Acknowledgements

There are a great many people without whom this research would have been impossible. Or shoddy. Or ill-supported. Or simply tedious.

The first that comes to mind is Mieke Bal, who was also, not co-incidentally, the first person I sought out after deciding to apply for the position of PhD student at the University of Amsterdam. I am very grateful that Mieke, almost instantly, agreed to be my supervisor, as, without this, I would have had to forgo the entire ASCA-experience which has so enriched my life.

One of the other recipients of my heartfelt thanks is another person I encountered in the ASCA hallways (then still at the Bungehuis) quite early on in the process, and that is Eloë Kingsma. Eloë has figured large in my daily life as ASCA PhD student, and without her hearty laugh, resounding congratulatory kisses and encouraging pats on the back, the process would have been a lot less cheery.

I also most dearly want to thank Murat Aydemir, who - even though he came to occupy a vital official function in the process of my research, and without whom I can quite honestly say this piece of writing before you would most certainly never have been, well, before you - started out as my first office mate at ASCA, and, aside from a driving force for my research, has always been a tremendously enjoyable and agreeable and hilarious colleague and friend. His input on my research has truly been indispensable.

I want to thank Ena Jansen, for being the first person to respond enthusiastically to my research proposal, even before I ever thought of taking it to the University of Amsterdam. She was the first to make me believe that it really was worthwhile pursuing over all these years, both by her early enthusiastic encouragement, and by checking up on me every so often at conferences and meetings where I would run in to her. I also want to thank her for forcing me to practice my (mostly dormant) Afrikaans skills in our e-mail correspondence – this always brought the reality of my topic closer to home that it sometimes actually was.

I also want to thank Ieme van der Poel, Theo d’Haen, Willem Westeyn, Rolf Bremmer and Ineke Tieke-Boonstra for epitomizing the sort of people who do smart academic work but are, above all, very human in being endowed with human kindness and humour, and for giving me as many breaks as I have had. A warm thanks also goes out to all the students I have taught over the years – at the University of Leiden, the University of Amsterdam and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie – for always giving me lots of lip and constantly inciting me to think further and deeper and in a different way.

And always, always I have felt the warmth and cheer and encouragement and inspiration that my friends have brought me over the years – some who came early in the process, some who
came late, and many of whom I know will never leave me, in spite of, perhaps, being some geographical miles away from me. There is Begüm Firat, who tirelessly braved the Amsterdam day-and-nightlife with me during my ASCA years, and who gave me invaluable information on the city, on iconic analysis and, most of all, on friendship. And Astrid Van Weyenberg, with whom I shared a cosy office at the Oude Turfmarkt, but most of all an incredible number of experiences – not all of them pleasant, but all of them together, and all of them have only made her dearer to me as a friend. And Anette Hoffmann, with whom I would swim at the Mirandabad in the mornings of Summer, and who would always dazzle me with her mouth-watering cooking and impassioned standpoints on South African politics. And Maria Boletsis, who shared the experience of organising activist conferences, attending clothes-swaps and many, many dinner and drink sessions with me, and who even proved to be an incredibly enjoyable flatmate for a couple of months in the middle of it all. And Marijke de Valck, who hosted me for some wonderfully relaxed dinner and movie sessions, took me on an amazing trip to Rome and has never ceased being an amazing friend. And Ihab Saloul, who makes a lousy pool-partner in combination with my awkward play, but makes an incredible friend and wonderful tour-guide through Leeds. And Jan Hein Hoogstad, who is a pleasure to collaborate with in teaching book- and film-studded courses, but is mostly an exceptionally loyal and warm and funny friend. And Sarah de Mul, who has lifted me on the back of bikes, sat in parks with me, and made every ASCA Crea session one to remember. And of course Sonja van Wichelen, Pieter Verstraete, Noa Roei, Paulina Aroch-Fugelli, Ilse van Liempt, Hilje van der Horst, Pieter Breek, Hilla Dayan, P.W. Zuidhof, Eliza Steinbock, Sonja van Wichelen, Stephan Besser, Laura Copier, Esther Peeren, Sudeep Dasgupta and Carolyn Birdsall. And Josephine, of course, who, even though she has now been replaced by Desirée, will always hold a special place in my heart for changing my life on the morning of my 30th birthday.

The people who always deserve my gratitude, for so many more things aside from encouraging me with my research, are my family. My three sisters (one from another mister) and my parents. First of all Tarja Laine, who, over the years since I have come to know her, has become my sister in Amsterdam, even though I only met her at the age of 29. Her love and friendship, and all our intense chat-sessions, whether on Amsterdam terrasjes or around her dinner table, have always given me strength and kept me sane. I can’t ever imagine being without her again. Then Judith, who, even though she is far away from me, is always more with me than she might imagine, and whose love and pride and encouragement have made this entire project possible. And Tanja, who, it seems, has always been right there with me in celebrating with the ASCA crowd and has constantly supported me – whether by encouraging me to continue or helping me to take my mind off it at certain times. And my mother, who, aside from assuring me of her constant love, has been an incredible help and inspiration through our intense and hour-long discussions on various deep
topics at various terrasjes and cafés in the city. And, of course, my father, who never shrinks from entering into an animated debate on gender issues with me, but who, most of all, has always made me feel capable of anything I set my mind to, entitled to everything the world has to offer, and quite certain of being continuously loved.

Lastly, I would like to thank my in-house sociologist, Alex van Venrooij. Not because he comes last for me, by any means, but because I want to emphasise that without being able to discuss this research with him, or laugh with him about it, or have him comfort me whenever things went belly-up, this process would have been downright impossible. And shoddy. And ill-supported. And simply tedious. As would the non-academic part of my life.

Thank you all!

Saskia Lourens
20 August 2009