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Out of character: debating Dutchness, narrating citizenship

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Publication date

2014

Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

van Reekum, R. (2014). *Out of character: debating Dutchness, narrating citizenship*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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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. Rogier van Reekum

OUT OF CHARACTER

*Debating
Dutchness,
Narrating
Citizenship*

by
Rogier van Reekum

**OUT OF CHARACTER:
DEBATING DUTCHNESS,
NARRATING CITIZENSHIP**

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties
ingestelde commissie,
in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
op donderdag 18 december 2014, te 15:00 uur

door

Rogier van Reekum

geboren te Rotterdam

Promotiecommissie

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Prof. dr. E.H. Tonkens

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Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen

Voor mijn lief...

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Acknowledgements

There are many people, more than I can name here, who I thank for having been able to do a PhD-project, write up my research and finalise a dissertation. While I take full responsibility for its contents, the study in front of you is the product of a multitude.

First of all, I want to thank Rosanne Stotijn, whose unwavering support helped me to actually pursue a PhD. Without her joyful confidence, I might never had jumped at the opportunity that came along in that summer of 2008. Next, I want to thank Jan Willem Duyvendak, Evelien Tonkens and Peter Geschiere for giving me the opportunity to begin with and, subsequently, not only being supervisors but also co-travellers on a sometimes bumpy ride. The greatest admiration and respect goes out to my fellow researchers in the project: Paul Mepschen, Bregje Termeer and Francio Guadeloupe. I fear I still don't think and act like an anthropologist. You have failed to convert me. However, our ecumenical exchanges across divides that we didn't invent have changed me forever. A huge amount of gratitude also goes out to the students involved in the project: Josip Kesic, Anne Brouwers, Thijs van Dooremalen and Fatiha El-Hajjari. Moreover, the project would have not been possible without the hard logistical work of Nazima Kadir and Martine Buijs. It was great to work and exchange ideas with the many research fellows in the project throughout the years: Antoine Socpa, Basile Ndjio, Isaïe Dougnon, Maame Gyekye-Jandoh, Murat Akan, Sandrine Bertaux, Rose Mary Allen and Fadma Aït Mous.

Already before the project began, I had found a peer and a friend in Marguerite van den Berg. I was fortunate enough to be able to do my PhD alongside her at the AISSR. Sharing this experience, exchanging thoughts and feelings, turned the job into a profession and profession into life. I look forward to many years of professional and not-so-professional friendship. At the AISSR I also found old and new colleagues that inspired and encouraged me: Thomas Franssen, Thijs Bol, Chip Huisman, Sylvia Holla, Francisca Canteclaeer van Barneveldt, Mandy de Wilde, Benno Netelenbos, Marieke van Eijk, Menno Hurenkamp, Marii Paskov, Anna Mann, Filippo Bertoni, Sanderien Verstappen, Marten Boekelo, Judith Elshout, Sander Steijn, Ellen Grootegoed, Marieke Sloodman, Maybritt Jill Alpes, Jesse Hoffman, Valentina Di Stasio, Eline van Haastrecht, Efecan Inceoglu, Rhiannon Michelle, Naomi van Staple, Lutz Hofer, Elmar Jansen, Anick Vollebregt, Matthijs Rooduijn, Carolina Evanescu, Paul van Hoof, David

Ehrhardt, Apostolos Apostopolis, Vanessa Cantinho de Jesus, Michaël Deinema, Victor Toom, Yannis Tzaninis, Laurens Buijs, and many many more. Apart from being an ungodly organisational mess sometimes, the University of Amsterdam was a place where I found many scholars from whose guidance and example I have benefited greatly. Among them are Bart van Heerikhuizen, Nico Wilterdink, Bowen Paulle, Giselinde Kuipers, Anouk de Koning, Jan Rath, Imrat Verhoeven, Olga Sezneva, Christian Broer, Irene Stengs, Rineke van Daalen, Ali de Regt, Markha Valenta, Oskar Verkaaik, Baukje Prins, Annemarie Mol, Dvora Yanow, Loes Verplanke, Gerben Moerman, Walter Nicholls, Peter van Rooden, and Floris Vermeulen. Also, I thank Peter Scholten and Christophe Bertossi from whose co-authorship I learned a great deal.

I'd like to thank my fellow editors at *Krisis* – Rene Gabriëls, Gijs van Oenen, Dirk Haen, Yolande Janssen, Irena Rosenthal, Ruth Sonderegger, Huub Dijstelbloem, Eva de Valk, Thijs Lijster, Robin Celikates, Jappe Groenendijk, Lonneke van der Velden, Daniel de Zeeuw and Absaline Hehakaya – for the opportunity to distract myself from the worries of a dissertation by every now and then drowning in the joys and frustrations of keeping our little vessel afloat. We will not perish! In fact, we will thrive! The many hours spent together, especially during our annual meetings in Maastricht, were instrumental in keeping the philosophical side of my academic heart pumping. I have gained more than I have been able to give.

I've also been lucky enough to make some intellectual connections. Sometimes only sporadic encounters, other times sustained dialogues helped me to maintain a sense of direction. Of all these encounters I can only hint at a few: Bram Mellink, Merijn Oudenampsen, Matthijs Ponte, Markus Balkenhol, Daan Beekers, and Sinan Çankaya. Shared ideas, indignations and preoccupations bring us together from time to time and I continue to enjoy the encounters that are the result.

In the last stint of writing, I had the great privilege to find myself among new colleagues – Jess Bier, Maja Hertoghs, Sanne Boersma, Friso van Houdt, Irene van Oorschot and Willem Schinkel – who through their enthusiasm and intelligence have made the final stretch not only bearable but exciting. I look forward to our work together in the years to come.

Having a lively intellectual milieu in which to breath and grow is fine and well. The soil is formed by the connections with family and friends that, even when contact is all too infrequent, continue to make you who you are and will become. For hanging in there, for being around, for shaping me, for making a mark, I thank you: Anne Stolk, Gerard van Reekum, Marijke van Oosterzee, Elise Veltman-Van

Reekum, Ruben Veltman, Joyce Veltman, Mathijs Mol, Erik Borst, Sanne Wijbenga, Reinier Smit, Gijs van der Togt, IJsbrand de Boer, Niels Cornelissen, Annemarie Nuwenhoud, Bas Vredeling, Hugo van der Wedden, Chris Wittkampf, Uhuru Phalafala, Senem Sirin, Marjolein Cazemier, Floortje Kootte, Willem Kort, Maren Siebert, Teun Meurs, Marianne Bloemink, Marc Stotijn, and David Stotijn.

Finally, I wholeheartedly thank Shiva Shazad, Robbie Voss and Anja Groten for their work and assistance in getting all the research material together and producing the actual book in front of you.

Somewhere along the way things started falling apart. For a while life sort of crashed, deadlines sped past and a finished dissertation seemed very far away. For some inexplicable reason, through some cosmic providence, in some crazy accident that turned into a somersault, life gave me seconds. I wasn't prepared for this kind of grace, this measure of forgiveness, and yet...it happened. She is the sole reason it all got done in the end. I love you, Lisette.

Amsterdam, October 2014

The research and writings that form the basis for this dissertation were executed within a larger research project – *Citizenship, National Canons and the Issue of Cultural Diversity* (NWO project number 312-99-102) – headed by Prof. dr. Jan Willem Duyvendak, Prof. dr. Evelien Tonkens and Prof. dr. Peter Geschiere. This project ran from September 2008 to November 2013 at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam. It was funded by NWO, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, by Oxfam-Novib and by FORUM, Institute for Multicultural Affairs.