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A war of words : Dutch pro-Boer propaganda and the South African war (1899-1902)

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Citation for published version (APA):

Kuitenbrouwer, J. J. V. (2010). A war of words : Dutch pro-Boer propaganda and the South African war (1899-1902). z.p.: Eigen Beheer.

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Preface

The Dutch pro-Boer movement was a part of the history of modern imperialism and as such left its mark in different parts of the world. Concerning this PhD thesis, the truism that writing it was like a long and exciting journey can therefore be taken quite literally. At the beginning of my project, I had the opportunity to enroll for a one-year Master's degree at Oxford University (St Antony's College), which has greatly shaped the theoretical framework of this thesis. In subsequent years, I was able to stay in South Africa for three spells during which I studied several collections, mainly at the National Archives in Pretoria. Other archives were right around the corner, such as the library of the *Zuid-Afrika Huis* (South Africa House) in Amsterdam. At these various places, I met a great number of inspiring people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of them.

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to a number of funding bodies that have made all the travelling possible. The *Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds*, the *Hendrik Muller Vaderlandsch Fonds* and the *Fundatie Vrijvrouwe van Renswoude* provided financial support for my stay at Oxford. For journeys to South Africa in 2006 and 2008, I received grants from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the *Amsterdams Universiteitsfonds* respectively. The Institute for Culture and History at the University of Amsterdam, to which I have been affiliated, has also generously supported research trips and participation in conferences.

Many individuals have contributed to this thesis in other ways. I thank my supervisor Niek van Sas for his enthusiasm when I came along with yet another plan for an overseas trip, which was a great incentive to go out and explore the world. I was also lucky with my colleagues at the University of Amsterdam. It is always a pleasure to discuss new ideas with Bas von Benda-Beckmann. Floor Meijer became a good friend with whom I share many opinions about nineteenth century history and life as a PhD candidate in general.

In other places, I met many people who have stimulated my enthusiasm for overseas history and that of South Africa in particular. Corine de Maijer showed me all the secluded corners of the *Zuid-Afrika Huis* where I was a regular for a while. Henriette Latsky of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg kindly allowed me to make use of her unpublished bibliography of Dutch books about the South African War. Barbara Henkes and I explored several aspects of the historical ties between the Netherlands and South Africa. Furthermore, I was lucky to become part an informal, but very lively study group on imperialism that discussed some of my preliminary chapters. I thank Annelieke Dirks, Remco Raben, Alicia Schrikker, Bart

Stol, Andreas Weber, and particularly Marieke Bloembergen for their comments. Annemarie van der Westhuysen's perceptive editing helped to improve the text. Prof. dr. G.J. Schutte, member of the examination committee, provided many useful suggestions and corrections for the final version. It would be impossible to mention all the people I have met during research trips, seminars and conferences. One friendship, however, sums up the experiences of the past few years: Andy Cohen with whom I had the pleasure of discussing imperialism on three different continents.

Travelling abroad also taught me to better appreciate home, which is Amsterdam, the city where I was born and raised. My old friends there are dear to me and I enjoyed discussing different aspects of my work and many other things with them, often over a couple of drinks or a nice dinner. I would like to thank Anna, Bart, Boris & Barbara, Erik & Lonny, Mark, Niels and many others for their pleasant company over the years. My parents, my sister and Constantijn showed great interest in everything I did and, as ever, that has been a tremendous support. More recently, Marieke has given 'home' a new meaning to me.

Considering this thesis, there is one person to whom I am indebted most. My uncle Maarten Kuitenbrouwer and I shared a genetic deviation that made us both interested in the peculiar history of Dutch imperialism. During the early phases of my research he provided many valuable comments, which helped me to develop my own ideas about this topic. Unfortunately, he is no longer around to see the final result. I dedicate this thesis to his memory.