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Stuck in a revolving door : secularism, assimilation and democratic pluralism

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Acknowledgments

One of the things that kept me going while writing this thesis was the promise that the book would one day be finished and that then the acknowledgments could be written, in which it would finally be possible to mention the 'team' that sustained me.

A range of people and institutions have made this study possible. First of all, I would like to thank my *promotores*. Ieme van der Poel was there from the very beginning, and she has always been supportive of everything I did. She meticulously went through my chapters and discussed them with me patiently. Always there to check whether I had not forgotten a few historical details or overlooked a possible interpretation of Proust's work, she also helped me many times to find a less complicated *entrée* into what I wanted to write. Veit Bader was there only for the final two years, but during this time his generous offerings of advice and support, his quick replies to my many questions, his accurate and encouraging comments on my draft versions, and all the time he invested, have been invaluable to me. Veit has enabled me to find my way through heaps of texts, contexts and lines of argumentation in less time than I had held possible, and I am very grateful for that. Further, I would like to thank Mieke Bal, Rainer Bauboeck, Jan-Willem Duyvendak, Matthijs Engelberts, Ido de Haan and Ruth Sonderegger for agreeing to be on my dissertation committee.

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An institution whose management forms part of the team and functions as a source of inspiration is a fortunate one. ASCA is managed by Eloë Kingma, whom all the ASCA Ph.D.-candidates thoroughly admire (or should I say love?), and whom I was so lucky to have as a neighbour across the corridor for several years. When Jantine van Gogh arrived to strengthen Eloë's office, the three of us together must sometimes have made passers-by wonder whether some giggling schoolgirls had been let loose in the university building. I greatly admire Jantine for never losing her sense of irony, even after her brother was killed in such a horrible way, and for never mixing up her sorrow, anger and pain with what I was writing about in my dissertation, which I often discussed with her and Eloë.

Last October, I received the following e-mail: 'Dear Yolande, we have just come back from the jungle (I am exaggerating) and we are now in Lima, so that I can finally give an extensive comment of your chapters. I will start with chapter one.' What followed were a range of precise comments, typed in a café in Lima. This e-mail was from René Gabriëls, and it could not have come from anyone else. René has been supportive of my work from the very first time we met, and he has read versions of practically all my chapters. In the last stage of my writing, he meticulously read my first two chapters and I regret that I have not yet been able to process all of his critical comments. René's e-mail was not only characteristic of the wonderful person he is, but also of the atmosphere among the editorial team of *Krisis; tijdschrift voor actuele filosofie*. I would like to thank the other members of the editorial team, with whom I shared numerous hours of debate and many new ideas: Hans Harbers, Noortje Marres, Ruth Benschop, Peter-Paul Verbeek, Frank Rebel, Niels Cornelissen, Maartje Schermer, René Boomkens, Tsjalling Swierstra, Ruth Sonderegger, and Irena Rosenthal. Odile Verhaar, a former member of the editorial team, read large parts of my work and commented very accurately and supportively. Ido de Haan, another former member, gave me some important reading advices about French-Jewish history.

Then there are my 'Marx sisters', Jenny Slatman, Karin de Boer and Ruth Sonderegger, with whom I shared many enjoyable evenings of discussion (and some gossip ...) while reading Marx and Foucault. Karin read part of my work in a difficult period of time and greatly encouraged me to keep going and to follow my own way of thinking. I also participated in the 'Onderzoeksgroep Islam en feminisme' founded by Karen Vintges. She, Annelies Moors, Irena Rosenthal, Loubna El Morabet, Carla Hoekendijk, and I organised a successful conference in De Balie in 2005 about *Women and Islam*, and I hope for a continuation of our activities.

In 2002, Andreas Huyssen was very hospitable when I stayed in New York for three months. This is admirable especially for someone who hardly had any time even for things 'objectively' much more important than paying attention to a visiting doctoral student from Amsterdam. I am sorry that I have not been able to make more explicit in my dissertation how much I have learnt from his work on cultural memory. In New York, Vera Zolberg and Nancy Fraser generously admitted me to their courses at the New School for Social Research, where I also met my future friends Hilla Dayan and Christiane Wilke. The year after, this friendship was extended during a summer school organised by the New School in Kraków, where Hilla and Christiane's company merged with that of Paweł Leszkowicz and Tomek Kitliński, two admirable Polish scholars and gay activists. During my stay in New York, Heather Ecker, who was working at the comparative literature department at Columbia University, generously offered me her umbrella while getting very wet herself, something

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quite characteristic of her general attitude. She shared with me many great stories about American academic life and helped me by discussing my own work. The time I spent in the 92nd Street Y was fruitful for my work, also thanks to the inspiration provided by several of my floormates, in particular Dorit Cohen, Dyane Lokonon, Anna Cohen, Keiko Mato and Grace Cheng. My time in New York would not have been possible without the support of ASCA, The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Faculty of Humanities of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, the Radboud Stichting, and the Dr. Hendrik Muller's Vaderlandsch Fonds.

I would like to thank the Universiteit van Amsterdam for its general support over the years. It did not try to kick me out when I heavily opposed its system of Ph.D. bursaries together with Dirk van Miert, Arjan Poelwijk, Mark de Vries, Reinhilde König and many other Ph.D. candidates in the LOBP (Landelijk Overleg BeursPromovendi); it even extended the duration of my appointment. However, I still wish that the conditions for Ph.D. candidates today would be more in line with the work they do.

The lively 'Marcel Proust Vereniging' hosts people who share an exceptional love of Proust's work, some of whom I owe special thanks: Sabine van Wesemael, Annelies Schulte Nordholt, Manet van Montfrans, Sjef Houppermans, and, once again, Ieme van der Poel. Jacques Dubois and Edward Hughes were among the guest speakers whose work I learnt most from. Edward Hughes was one of the first to encourage me to try to take lessons from Proust's work for today's questions around cultural diversity and migration, and he put me on the track of various aspects of Proust's work that I analyse in chapter three. I first met Edward Hughes through Jo Labanyi, who was the congenial host of a summer school about cultural memory organised for University College London. Jo gave me the opportunity to publish the first version of what has become the chapter about 'the red shoes'.

Many people connected to the philosophy department of the Universiteit van Amsterdam have been supportive of my work. Hent de Vries first encouraged me to think critically about the relation between philosophy and religion, already during my M.A. in philosophy. I hope for the subsistence of a strong Amsterdam-Baltimore connection in the future. Then there are the colleagues with whom I taught courses over the last years, and I cannot say how grateful I am for their flexibility in giving me the opportunity to combine teaching with finishing my thesis: Asja Szafraniec and Elsbeth Brouwer in our course on metaphysics, Marieke Borren and Pieter Pekelharing in our course on the history of philosophy. Pieter Pekelharing and Victor Kal read large parts of my work at a late stage and provided me with inspiring and helpful commentaries. Marijke de Wit 'rescued' my first semester in the academic year 2005-2006 by rescheduling my teaching at the last moment; it is only because of her actions

that this book is finished now. I look forward very much to working within the philosophy department, and particularly to cooperating with my new colleagues within the NWO-project *The Sacred and the Secular; Genealogies of Self, State and Society in the Contemporary Islamic World*: Michiel Leezenberg, Mariwan Kanie, Ruud Peters, Peter van der Veer and a PhD-candidate yet to be appointed.

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Atique Sultanpour was the first person I came to know through being a volunteer for VluchtelingenWerk Nederland. When I met him, he was a lonely but courageous person with images of extreme violence and memories of great fears inscribed on his body and his retina. I am very happy that he has found the strength to help Ferozah come to the Netherlands, to study Dutch, to pick up his nearly finished degree in medicine, to work as a geriatric carer *and* to raise a child (and soon two children). Mahbooba Menapal is the other person I met as a volunteer. We spent many hours, but not enough by far, discussing our lives. Knowing Atique, Mahbooba and their families is perhaps the most important source of inspiration for what I write in this book.

My parents have been very supportive over years of finishing subsequent master's theses, a theatre play, and then a Ph.D. When I suffered from RSI, my mother even typed my entire M.A.-thesis and also long quotes from Proust for the current study. Moreover, my parents' financial help has been substantial and together they deserve to be officially baptised the 'B.C.P. Jansen and Hiske Zijlstra's daughter's sponsoring Foundation'. My mother read the whole manuscript in one week just after I had finished it, and it made me really happy to feel that she was proud of me, even though our opinions do not always

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converge.

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After I finished writing my chapters, they were not really finished. From my own file they were moved to two other files. First, after the folder called 'Af' [finished], they went to the folder 'Afesther'. Esther Peeren meticulously corrected my English from A to Z, sometimes rereading texts she had already seen as articles at least once, and she also checked all my translations from the French. She never forgot to correct anything, sometimes adding, at crucial moments, precisely the right small advices about content as well, and especially about how to keep relaxed in stressful moments. I really hope that academia is going to provide her the place she deserves.

Yet after the folder 'Afesther' came the folder 'Afhubb'. When the documents reached this folder, they were totally transformed, suddenly looking like real book pages with headers and footers, cartoons in the right places, and with all the references double-checked. I cannot say how grateful I am to Huub, my long-time beloved partner, for not having to do this all alone. All the credit for the lay-out *and* the index goes to him; all the remaining mistakes must be the result of my sometimes being too slow or unorganised. (A word of thanks should also be addressed to Fred Zurel from 'F&N Eigen Beheer publishers' in Amsterdam, who designed the cover in a way sensitive to my preferences, and who printed the book carefully).

Huub has appeared several times in these acknowledgments already, and this is because our lives are interwoven at all levels. Love, topics of interest, jobs, hobbies, help, people we like, we share all that. This may sound a bit odd and a little romantic, and indeed, we are not like sorb-apples. But we learnt to write together when we were editors of the student magazine in the philosophy department; we share a love of the same kinds of literature and music; an interest in critical political debate; a love of travelling, of Paris and Prague, of discussing our ideas during long walks in the Flevopark, the dunes and elsewhere. I am proud that Huub has asked me to take pictures while he

conducted interviews with many people in Eastern Europe, particularly during our visits to Romany settlements in places such as Sečovce, Chminianské Jakubovany, Malá Domaša and Košice, where we went together with our friend Maria Horňáková. I am looking forward to finally become the one able to support Huub in finishing his dissertation about Europeanisation and emerging Romany networks in Eastern-Europe, instead of being the one who has to be supported. Through years of seeing me struggle with theses, but also through hardly being able to walk for well over a year, Huub never became impatient and never lost confidence in me; you did push me in the end, but in the right direction. Thanks, Huub.



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