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As spring approaches the North of Finland where I write, Whooper swans (*Cygnus cygnus*) are returning. Crossing borders above Europe at ease, they are oblivious to the simultaneous plight of masses of human migrants and refugees fleeing war. They return to their breeding grounds, with their life companions, and are greeted with delight by people. This wasn't always the case. In the early 20th century Whooper swans were met with hostility as they migrated back to Finland to breed: they were hunted aggressively across the country, and as a result almost disappeared completely. In 1940 only about 40 pairs remained.

It took one dedicated veterinarian and photographer, Yrjö Kokko, and his published book – *Laulujoutsen: Ultima Thulen lintu* (Kokko, 1950) – to return us Finns to compassionate co-habiting with the white giants. And it happened almost overnight. For a long time even after being protected, Whooper swans populated only the very North in Finland, as the population density of humans around here is sparse and there were safer nest-

ing places to be found here. Now as they return, they populate all of the country again.

Movement and migration as well as conflicts abound when species and individuals meet. But also compassion, curiosity and imaginative attempts to estimate how living feels for another lifeform – and continuous attempts at speaking for others. Sometimes these can make all the difference, as we know in the case of Kokko and his book that saved the Whooper swans of Finland.

All of these themes are present in this issue of *Trace*, which is once again heftier than the earlier ones. I stepped in as Editor-in-Chief after Otto Latva last summer and continued on the well-paved way. At around our deadline in October last year, we had eight manuscripts lined up for peer-review. Had they all made it to be published we would have a clear record in our hands. The upward trend in manuscripts sent to *Trace* resulted in growing our editorial board with a further two editors. This issue is the result of excellent scholarship by the authors and

hard work of the editorial board: Jouni Teittinen, Helinä Ääri, Tuure Tammi, and Jenna Aarnio. We are proud to publish five peer-reviewed research articles, four longer commentaries and essays, and four book reviews that I will introduce next thematically, rather than in the order in which they appear in this issue.

In their research article Sarah Oxley-Heaney and colleagues write about movement and migration from the viewpoint of nonhuman immigrants – dogs, pigs, elephants and zoo animals. Tiina Ollila provides a matching book review of the approaches of critical animal studies to borders, displacement and othering. The texts exploring language and representation of other animals include Michelle Szydłowski and colleagues' paper on the language of domestication and its developments as means of human control of nonhuman animal bodies. Ville Malila, a recipient of an MA dissertation award by the Finnish Society of Human Animal Studies, writes of representations of raccoon dogs in newspapers, and Outi-maija Hakala as well as Matilda Aaltonen and Salla Tuomivaara each explore multi-modal possibilities of performing of, with, and for other animals – namely ants and seagulls.

As Matilda Aaltonen highlights dance as an artform in exploring human-seagull relations, Raj Sekhar Aich and Priyankar Chakraborty focus on the interconnected lives and conflicts between

humans and sharks through what they frame as agentic dance between these two significant species in the region of their text, the West Bengal in India. Historical takes on interspecies agencies and interconnected lives are offered by Philip Line in his research article about elephants who were required to perform for human crowds in Rome, and by Taina Syrjämaa in her book review of Liv Emma Thorsen's *The Town of Animals* that focuses on the daily life of equine, bovine and avian inhabitants of Kristiania (Oslo) in the turn of the 20th Century.

In his article, Philip Line highlights the unusual sympathy that the human crowds showed to the performing elephants, making a connection – across centuries – to still existing forms of animal labour and its emotional entanglements, examined by Tiamat Warda in her research article. From fighting elephants in 50BCE Rome, to the rapid increase of therapy animals in the current millennium, animals engage in – are made to engage in – emotional labour in their relations to humans. This is especially evident with young humans, something that the book reviewed by Marianna Koljonen – on children's animals relations – highlights.

Trace is not complete without explicitly critical takes on human animal relations. These are provided by Carlo Alvaro and Nathan Poirier. In his extended commentary Alvaro notes that despite the

hard work done by vegan activists, global meat consumption is still increasing, and discusses what options ethical veganism still has. Poirier provides a review of a recent book on environmental and animal abuse denial, in which these two are connected to the wider, ongoing wave of sci-

ence denial, and the saying “Out of sight, out of mind” is illustrated well.

I wish you enchanting moments with these pieces of human–animal scholarship, and don’t forget to spread the word about our small but funky open access journal to your colleagues!

References

Kokko, Yrjö. 1950. *Laulujoutsen – Ultima Thulen lintu*. Helsinki: WSOY.