

Dominee Nicolaas Beets: “De familie Kegge” (1851) in het perspectief van de afschaffing van de slavernij

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Reverend Nicolaas Beets: “The family Kegge” (1851) in the context of the abolition of slavery

Abstract: Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) offers opportunities for re-reading and re-interpretation of canonical historical literary works by way of focussing on the relation between culture and empire. Nicolaas Beets, “De familie Kegge,” seems to be a good example for this “contrapuntal reading.” The short novel protests in a mild way against slavery and behaviour of slave owners and plantation owners in the Caribbean. In later work Beets proves to have become a fierce anti-slavery advocate, an aspect of his work that until now is hardly ever discussed and has been neglected in traditional criticism.

Keywords: Dutch literature in the 19th century; Edward W. Said; contrapuntal reading; Caribbean sugarplantations; slavery and anti-slavery movement in the Netherlands; imperialism; interpretation problems; canon

In zijn *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) pleit Edward W. Said voor een vorm van “contrapuntal reading” waaronder hij een leeswijze verstaat die niet alleen aan het literaire werk zelf recht doet, maar dit ook en vooral plaatst binnen zijn cultureel historische context, met name die van het Westerse imperialisme: “My method is to focus as much as possible on individual works, to read them first as great products of the creative or interpretative imagination, and then to show them as part of the relationship between culture and empire” (Said 1994: xxiv).