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Out of character: debating Dutchness, narrating citizenship

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## This is an inquiry into the public and political debates over Dutchness and citizenship in the Netherlands (1972-2008). It demonstrates how disagreements over nationhood and citizenship were deliberately transformed from disputes about character into debates about identity and its particular problems. As debates about Dutchness and belonging grew in intensity and political significance, national identity debates came to involve narratives and performative repertoires that were markedly different from previous modes of articulation. The study reconstructs the emergence of this discursive formation, while also showing its subsequent development into an exceptionalist imaginary of dialogical Dutchness. Across these debates, Dutchness is – again and again – performed to be liberal, expressive, plural and outspoken. Inclusion into this nation is imagined at once inevitable and liberating, while also demanding and unattainable. Along the way, citizenship politics devolves into a governmental project of retracing the public image of Dutchness with borderlines of protection. The deliberate move away from character's essentialism ends up being a potent conversation machine. However, it fails to produce struggles to win and instead revolves discussions around a native public to be defended.

# OUT OF CHARACTER

Debating
Dutchness,
Narrating
Citizenship

by Rogier van Reekum

## OUT OF CHARACTER: DEBATING DUTCHNESS, NARRATING CITIZENSHIP

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Rogier van Reekum

geboren te Rotterdam

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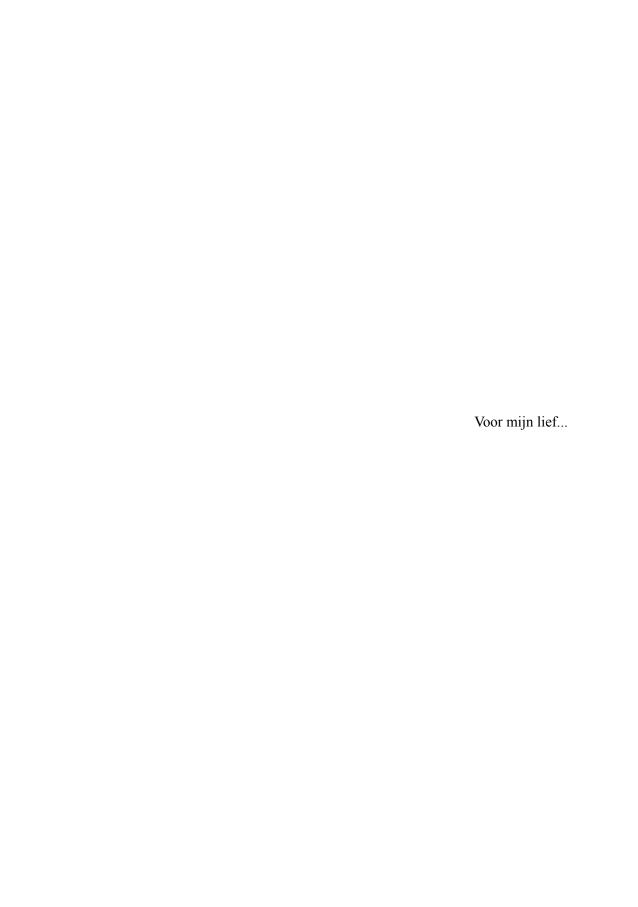
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