Nation. Audience, Representation, and the Production of Identity in Die Gartenlaube, 1853-1900*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. 28ff.

enen in Madrid kann nicht einmal die Erinnerung zu einem erträglichen Bilde umgestalten [...].<sup>56</sup> While one may return to the well-known tension between nature and civilization, this contrast highlights above all the sometimes unwanted realization of the proximity of humans and animals.

Examples such as the Christmas festivities in Sudan, in which humans are simply absent or, at best, non-European humans are reduced to animals, then continue throughout Brehm's roughly 400-page long account as well as in posthumously published lectures about his various continental excursions to Lapland, Siberia and Hungary.<sup>57</sup> For instance, Brehm goes on elaborately to compare slave practices to animal herding ("mehr gestoßen und gepeinigt, als eine Herde Vieh") and the seizing of human slaves to fierce attacks of tigers on their prey ("Tigern gleich").<sup>58</sup> As noted before, throughout Brehm's reductive narration readers begin to encounter in this way important prefigurations for his subsequent *Thierleben*, as human characteristics are described as analogous to non-human animal behavior and by means of expressions of antipathy, sympathy or even moral valuations. Fleeting expressions of empathy for African slaves, however, that Brehm may have had – and he does articulate at least a few<sup>59</sup> – pale in comparison to his virtually enthusiastic animalization of slaves alongside the killings of innocents: "Vor ihren Augen schlachtet man Weib und Kind, Vater und Mutter; selbst die *unschuldigen Haustiere* werden erbarmungslos niedergestochen."<sup>60</sup> Aside from his disturbingly matter-of-fact observations about the slaughter of children, which for Brehm appear not entirely different from his own slaying of crocodiles, antelopes, lions and other wildlife for the express purpose of export to German zoos and natural history museums, readers cannot help but note here the strong compassion that Brehm embeds. It is a feeling of empathy, however, that is for "innocent domestic animals" only, thus setting up yet again the stage for what would prominently feature in the later *Thierleben* as an anthropomorphization of animals through emotions and human traits.

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56 Alfred E. Brehm. "Zwei Weihnachtsabende". *Kleine Schriften* (FN 9). 319.

57 See Alfred E. Brehm. *From North Pole to Equator: Studies of Wild Life and Scenes in Many Lands*. Ed. J. Arthur Thomson, translated by Margaret Thomson. London: Blackie and Son, 1896.

58 *Brehms Reisen* (FN 23). 182, 181.

59 Ibid 188.

60 Ibid 181-182 (emphasis added).

One additional example from the *Reiseskizzen* may serve at this point as a final illustration to document just how Brehm's ethnographic practices provided readers with essential narrative and intertextual connections to his later influential animal studies – to show more than just the ideological repercussions of his excursions, since Brehm's *Reiseskizzen* reveal just how his experimentation with humans *as* animals helped him approach animals via human-like qualities. What surfaces in the end is what one might call a predominantly material aspect of the excursions. This orientation leads Brehm in due course to refocus his efforts “eifrig an der gehörigen Verpackung [s]einer Schätze.”<sup>61</sup> Significantly, Brehm's trip to Africa concludes with an almost audible sigh of relief to have been rewarded safely with an “Anblick [...] des ersehnten Vaterlandes”, all the while fulfilling the principal charge of delivering “[s]eine Bestien [...] einem [ihm] von Berlin entgegengesandten Tierwärter.”<sup>62</sup> Among Brehm's *beasts*, readers encounter an array of living and dead zoological *Kolonialwaren*: *Nilgänse, Kraniche, Affen, Kamele*, and more. Together, this bounty of exotic animals – a definitive Other compared with his readers' known world of European animals – eventually reappeared in Brehm's zoological taxonomy of his *Thierleben* alongside domestic *Hauskatzen* and *Schoßhunde* as the approximation of humans and animals was revisited by Brehm.

Similarly extensive quotes are to be found throughout Brehm's *Thierleben* that further underscore how all of these exotic animals eventually were relayed to readers through Brehm's anthropomorphizing lens. A representative example may therefore serve to illustrate the narrative and scientific relation between Brehm's ethnographic and zoographic systems. It is, for example, Brehm's depiction of camels which not only draws attention to the wealth of anthropomorphizing elements, but also offers a glance at the dynamics in which the exotic (Other) is brought closer (and ultimately domesticated/dominated) via comparison with common, mostly domesticated European animals:

[Dem Kamel] gegenüber ist ein Ochse ein achtenswertes Geschöpf, ein Maultier, das sämtliche Untugenden aller Bastarde in sich vereinigt, ein gesittetes, ein Schaf ein kluges, ein Esel ein liebenswürdiges Tier. Dummheit und Bosheit sind gewöhnlich Gemeingut; wenn aber zu ihnen noch Feigheit,

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61 Ibid 374.

62 Ibid 375.



Störrigkeit, Murrköpfigkeit, Widerwille gegen alles Vernünftige, Gehässigkeit oder Gleichgültigkeit gegen den Pfleger und Wohltäter und noch hundert Untugenden kommen, die ein Wesen sämtlich besitzt und mit vollendeter Fertigkeit auszuüben versteht, kann der Mensch, der mit solchem Vieh zu tun hat, schließlich rasend werden. Dies begreift man, nachdem man selbst vom Kamel abgeworfen, mit Füßen getreten, gebissen, in der Steppe verlassen und verhöhnt worden ist, nachdem einen das Tier tage- und wochenlang stündlich mit bewunderungswerter Beharrlichkeit und Ausdauer geärgert, nachdem man Besserungs- und Zuchtmittel erschöpft hat.<sup>63</sup>

While this particular character study of camels directly speaks to the blurred lines between humans and animals in Brehm's works in particular, as readers will recall the earlier excerpt in which Brehm animalized his human Sudanese subjects, it is equally interesting for this reading, how exotic animals, particularly as imported animal goods, expose the potential impact of Brehm's attitudes toward *images* of humans and animals. It also begins to address the question just how these images might have shaped an audience's perception in general.

### The Endurance of Distorted Images, or: Continuing the Sale of Ethno-Zoography

While mostly ideologically connected to Brehm's explorations, it was just ten years after the publication of his *Thierleben* that Carl Hagenbeck – by then already an acquaintance of Brehm – proudly presented his first *Völkerchau* in various German zoos, thus turning Brehm's *Tierhandel* into a form of *Menschenhandel* featuring members of the Sudanese people Brehm had encountered during his journey.<sup>64</sup> Even a brief glance at *images* associated with human and animal exhibits since the mid-1800's instantly weakens persistent claims of innocence or ignorance linked to the use of ethnographic and prevailing racist *images* that until today interconnect ethnography

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63 *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1). 67. Other exotic animals, for example gorillas, monkeys, hyenas, and wild cats are introduced in similar fashion. For an in-depth discussion of Brehm's use of cats, see my monograph *Furry Friends and Feline Demons: A German Cultural History of Cats* (forthcoming).

64 Carl Hagenbeck. *Von Tieren und Menschen*. Leipzig: Paul List, 1967. 44f.

and zoography.<sup>65</sup> *Images*, in the broadest sense of the word *imago*, whether visually or ekphrastically generated, encompass thus – as one can draw on a range of definitions – *a vivid description* or *a reproduction* and obviously *a picture*. In often multiple ways a part of what W.J.T. Mitchell categorizes as graphic, optical, perceptual, mental, and verbal, an *image* “not only ‘mediates’ our knowledge [...], but obstructs, fragments and negates that knowledge.”<sup>66</sup> Intended (ekphrastic-verbal) or actual (graphic) *images* then in essence become part of a Genettian *paratext* or a micro-preface prior to further verbal explorations, precisely in ways that pictorial illustrations are more than an adjunct to media reports, even if the message is still to be dialogically established.<sup>67</sup> These images become a part of the message – whether or not their meaning is ever fully worked out. *Images* are more than innocent attractions to a text.

Ekphrastic descriptions, pictorial illustrations and performative acts alike – similar to manipulating headlines – must for that reason be approached as quasi-rhetorical devices steering audiences *a priori* in distinct directions. For that reason, Brehm used many of these verbal-visual illustrations in his *Reis-eskizzen* and *Thierleben* alike. Instead of merely addressing evolving intentions behind images of humans and animals the focus has to be on what has remained the same over time: namely, the capacity to manipulate audiences.

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65 A number of recent controversial events and exhibits can be said to relive the problematics of human-animal relations encountered in Brehm's works. A four-day event of exhibiting African artisans and food stands side-by-side with animals in the Augsburg Zoo in 2005, for example, resulted in widely publicized outcries to stop the exhibit based on the fact that it created but one dominating image: that people of color were dehumanized as/among animals. At the time, the zoo director's apparent inability to understand the project's objectionability as part of a long history of exhibiting the exotic is somewhat perplexing, as the images that most people did see when confronted by the Augsburg project and similar displays were so close to the past business of exhibiting pre-colonial and colonial cultures. In re-creating the old ways of the *Völkerschau*, zoo exhibits such as the one in Augsburg merely re-presented (in the sense of repeating) visual and performative images of animalized Otherness.

66 See W.J.T. Mitchell. *Iconology, Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1986, 9-10; W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1994. 188.

67 See Gerard Genette. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

*Images* like the ones generated by Brehm and others since have played and continue to play a crucial role in selling ideas, ideologies, desires, and, on a more explicitly material level, commercial products. Precisely this latter commercial success – of selling products and images – is where Brehm’s legacy resurfaces still today. The tradition of selling Otherness goes back in time to include family magazines and Brehm’s *Reiseskizzen* alike, in which ethnographic and zoological images were not the exception but the rule. Aside from opening up additional questions about the reception of Brehm’s views on animals as humans and vice versa, questions which Hagenbeck and his heirs have brought to the forefront, one can conclude for certain in the context of this essay, however, that a distinct sense of superiority throughout all of Brehm’s observations must have found a receptive and willing audience.

His egotistical superiority may have been initially a narrative necessity in the *Reiseskizzen*, as popular mid-nineteenth-century tales so often depicted superior German adventurers as their heroes. Consequently, readers will today recognize many facets in Brehm’s account that echo the common chauvinist tone of other mid-nineteenth-century ethnographers (Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl and many others) and their elevation of German ‘culture’ as superior vis-à-vis the depicted backward ‘civilizations.’<sup>68</sup> And while one would be hard-pressed to argue that the sense of superiority in Brehm’s *Reiseskizzen* served any expansionist purposes at all, it did in part contribute to an inward perspective and the German audience’s engagement with its own sense of self that included to a large degree the question of national cohesiveness that became increasingly prominent in the late-1840s.<sup>69</sup> Brehm’s tales, however, went a notable step further by subjugating men *and* beast to his superior will. As the successful German explorer, hunter, and scientist, Brehm had overcome on his journeys all trials of unhuman realms populated by a mix of human-like animals and animal-like humans – to show to his German readers, for better and for worse, “wie nahe, wie innig verbunden wir, als die höchststehenden Säuger, mit den übrigen sind, denen wir unser Joch auferlegt haben.”<sup>70</sup>

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68 For the *Begriffsgeschichte* of the notions ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’, see Chenxi Tang’s contribution in this volume.

69 See Koch. How to Read the Globe (FN 13).

70 *Brehms Thierleben* (FN 1). 37.