acknowledgments

This book came into being through the most fortunate combination of factors - a wonderfully inspiring intellectual environment, the expert and enduring guidance of a brilliant mentor, and the unconditional support of so many loving people.

The starting point is the University of Amsterdam for this is where the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis is based to which I owe my deepest gratitude. I thank ASCA for awarding me with a PhD Fellowship, for placing its confidence in me, and for taking me under its wing. I am grateful for that, because ASCA is one of the rare academic communities where theoretical rigor and high standards of achievement, go hand in hand with sensitivity for other people, for their dreams, personal choices and struggles.

The first person I want to thank is my mentor and supervisor Mieke Bal whose impact on my work and my life has been more profound than I can say. It is thanks to Mieke's scholarly intuition and systematic guidance that I learned about my strengths and weaknesses and how to go about solving the problems. Meticulous and to the point, never missing a single detail, encouraging yet critical she was determined to get the best out of me. Mieke is a great master and a scholar I truly admire. But she is also a beautiful and a charming woman who taught me that solving complex theoretical problems does not mean that I don't have to sleep, eat, take a break, or smile once in a while. Thanks to you Mieke, amidst all those convoluted structures of meaning I think I have finally managed to catch a glimpse of what it means to be - "me."

Writing my dissertation was a long process and I am indebted to many people who read versions or sections of separate chapters, who raised important questions and helped me rethink the central points. I am very sorry that one person who contributed so much to the initial phase of my project is no longer with us. That person is an outstanding film historian and the most gracious scholar one can imagine - Nico Brederoo. We spent many pleasurable hours in his study in the Scheveningen discussing questions of cinema relevant to my project. Nico Brederoo's sophistication and his ability to give a beautifully baroque twist to popular filmic texts will remain an inspiration for all my future endeavors.

I was very fortunate that one of my favorite scholars, Ernst van Alphen was generous enough to read sections of my work. I am grateful for his critical comments and especially for stepping in when he was most needed. I am honored that he has agreed to act as a member of my PhD committee.

I would like to thank Thomas Elsaesser who again and again and again, posed the most difficult questions at numerous PhD film
seminars urging me to strengthen my arguments and to clarify my standpoints and ideas. Co-teaching a course on contemporary Hollywood cinema with him was a remarkable learning experience and an occasion to present and test out important segments of my dissertation.

The present form of this book would not be possible without the selfless engagement of an ingenious artist and my good friend Darko Fritz. I owe him many many thanks for taking on the challenge of designing the layout for the book. The excessive amount of work that needed to be done pushed his patience to the utmost limits; at four in the morning when yet another series of shots was completed (amounting usually to another hundred digitalized images), I would leave his studio wondering whether I will ever see him again. But his commitment to the project would always prevail in the end, and I am so grateful for this, because without his professionalism and support the entire venture would be unthinkable.

I cannot thank Markha Valenta enough for correcting my English, for being there for me just when I needed her help. She has done much more than one can dare to expect of a colleague.

I am also indebted to Marleen Rensen for revising my translation of the summary in Dutch. I know how busy she was at the time, and yet she agreed to do it so readily as it was just a normal thing for a paranifm to do.

It is so difficult for me to find the words to express my gratitude and my appreciation for all the help and support I have received from the ASCA community, without them I would not be where I am today. I owe so much to Eloë Kingma, the manager of a kind, whose expertise in academic affairs and public relations is just as immense as her ability to reach out to people at the personal level. Eloë is the bravest woman I know and she will always be my hero. Maartje Geraedts who in her quiet and subtle manner manages to coordinate so many things at once is another pillar of ASCA. There are countless occasions on which Maartje would take care of crucial matters for me, always leaving the impression that there is nothing to it, that it is all just a simple routine. Another gem of ASCA is Sherry Marx, the great mediator without whom I would have panicked so many times.

This is also an occasion to express my gratitude to Cees Ostendorf. I thank him for his incredible efficiency in resolving all kinds of formal matters regarding my PhD - year after year.

I don't know how I would have ever managed to be in Hong Kong on a postdoctoral fellowship and finish up a million formal details without the help of the best paranimf ever, Michael Burke. He is simply the greatest, and nothing I can say can match up to what he has done for me. Marleen Rensen, my other paranimf is actually not an ASCA fellow, it is thanks to pure luck that she has landed in our ASCA
room, the famous 501. Marleen has immediately captivated all of us with her sense of humor, her most agreeable character and especially her willingness to get involved and be there for every one us. Marleen and Michael, I never could have done it without your help.

One of my dearest ASCA people, and a person who has done so much for the well being of this community is definitely Frans Willem Korsten. I don’t know whether I should thank Frans Willem first for all he has taught me about presentation skills or what he has done for me as a colleague and a friend. In 1993, when I first joined the ASCA theory seminar I had to give a presentation of Arjun Appadurai’s article, and this was a scary task because Appadurai was himself going to be present at the seminar. I also had to find a partner for the presentation but all the people I called said they were too busy; all except the one who was actually the busiest of all - Frans Willem. His commitment to ASCA and to building up a strong intellectual community was both impressive and instructive; Frans Willem set an example for all of us.

If it hadn’t been for ASCA I never would have met one of my best friend’s in the world and the most fantastic of colleagues - Françoise Lucas. We spent endless hours discussing films, books, theoretical concepts, ASCA seminars, workshops and conferences. It was so good to talk to her because with her keen grasp of theory and her interdisciplinary interests Françoise would immediately sense the gist of what I was trying to say. "Does this make sense to you?" is the question I asked more times than I can remember. No matter what time of day or night she was always there, and in her typically modest and painfully self-effacing manner she would always give me complete support and the most lucid answers.

Madelaine Kasten is another one of my ASCA colleagues who has become my good friend over the years. Her radiance and giving nature are simply overwhelming. The reading group we formed together with my other dear colleague and a friend, Leslie Kavanaugh gradually grew into visits to exhibitions, special events and, thanks to both Leslie and Madelaine, special celebrations.

Peter Verstraeten, a former resident of 501 was one of my closest ASCA buddies throughout the years. Peter’s relaxed way of dealing with complicated problems would always provide a good balance to my taking everything too seriously. After having a coffee with Peter everything seemed to fall into a place. His ability to look at the world from a brighter perspective is a unique gift that had a positive effect on all of us.

Another person who has been the sunshine of my life is Murat Aydemir. Witty and bright, caring and thoughtful, he is my ASCA star. I feel so privileged for the opportunity I had to grow amongst all these people who are able to produce important work but who
always found it worth their while to take the time and energy to read and discuss the work of the colleagues. We learned so much from each other and about each other through the exchange of thoughts and ideas. Janneke Lam is one of my colleagues who was perhaps the most responsible of the respondents, for she would read the text most carefully and critically yet passionately. This is a rare talent, which carries a risk that only extraordinary scholars are ready to take.

Maaike Bleeker is another miraculous person. It is really amazing how someone so perfectly contained can be so sensitive and act on those moments in life that count the most. Maaike, thank you so much for being in those moments.

It was such a pleasure to interact with Joyce Goggin in the last few years, with her incredible energy, talent and commitment she is a genuine ASCA asset.

There are so many dear people who I have come to know through the ASCA theory seminar, ASCA salons, or the exchange programs with the University of Rochester. I would especially like to thank Yolande Jansen, Wilma Siccama, Hester Ijseling, Ellen Tops, Jos van Winkel, Sonja Neef and the roommate who was the last to arrive to 501, Stefan Besser.

I also want to thank my ASCA friends who are now in different parts of the globe: Laura Quinn in the US, Edit Zsanyi in Hungary and Eldad Kedem in Israel. I am indebted to each one of them for all the productive discussions, and to Laura especially for her comments on my paper during the Walter Benjamin conference. And for much, much more.

Throughout these years I was closely associated with the Department of Film and Television Studies where I had the opportunity to present my work at the Ph D film seminars, lectures and conferences. This is also a place where I have come to know some wonderful people who left an important mark on my work and my life. First of all I want to thank Alison McMahan, one of my dearest friends, without whom it would have been much more difficult to survive the final stage of writing this book. Our early morning running sessions in Vondel park several times a week (which was all her idea) helped me to build up the strength to endure the most trying year ever. We would run and discuss all kinds of topics, but mostly our work; when we became tired of running we would just walk, and when we were tired of talking we would just run. Often, Warren Buckland, whom I have finally learned to know better through Alison, would join the discussion; I love spending time with them, they both love film and have so much to contribute to film scholarship.

I owe many thanks to Michael Wedel for all the comments and illuminating discussions, for his understanding and for his open heartedness. His collegial support and friendship are very precious to me.
I am grateful to other colleagues from the PhD film seminar, especially Gerwin van der Pol, Ivo Blom, Michael Vocino, Tarja Laine, Sybille Lammes, Andre Wardenburg, Susanne Kooi and Wim Staat. I would like to thank Willem Pohl and Jürgen Miller, for their support throughout the years. And especially Jan Simons who invited me to teach the Europe-Hollywood-Europe course for the first time and gave me important guidelines and valuable suggestions. I would like to thank Renée de Graaf for her efficiency in resolving all the administrative matters.

With her devotion to film scholarship Patricia Pisters has become an important force not only of the PhD film seminars but also of the entire film department. I am especially indebted to her for inviting me to participate in the ASCA salon on Gilles Deleuze and for her many fruitful comments on my paper. I am truly delighted that she is a member of my PhD committee. This is also an occasion to thank the other members of the committee who agreed to officially comment on my dissertation: Christine van Boheemen who I have come to know through her thought-provoking lectures. I am also very honored that Ginette Verstraete has agreed to take on the role of the opponent. Finally, I am extremely pleased that a person who has played a crucial role in my academic life, Catherine Lord, is on my PhD committee. Her bi-sensitivity, her ability to traverse from the questions of the mind to the questions of the soul makes her one of my favorite scholars and one of my favorite people.

There are so many other scholars I would like to thank for engaging with my work, those who organized the ASCA salons, attended the ASCA PhD reading group or took part in thematic workshops. Jan van Luxemburg played a particularly important role because he gave me the chance to present my project at the ASCA salon Structure and Story when I was at the initial phase of my research. This “initiation” into the ASCA community had a most productive and encouraging effect. I would also like to thank John Neubauer for participating in our ASCA PhD reading groups and for sharing his knowledge with us. Hent de Vries, Burcht Pranger, Helga Gayer, Patricia Spyer were some of those scholars whose engagement with ASCA taught me about academic life and the ways our intellectual community can be strengthened. Of the ASCA members who reside outside of Amsterdam I would especially like to thank Michael Steinberg for his support and for the insights and ideas he was generous enough to share over the years.

I would also like to thank my former professors and mentors from the University of Zagreb for their continuous support and the commitment to film that they have passed on to me, especially Branko Ivanda, Nenad Puhovski, Zoran Tadic, Hrvoje Turkovic and Tomislav Gotovac. With their persistence and creative energy my colleagues...
Silvije Petranovic, Hrvoje Hribar, Vinko Bresan and Snjezana Tribusson have been an everlasting inspiration. On those rare occasions when we have a chance to meet, we realize that some things never change because no matter what, our lives will always revolve around cinema.

When it comes to those friends who are not related to ASCA nor to the film department, I think it is a miracle that they remained by my side. I have cancelled so many appointments because I had to attend this or that workshop, prepare for one of the seminars or simply work on my dissertation. I am indebted to them to death for not giving up on me, for being there, for understanding what this project means to me, for supporting me unconditionally. Djuro Grdinic, Barbara de Groot, Radovan Lucic, Giorgia, Augusto, Ruud Panhuisen, Kreso Kovacicek, Vladimir Miovic, Grainne Delaney, Aural Pelleg, and the most caring and loving of them all, Jolanda Kuipers. thank you all so much!

I am very fortunate that in spite of living on different sides of the continent I still share a closeness with my friends from Zagreb, Marina Ralasic, Senka Zaninovic, Sanja Ivic, Jelenko Bantic, Vanja Matujec, Max Juricic and Sanja Muzaferija. Their being there has given me so much strength.

As it so happens I have spent the first semester of this academic year in Hong Kong, as a Y. K. Pao postdoctoral fellow of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. I would especially like to thank Angelina Yee for her confidence, her guidance and her constant support. I am very honored to be able to participate in the activities of the Center for Cultural Studies, and to work in an environment of so many excellent scholars and energetic students. The three colleagues who have already made a difference in my life are Jowen Tung, Kam-ming Yip and Flora Fu. I would also like to thank other faculty members who have all been very supportive and who gave me many useful suggestions, Karl Kao, Chang-tai Hung, Li-fen Chen, Hao Chang, Zongli Lu, David Lawrence and Cecilia Chien. My special thanks go to Isha Chun Chun Ting, my teaching assistant and to my roommate Man fung Yip for their in the last semester. I also want to thank the superbly efficient staff - Rita Chui, Teresa Wong, Phil Lam, Iris Ling, Anita Wong and Joan Tang.

Finally, my family; my brother Alan his wife Natasa, my multi talented niece Timea and my adorable nephew Luka my favorite storyteller. I am so grateful I have them in my life. My mother and father, Mira and Marko Vojkovic gave me my wings. They taught me never to fear the world because there are so many good people in it. To them I dedicate this book.