UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS:
AT THE CROSSROADS OF COLLABORATIVE FILMMAKING AND FEMINIST
SCHOLARSHIP

By

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ABSTRACT

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This hybrid dissertation combines collaborative, creative filmmaking and feminist scholarship grounded in German studies. The written dissertation addresses fundamental issues in feminist filmmaking--body, voice, and collaboration--and is in part conceived as a complement to the travel documentary *Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito* (2017), a bi-autobiographical account of a journey from Egypt to Germany that was co-directed and produced by the author of this dissertation and Maria Pérez-Escalá. Taken together, the two ask the question: how can we *reframe* the woman traveler? Chapter One focuses on *Cinematography and the Body* and explores embodied, intersubjective and haptic strategies to depict women's bodies. Chapter Two focuses on *Narration and Voice* and makes an argument for constructing embodied voices and expressions of relationality. Chapter Three demonstrates the potential of *Collaboration, Friendship and Sisterhood* in women's (bi-) autobiographical travel accounts. These elements have taken center stage throughout the pre-production, production and post-production of making *Wanderlust* and are explored within each chapter in a three-dimensional way. The first dimension is a theoretical-historical engagement with literature from feminist film studies, autobiographical scholarship, postcolonial theories of representation and German film history. The second dimension involves analysis of (primarily German) feminist films that grapple with questions of how to depict the female body and/or express female subjectivity through the filmic medium. The third dimension connects these first two with the film

Wanderlust through an in-depth analysis and reflection of selected scenes. As an experiment in crossing cultures, borders, disciplines, and languages this dissertation presents practical examples of and theoretical insight into cross-cultural collaboration and autobiographical documentary filmmaking. In the epilogue, the wider cultural and political context of voluntary leisure travel is contrasted with other, less privileged forms of human mobility, such as migration and refugeeism, making an argument for reimagining touristic discourses in order to open up spaces for (narrative) encounters with these realities.

Appended to this dissertation are two sample scenes from *Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito* (2017). The first consists of the opening sequence, which illustrates the core issues addressed in the body of the dissertation (camera, narration, and collaboration) (opening_sequence_wanderlust.mov). The second focuses on a border crossing between Egypt and Israel and addresses the problematics of embodied, gendered travel (border_crossing_wanderlust.mov). Information on how to access the complete film is available at wanderlustlapelicula.com.

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we have accompanied each other. Without your friendship, our many encounters, and re-

encounters, this project would not exist. ¡Gracias!

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Introduction

This dissertation is the result of crossing cultures, disciplines, languages, and discourses. It is the outcome of intensive work with feminist film studies, autobiographical scholarship, postcolonial theories of representation, and German film history, as much as it is the result of a two-and-a-half-month-long journey from Egypt to Germany and more than 40 hours of footage in various languages. In this dissertation, I set out on a hybrid endeavor of combining filmmaking and scholarship. Too often, the professional worlds of academia and filmmaking place practitioners and theorists in separate categories; I would like my dissertation to be understood as an effort to bridge this divide.

The centerpiece of this undertaking is my own documentary *Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito* (2017), a bi-autobiographical account of a journey from Egypt to Germany, which I co-directed and produced with Maria Pérez Escala. Between May and July of 2014, Maria and I embarked on a journey between Egypt and Germany to document our travel experiences as women. The resulting film records our travels across three continents--Africa, Asia and Europe--taking trains, boats and buses through 14 different countries.[1] The primary text of this dissertation project is thus one that I created together with Maria. It is accompanied by this written treatment of the filmic core concerns, in a format that is in turn theoretical and historical, analytical and reflective.

The aim of this hybrid dissertation is to *reframe* the woman traveler. The historical predominance of male traveler stories over female traveler stories has created a legacy of (gendered) travel representation with few, and often problematic, representations of women

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[1] The countries we traveled through on our journey were: Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Southern Cyprus, Northern Cyprus, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Austria and Germany.

travelers. These representations have real life consequences for women since limitations on their identities are directly connected to limitations on their mobility. If, for example, women travelers are exoticized or considered reckless for traveling in the first place, it restricts where and when their bodies can appear in public spaces and the appropriate time and way these appearances are deemed legitimate. As a woman traveler, scholar, and filmmaker, my motivations to explore this topic were born out of my own embodied travel experiences, the lack of women's travel narratives and their representation in film, and the gendered nature of space, which triggered my desire to create a conversation around women's embodied travel experiences. Consequently, I approach the *reframing* of the woman traveler from the perspectives of a scholar and filmmaker: in filmmaking, a *frame* is one of the many still images which composes the complete work; in cinematography *framing* is used to refer to the segment of external reality the camera captures; and a *frame* in more general terms is often understood as a schema of unquestioned beliefs and values we use when inferring meaning. By *reframing*, I therefore hope to instill a process of not only challenging what is shown on screen, but also encouraging a reassessment of the meaning that is inferred when we think about the woman traveler.

Filmmaker and scholar Britta H. Sjogren highlights the benefits of building bridges between theory and practice by arguing that making films has forced her to look for solutions to problems "that theory suggests are nearly insoluble" (5). In a slightly different way, the benefits of combining theory and practice also became apparent in this project: Maria and I embarked on our journey to document our travel in the summer of 2014 following the first year of my PhD studies. Thanks to a mix of healthy optimism, naiveté and enthusiasm, we set out, assuming that it was possible to represent our traveling bodies in a self-determined way and that our subjectivity could find expression within the filmic medium. Since this was relatively early on in

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the process of my doctoral education, the largest part of theoretical engagement took place *after* the filming of *Wanderlust* and confronted me with numerous questions and struggles. Working through these questions and struggles during our post-production process then largely overlapped with the writing process. Consequently, the written part of this dissertation dialogues and interacts with our film on a variety of levels as the experience of crossing cultures, borders, disciplines, and languages emerges in various ways over the following chapters. Additionally, the lived experience of traveling, filming, and post-producing our film in a *joint* way, shaped many of the insights I offer in the following pages. The reason for calling attention to such elements is to highlight the transnational, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and hybrid core of this project.

Reframing the Woman Traveler Through (Bi-)Autobiographical Filmmaking

Film scholar Christine N. Brinckmann points out how film has the power to create and conserve collective ideas of gender roles, as well as idealistic ways of behaving and looking. This is all the more powerful because film works with "photographic evidence," through which societal and cultural conventions and constructs are presented as natural or exemplary manifestations of reality (Brinckmann 167).[2] *What* is represented and *how* something is represented therefore have real life consequences. The aesthetic representation of women travelers in audiovisual media is often problematic in the sense that it produces rigid imaginative frameworks for women, and reproduces these frameworks for the societies in and out of which they travel.[3] In mainstream audiovisual production women travelers are often victimized, fueling

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[2] The original text by Brinckmann talks about "fotografische[r] Evidenz," which I translate as photographic evidence.

[3] This is something which becomes most evident in the separation between public and private spheres where the

the premise that they are more vulnerable than men and that they are at high risk of falling victim to (sexual) violence. Additionally or alternatively, the image of the woman traveler is often administered in favor of the aestheticization of the female body, presenting women travelers as sexualized objects of desire.

In recent years, biographical motion pictures like *Wild* (2014), *Eat Pray Love* (2010) or *The Queen Of The Desert* (2015) have related the events of woman travelers for the big screens in Hollywood. Strikingly, these films, largely based on female autobiographical accounts, have been directed by men. Werner Herzog's *The Queen of the Desert* (2015) depicts the English traveller and writer Gertrude Bell (Nicole Kidman) with a particular focus on her love interests, largely disregarding her relative power as well as her intelligence in handling the complexities of deal-making in the Middle East where she served the British empire. Ryan Murphy's work in *Eat Pray Love* (2010) also puts a strong focus on the protagonist's quest for love, suggesting that Liz (Julia Roberts) finally finds the "balance" she has been searching for when she falls in love with Felipe (Javier Bardem). Jean-Marc Vallée's *Wild* (2014) explores the particular challenges of a female hiker on the Pacific Coast Trail, but does so in a way that seems to suggest that for a woman (almost) every encounter with a strange man carries the possibility of sexual predation. This is not to say that male directors in general lack the capacity to represent women travelers in a non-victimized way. The film *Tracks* (2013), directed by John Curran, for example, is based on the written account of Robyn Davidson's nine-month journey by camel across the Australian

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endeavour to tie women to the domestic realm was both a spatial control and a social control on women's status (Massey 179). If women travelers are tied to gendered cultural fantasies--e.g., that women travelers are more vulnerable, reckless for traveling by themselves or exoticized--it will restrict where and when a woman's body may appear and what it can do. During our journey from Egypt to Germany we often felt that we were infiltrating places where we were not supposed to be. Particularly at border crossings where women are underrepresented (Mackay 4), we often felt inadequate or out of place.

desert and depicts Robyn (Mia Wasikowska) and her encounters without focusing needlessly on her (sexual) vulnerability as a woman traveler. Despite this counter-example, it is salient to note how a male-dominated film production culture manifests itself in stereotyping and one-dimensional representation of female protagonists. As a way of constituting knowledge about the woman traveler, these communications produce conversations that further a perception that objectifies and exoticizes the woman traveler.

One way of breaking away from this problematic representation in cultural production is for women to take matters of representation into their own hands. In Germany, the second half of the 20ᵗʰ century was a time when many women filmmakers started to do exactly that. Fueled by the movement of a second wave of feminism in the late sixties and the emergence of literary movements like *New Subjectivity* and *Verständigungsliteratur*, women authors, directors and artists started to produce cultural works that informed the broader public about their specific lived experiences as women.[4] A number of German-language films made by women directors since the 1970s reflect this idea of an active stepping out. Directors such as Margarethe von Trotta, Helke Sander, Helke Misselwitz, and Jutta Brückner started to make their first feature films and made important contributions to feminist film culture. It was while working on this dissertation that I became increasingly aware of the challenges and struggles of feminist filmmaking and focused on the works of these filmmakers as sites that grapple with problems and possible solutions of addressing the status of women in film. Drawing on the legacy of

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[4] While for many men *New Subjectivity* was seen as a retreat towards the private (after the disappointing "stagnation" of the left wing movement), for women it was an active stepping out, to bring the private sphere into the public sphere (Kosta 38). Filmic and literary works by women were addressing issues such as oppression, sexism and unequal treatment in their professional and private lives. The verb *verständigen* from which *Verständigungsliteratur* is formed connotes both an informative function as well as a dialogic intention, encouraging a sense of solidarity with female readers and audiences.

German feminist filmmaking, I turn to these sites in order to step outside of my own project and look at it within the context of predecessors, who have dealt with similar issues as Maria and I did. The selection of films I consult for my own filmmaking, and analyze for my theoretical explorations, are based on the overlap in concepts and questions most pertinent to our own filmmaking. In its hybrid form this dissertation explores the ways in which bi-autobiographical film can resist, or even transform, the limiting representations of, and messages about, the female body in transit.

Throughout the making of our film and my writing about it, I was however not only concerned with the representation of the woman traveler. Creating a travel representation from my position as a white, German woman, studying at a university in the US Midwest in collaboration with a woman from La Plata, Argentina calls for scrutinizing the many ways in which my cultural, geographical and social location influences my work. In the last three decades numerous scholars, such as Marie Louise Pratt and Shannon Marie Butler, have highlighted how literary and filmic travel representations of the 20th century helped to support European imperialist agendas by emphasizing world-views of their home countries in the encounter with the Other (Butler 4). Germany, in particular, has a strong history of travel narratives, and scholarship has indicated how the practice of explaining other cultures through an imperialist worldview both expresses and facilitates imperialist power relations.[5] While crossing cultures is not (only) an intellectual process, but utterly embodied, this does not mean that it can, or should, not be intellectualized as well. It is within this context that I turn to auto-ethnography as a way to

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[5] Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism,* literature's affiliation with master discourses to legitimate the oppression and domination of Others has been widely acknowledged. In the German context, numerous scholars such as Susanne Zantop and Uta G. Poiger have highlighted how (travel) representations helped to support German imperialist agendas and supported the creation of German empires in formal as well as informal ways.

conceptualize the relationship between Maria and me, but also as a way to account for our relationship to the wider cultural, political and social context of travel in which we encounter and represent other places and cultures. At the intersection of postcolonial power dynamics, questions of representation, and feminism this dissertation investigates the role of gender, but also explores other social categories such as race, class, and nationality in their significance for knowledge production.[6]

Auto-Ethnography and Bi-Autobiography as Spaces of Cultural Encounters

Carolyn Ellis writes that "[...] autoethnography starts with personal experiences and studies 'us' in relationships and situations. Doing autoethnography involves a back-and-forth movement between experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience" (13-14). This description of auto-ethnography construes it as something that sounds similar to autobiographical writing and thus raises the question as to how these two types of life writing differ from one another. Consulting the literature on auto-ethnography, one major assumption is that autobiographical writing is concerned (only) with the personal story, while auto-ethnography uses self-observation and reflexive investigation to understand the ways in which personal histories are "implicated in larger social formations and historical processes" (Russel 276).[7] Generally speaking, auto-ethnographic works can be

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[6] Linda Alcoff and Elisabeth Potter argue for "feminist epistemologies" as being concerned with the relationship between gender and knowledge, but they also highlight that gender alone cannot serve as the sole classification of analysis. Instead they propose that "[g]ender identity cannot be adequately understood - or even *perceived* - except as a component of complex interrelationships with other systems of identification and hierarchy" (Alcoff and Potter 3).

[7] A few decades ago, auto-ethnography was more closely defined as a study of a certain group to which the researcher him/herself belongs, while nowadays it is often used more broadly to describe those texts that use a researcher's personal experience to depict cultural practices and experiences (Jones et. al 25-32). Mary Louise Pratt introduced the term as an oppositional term to Western representations of cultures and people outside of what they

understood as concerned with the study of other cultures and people, while also describing and

analyzing the researcher's personal experiences. In comparison, autobiographical works focus

more tightly, and often exclusively, on the life story of the author/subject. I would argue that

autobiographical and auto-ethnographic writing must be understood as placed on the same

continuum, where one end is concerned exclusively with the life story of the subject who is also

the author of the story, and the other end is concerned with describing of cultural phenomena and

practices while the researcher also reflects deeply on his or her role throughout that process.[8] The

bi in bi-autobiographical then works in two ways. First, it points to the intimate cultural

encounter between Maria and me. Second, it refers to the twofold perspective through which

Maria and I explore our personal experience as women travelers and the way our travel

experience takes place in contact with other people and cultures. It is in that sense that I

understand our film and my writing about it as spaces of cultural encounters.

Giving voice to personal experiences for the purpose of broadening theoretical/academic

knowledge is of course not without problems. Issues such as the legitimacy, reliability, validity,

as well as the question of how one's own ego or unconscious desires might influence the

research, are to be considered and addressed.[9] In our film, we deal with several situations which

have to do with traveling itself (e.g. getting sick or estimating risks, but also the immense

privilege which allowed us to embark on this journey in the first place), traveling as a woman

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consider their own: "If ethnographic texts are a means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others, auto-ethnographic texts are those the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations" (Hanson 186).

[8] Another way in which the literature distinguishes auto-ethnographic writing from autobiographical writing is by highlighting that autobiographies usually focus on a single author, while auto-ethnographies include perspectives of multiple subjects. Eventually, though, there seems to be no agreement and Jones et al. argue that the delimitation between autobiography and auto-ethnography proves to be "a complex and uncertain activity" (23).

[9] See for example Holt's "Representation, Legitimation, and Autoethnography: An Autoethnographic Writing Story" for more detailed account of pitfalls, issues and problems related to auto-ethnographic works.

(e.g. dealing with increased attention in public places and/or sexual harassment), filmmaking (e.g. how the camera changes the way people react to us and the process of turning a joint experience into an audiovisual representation) and sharing this reality with another person (e.g. the negotiation of our own cultural differences and our relationship).

At the intersection of these issues, I often found myself struggling with the question how I was representing myself and how much I wanted to reveal about myself. For example, it was difficult for me in terms of self-representation to explain and justify the deliberate choosing of situations, routes and experiences that were uncomfortable and could potentially put us in danger. I had to accept that my desire to embark on this journey in order to later draw on these experiences is also connected to the way I utilize foreign environments to fuel my own idea of myself as an "adventurous spirit." In a similar vein, I was of course also afraid that my readers, or the audience of our film, would not like me or that I could be misunderstood. While I wanted to present an "authentic" self, I was also wondering which "authentic" self I wanted to present, since my engagement with the literature, theories, and other films altered, questioned, and replaced my previous opinions and ideas with new ones. As all the scrutinizing and reflecting on myself helped me to bring *some* of my underlying and previously unconscious motives and desires to the surface, a sense of never fully knowing or understanding my self remains.

It becomes clear from this short digression into the anxieties and limitations of using personal experiences in one's research that autobiographical writing cannot produce an author/subject who is completely aware of his/her motivations and/or underlying reason for choosing a certain topic in the first place (Clough 7). It also does not resolve the representational problem that lived experiences cannot be represented as they "really" are. The way an exploration and representation of personal stories can then contribute to knowledge production is

by accepting that it is always based on knowing *and* not knowing, and making transparent the *process* of how one's personal story is created. The additional value in *bi*-autobiographical accounts then may lie in the twofold perspective that can serve as a control mechanism to check the self and the other's unconscious desires and ideas.

Finally, the joint endeavor between Maria and me in making our documentary also demands a clarification with regard to her contribution to the project. *Wanderlust* is a genuine collaboration on all levels of the filmmaking process (conceptualization, production and post-production). The written part of this dissertation has been researched and written by me alone, yet it includes information from our joint experience of making the film. Throughout the writing process I have thus taken great care not to assume anything in Maria's name that is not also perceivable in the film itself, or articulated and documented in conversations between us.

Overview

In structuring the written part of this dissertation, I draw on three elements of filmmaking that have taken center stage throughout the pre-production, production and post-production of making our film: 1) cinematography and its possibility to capture the experiences of actual human bodies on a rugged journey, 2) narration and voice, and the recounting of travel experience from the perspective of a woman traveler, and 3) friendship and collaboration between women, in both form and content, and its (political) potential as an agent of change.

While Chapter One on *Cinematography and the Body* is primarily concerned with the depiction of the *bios* of *autobiography* and the way in which bodies leave their traces on the filmic image, Chapter Two on *Narration and Voice* is concerned with how telling the stories of our lives to others and to ourselves shapes our understanding of self. Chapter Three, on

Collaboration, Friendship, and Sisterhood explores the processes, implications and potential of writing stories in a joint way. For each chapter I first provide a theoretical-historical context, then move to examples from German films and filmmakers who have grappled with similar problems and challenges, and then bring these aspects into dialogue with our film, by paying attention to specific scenes and issues in *Wanderlust*. Each of the three chapters offers alternative strategies and/or aesthetics to reframe the woman traveler, but they also interconnect with each other.

In an epilogue, I address the implications of my research in terms of grappling with issues related to the politically unstable and often deadly context of the "European migration crisis." Maria and I undertook our journey from Egypt to Germany in the summer 2014, just a few months before the route we traveled would become associated with the circuit millions of migrants and asylum seekers embark on to reach the European Union. Consequently, the very existence of our documentary draws attention to the chasm between these two very different experiences and emphasizes the medial gap between the high visibility of travel and tourism, and the largely imperceptible experiences of migrants, which are mainly re-lived orally or re-enacted/re-presented by other people. I would hope that the ideas presented in the epilogue concerned with touristic narration can trigger other ideas and/or research projects that might explore means and potential benefits of *reframing* different types of human mobility.

Chapter One: Cinematography and the Body

When Maria and I embarked on our two-month-long journey between Egypt and Germany to document our travel experiences we set out to film this experience with two small DSLR cameras. Cinematography, stemming from the Greek words *kinema* (movement) and *graphein* (to write, to record), suggests that the relationship between camera work and the body is concerned with the recording of the movement of bodies and/or the role of the body in recording movement. Born out of the desire to document a travel experience from the perspective of a woman and to scrutinize the role of our own moving female bodies in recording our travel experience, we set out to create conversations around embodied travel experiences, which foreground bodily sensations. In order to do justice to the bi-autobiographical perspective on a visual level, we worked with two cameras and explored the way the intersubjective nature of making our film mediates discourses of self. The opening scene of our film provides a good example of this bi-autobiographical perspective on the visual level. It shows a little girl jumping down a few stairs in the old part of the town of Jerusalem, filmed by our two cameras and a reflection in a safety mirror. Her jump is repeated several times, alternating between Maria's perspective and my position, little by little revealing our camera-holding bodies (see figure 1.1). Maria and I appear as implicated in our own filming, in the other's frame, and/or as reflections in the safety mirror.[10]

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[10] The first image shows how the girl gets ready to jump in the top left corner of the frame, shown through the reflection of a safety mirror captured by Maria's camera. She takes off and disappears once her reflection is no longer visible in the safety mirror. Next, we see a wider framing of the same situation, this time with Maria's lower body visible and my feet on the top left corner of the frame. The girl jumps and I take a step back. With the next cut the perspective changes and we now see the little girl from behind, filmed with my camera so that this time my stepping back is embodied in the frame with the girl jumping. The jump is repeated again from a wider angle. The fifth time her jump is repeated, we see her jumping and Maria filming her, while we also see the three of us as a reflection in the safety mirror. All of the repetitions are shown in slow motion, alluding to the possibilities (compared to what is possible with the human eye) of the writing/recording of human movement with the camera.

Figure 1.1 Opening scene of *Wanderlust* (*Wanderlust* 0:01:20).

This chapter centers on bodies and recording devices and the footprint their interaction leaves by means of the filmic image. Taking as a point of departure the notion that bodies ground us in time and place and must be scrutinized as central instruments in (autobiographical) filmmaking, I explore cinematographic strategies that highlight the physical and social dynamics between bodies and the camera and ask how (interpersonal) meanings are made in unfamiliar settings. When I talk about bodies and their role as central instruments in (autobiographical) filmmaking, I do not just refer to the bodily image on screen, but also to the way bodies are involved in the filmmaking process as camera operators and the way they inscribe themselves on an audible level. Unlike a visuality that promotes a mastering of the thing seen, I am interested in cinematographic strategies that foreground a visuality that is embodied, intersubjective, and haptic. My discussion on these cinematographic strategies is thus organized in three parts around three different aspects of the relationship: 1) the camera-holding body; 2) the camera as body (*Kamerakörper*); 3) the haptic representation of bodies and places.

The Camera-Holding Body

Expressing and thematizing, rather than concealing, the camera-holding body is associated with cinema vérité, which first materialized within earlier filmmaking traditions like avant-garde filmmaking and later resurfaced in genres like the essay film and experimental filmmaking (Chanan Section 4, location 648, par. 3). Drawing on these traditions, recent contemporary film scholars have started to emphasize the physical involvement of bodies in cinematography. Michael Albright, for example, describes "cinematographic embodiment" as the "instances when the camera operator's bodily movements and perceptions are recorded or 'embodied' along with the subject(s) in the frame" (34). In addition to showing how the physicality of the human body is bound up in cinematography, I argue that the visual disclosure of the camera operator through bodily movement also carries social importance. Since human physicality is bound up with questions of gender, "cinematographic embodiment" also contains information about gender and power dynamics at play while filming.

This social dimension of embodied cinematography matters for women filmmakers in various ways. In the history of image production, women have traditionally been looked at rather than been the bearer of the look (see for example Mulvey). The heritage of a long domination by male filmmakers as the exclusive holders of means of production to create filmic representations of women, as well as the ongoing objectification and sexualization of women's bodies in entertainment and advertising today, illustrates how the legacy of predominantly male camera-holding bodies has helped to create a system in which women have been the prevailing object of the gaze, with little or no authority over the representation of their bodies. This is by no means to suggest that all male camera operators depict all women in an objectified way, but that historical gender divisions between the predominantly male onlooker and the female receiver of the look

have created a powerful legacy which is visible in the continued control of women's bodies today. Making visible the bodily and social dimensions of the camera-holding body is thus a way to address and challenge this legacy.

Additionally, embodied cinematography can show how the process of cinematic production is dependent on the existence of others. Every image carries the footprints of a culturally and historically situated way of knowing, the absence or presence of an agreement between the camera operator and the object of the gaze, the incentive of economic gain, power relations, gender roles, expected ways of behaving, and so on. Making the camera-holding body perceivable allows the audience to see how filming is both a *bodily* and *social* practice*,* and thus positions cinematography not just as something that is concerned with showing things, but also with making visible the socially and culturally situated ways of seeing things. For this project the *bodily* and *social* practice of cinematography is of importance in the cross-cultural encounter between Maria and me, but also in the cultural encounter between us and the places and cultures we pass through on our journey, which is something I will address more closely in the last part of this chapter.

When women filmmakers take matters of representation into their own hands and take on the role of the camera-holding body (or the role of the director who determines to a large degree when and what the camera is recording) two important things happen. First, women filmmakers reclaim authority over their own representation. Second, they make perceivable the *female* body behind the camera. Given that looking is traditionally not as privileged in women as it is in men, the act of making the camerawoman explicit is bound up with issues of authorship (McFadden 23). As creative agents, women filmmakers in the position of the "seer" establish themselves in control of the significance of their own lives and bodies *and* at the same time assert their

influence as image makers.[11] Agnes Varda's documentaries, for example, provide multiple instances of "[...] rendering visible [her] artistic practice and praxis […] visually claim[ing] the role of filmmaker and creative subject" (McFadden 1), by turning the camera around and showing herself as the camera-holding body.[12]

The Camera (as) Body [*Kamerakörper*]

In traditional documentary filmmaking, the camera as a recording device typically demarcates a clear line between film*matter* and the film*maker,* the former referring to the object being filmed, the latter referring to the originator of the look. As a frontier between the one who films and the world being filmed, the camera itself operates like a body, in the sense of a physical structure that delineates a material and conceptual line between those who look and those who are receiving the look. This dynamic becomes most strikingly perceivable in early works of the 20th century that displayed a fascination with the exotic theme of native people's bodies. Examples include anthropological accounts like *Trance and Dance in Bali* by Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead (1952) or early travel documentaries like *Moana* by Robert Flaherty (1926). Both examples document non-Western people's lives with the aim to entertain and create knowledge about them for audiences in the filmmakers' home countries. While *Moana* is often considered *docufiction*, *Trance* follows a more strictly observational strategy.[13] Both films,

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[11] Russel describes three ways the filmmaker writes herself into her audiovisual work. As the seen (alluding to the body image of the filmmaker), as the "speaker" (alluding to the voice [-over] of the filmmaker) and as the "seer" (alluding to the gaze-holder) (277).

[12] *The Gleaners and I* (2000) by Agnes Varda provides several instances in which the filmmaker visually asserts the role of the creative subject by using mirrors of reflection in glass that show her behind the camera filming herself.

[13] The term *docufiction* is commonly used to describe the combination of documentary and fiction in filmic works. In the case of *Moana* film critics often speak of *docufiction*, due to its many staged scenes (see for example Mayeshwari [although the headline, which describes *Moana* as the first *docufiction* is misleading since Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) exhibits similar elements of *docufiction*]).

however, are marked by visual objectification with the filmmaker as a seemingly disembodied observer behind the camera, and the film*matter* in front of it as a source of knowledge.

In recent decades, these types of ethnographic films have been the subject of critique by numerous scholars for objectifying non-Western cultures and for turning them into a spectacle.[14] Dividing the filmmaker and the object of the gaze into two clearly separable categories, the camera serves to set up a frontier between those who are the source of knowledge and those who are the holders and producers of knowledge). For documentary filmmaking, this relevant critique points to the troubling division between film*maker* and film*matter,* which has often served the main purpose of visually mastering and extracting knowledge for the purpose of establishing power hierarchies. As a possible answer, autobiographical filmmaking and other forms of filmmaking that involve the filmmaker as a social actor (such as cinema vérité or some forms of experimental, self-reflective filmmaking), use the camera as a tool to establish a connection or to trigger a reaction between the filmmaker and the world around her.[15] As an intermediary placed between the filmmaker and the world surrounding her, the camera can thus be understood as a way of connecting, instead of separating.

When filming our documentary, our cameras also mediated between me, Maria, and the world around us. For example, I often found myself in situations where I felt like the camera served as a shield we carried close to our bodies in order to protect us.[16] In the streets of Cairo,

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[14] For a film-specific critique of Western-centricity in knowledge production, see for example Fatimah Tobing Rony and Trinh T. Minh-ha's work. For a more general critique of the ways in which language influences power relations, see postcolonial scholars mentioned earlier (Said, Spivak, Mohanty).

[15] The possibility for more interaction and intersubjectivity in the process of filmmaking was also made possible to some degree by the advent of hand-held cameras that were robust and light enough to be carried by one person and gave birth to more self-reflective and intersubjective filmmaking.

[16] In an interview shortly after our journey I talk about the experience of walking down a busy street in Egypt: "[…] I found that it was almost like my camera served as a shield and as a mirror at the same time. A shield because I felt like filming protected me from – or rather diminished – the male gaze; at the same time the camera served as an eccentric mirror in which we also recognized our gaze, a fascination with everything that was unfamiliar to us."

we found ourselves exposed to increased male attention and used our cameras as a buffer for looks we experienced as uncomfortable. The camera became a body that could return the gaze when our own bodies could not. It became a surrogate body, which we used to regain a sense of agency. At the same time, however, the camera also made us conscious of our own gaze that we were imposing on others. People reacted to the camera in different ways: some posed to be photographed, while others avoided being filmed. Placed between us and these unfamiliar surroundings, the camera as a physical structure influenced not only how we felt, but also how others reacted towards us.[17]

As a spatial intermediary between our bodies and the world around us, our cameras perform not only a type of mediation in the moment of image production, but also serve as a temporal intermediary between the past, present, and future. While I was in Aswan, Egypt, for example, I knew that I stuck out as a white, Western woman with a camera in my hand, but it was not until I saw footage of myself that I realized just how out of place I looked. In one of the first scenes in our film Maria filmed me walking through a market in Aswan. As we edited this part and I looked at the footage to record the voice-over, I was prompted to reflect on myself as an object, observing my strangeness, unfamiliarity and foreignness.[18] Entrapped in my own

(Petersdorff-Campen, Interview Agnes Films).

[17] Jean Rouch refers to this type of cinematography as "a strange kind of choreography" ("Vicissitudes of the Self" 8). Thinking of cinematography as a choreography, an arrangement of movements between bodies, as something in which the cinematographer is participating points towards the interdependence between different bodies in filmmaking. You cannot film another person walking without moving yourself and anticipating their movement, without getting a sense of their speed and path, their height, their possible actions and reactions. Rouch says: "For me then, the only way to film is to walk with the camera, taking it where it is most effective and improvising another type of ballet with it […] it is a matter of training, mastering reflexes as would a gymnast." ("Camera and Men" 41). The comparison with a gymnast evokes the physical labor bound up in cinematography, muscles that are trained for a specific purpose/task, and that react toward events, movements and reactions of other people.

[18] In *Shame and Desire: Emotion, Intersubjectivity, Cinema,* Laine argues that a subject's being in the world can have meaning only through self-awareness of his or her presence in front of others and this relationship with the Other contributes fundamentally to the core of subjectivity of the self itself (Laine 10). Acknowledging how my self-perception in this foreign context is prompted by my different appearance, demonstrates how my understanding of self is formed in negotiation with my surroundings.

body, I am bound to a limited view, but with the help of the camera-body and Maria, I can look at myself from different angles. In that sense, the camera-body afforded me the ability to visually examine myself as an external object to which my voice-over thoughts and words are directed. As a consequence, I was able to mediate between myself and my surroundings, but also between my *self* of the past and my *self* in the moment of editing.[19]

Finally, the intermediary potential of the camera points to an important function it holds for autobiographical filmmakers. Swiss film scholar Christine Brinckmann explains how difficult it is in autobiographical films to say 'I' with the camera. This difficulty in declaring a sequence of audiovisual images as a statement of a single person, thus Brinckmann, is related to the technical demands of the medium (Brinckmann 88). She highlights that it is challenging to imagine the protagonist as the camera person because then the audience is unable to see her (the protagonist). At the same time, it is difficult to imagine the protagonist *not* being the camera operator, because then the perspective of what is happening is no longer hers (that of the protagonist, which is something we usually expect in an autobiographical film) (Brinckmann 88). In other words, the point of interiority, from which any autobiographical filmmaker looks at the world, can never be externalized without the help of others. Alone, the filmmaker can only ever look from inside out, observing others, but in order to see herself from a different perspective, or to show herself, she needs others.[20] The technical demands of the medium thus render

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[19] In a way, the camera's instrumentality as a means to separate filmmaker and filmmatter is reassigned here as it enables me, the filmmaker, an auto-ethnographic investigation into the ways in which I am embedded in different cultural contexts and historical frameworks. In the scene on the market in Aswan I examine myself during the editing process and decide to refer to myself as a "defective pixel" (Wanderlust 0:05:57) in the voice-over. The instrumental way of viewing through the camera thus also becomes a way of being viewed and renders me as an object.

[20] One example of an autobiographical film where the protagonist is also the only camera operator and operating the sound, is *Kassel 9.12.67, 11.54h* (1968) by Adolf Winkelmann. Generally speaking, however, it is a quality of film that even if a filmmaker is able to record image and sound by herself, she will often need to collaborate with others at the level of music, sound design or editing (Brinckmann 93).

autobiographical film as an exciting opportunity to explore intersubjectivity and its role in mediating discourses of the self. The two cameras in our documentary thus serve a double purpose. On the one hand they afford each one of us a different perspective on ourselves (the perspective of myself as a foreign object at the market in Aswan was only accessible to me because Maria filmed me), and on the other hand, they provide a visual reference point for the relation of self to others. The camera which films me renders Maria indispensable for my own visual existence and as such also for my knowledge about myself.

Haptic Bodies and Places

Embodied cinematography and using the camera as an intermediary engages in camera work that is bodily and intersubjective. Instead of attempting to visually master a subject, such a cinematography can provide access to ineffable and invisible elements of culture that are cultivated and expressed at the level of the body and in interaction between individuals. In order to further explore these visceral qualities of cinematography, I draw on Laura Marks who proposes haptic visuality as a visual strategy to counteract instrumentalization and who explores film as a body to which viewers can relate to in a visceral way.

Our perception of the world is largely based on our senses. Sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell help us comprehend our surroundings and form the backbone of what we call experience. In the process of filming, our multi-sensory experiences are partly translated to an audiovisual medium. Although film cannot technically replicate the senses of touch, taste, and smell, some scholars have argued that it can nonetheless appeal and in a specific way represent those senses, which are closely connected to the body (Marks Ch. 3.1, location 2198, par 1-2). Vivian Sobchack and Robin Curtis, for example, have argued that film can emerge as a body on

its own to which the viewer relates and responds in a visceral way. Sobchack explains that our vision can retain the experiences of the other senses, which makes it possible for us to haptically perceive without our bodies coming into direct contact with the material world:

> My sense of sight then is a modality of perception that is commutable to my other senses, and vice versa. My sight is never only sight — it sees what my ear can hear, my hand can touch, my nose can smell, and my tongue can taste. My entire bodily existence is implicated in my vision (Sobchack, *Address of the Eye* 78).

The idea put forward here is that the sensation of embodied selfhood, which is based on impressions, can also be reproduced in film. Marks expands on this and argues that film can "[…] evoke the particularly hard-to-present memories of people who move between cultures, by pointing beyond the limits of sight and sound" (Marks Ch. 3.1, location 2203, par. 2). This suggests that some audiovisual images can provide access to the ineffable, inexplicable and invisible elements of culture that are cultivated at the level of the body and learned through everyday interactions in specific cultural settings (Marks Ch. 3.2, location 2457, par. 14). The way Marks proposes film can provide this access is by means of haptic visuality, which she describes as a way of seeing that draws upon visceral experiences and multiple senses, a "[...] kind of seeing that uses the eye like an organ of touch" (Marks Ch. 3.6, location 2732, par. 1). Working in dialogue with optic images which demand separation so that we can perceive the objects in them as distinct forms, haptic images are often unrecognizable and demand a more intuitive and embodied understanding. An example of haptic visuality is when one looks at objects from extreme proximity so that the human eye might be able to sense the materiality of the object, but cannot discern what exactly the object is. This means that haptic images are in a way less complete, leaving the viewer wondering what it is they are actually seeing.[21]

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[21] Some of the concrete examples Marks gives in *The Skin of Film* to describe haptic visuality are images that foreground the materiality of film and/or the object being filmed: graininess of the footage, a close up of a person's

For the representation of women travelers in film, this bears the intriguing promise of a visuality that is not easily consumable and comprehensible and therefore complicates the use of female bodies as projection foils.[22] It obstructs a capitalist propensity to turn the female body into a carrier of symbolic values and to render meanings as easily translatable (Marks Ch. 3.2, location 2348, par. 4). Haptic visuality thus provides a possible alternative to instrumental and symbolic representation by denying ostensible clarity on the visual level. By opting for a closer, less dominating and less complete way of seeing bodies and objects, alternative ways of knowing can be accessed. Marks suggests that a focus on the haptic qualities of image production can "[…] frustrate passive absorption of information" and encourage viewers to engage more actively and self-critically with the image (Marks Ch. 3.2, location 2276, par. 12).

In our own film we have come across situations and emotions that were difficult to capture in words, let alone on camera. Given the fact that we were filming our journey as we were experiencing it, some of the problems of capturing situations or emotions have to do with the practical limitations of not always being able to film. At border crossings, for example, we were usually not allowed to film. Other times, the difficulty of expressing lived experience stems from the lack of adequate language that was available to us at that point. An example, which combines these two reasons, and which made us turn to haptic visuality, is the border crossing between Egypt and Israel where one of the border guards at immigration held on to Maria's passport and did not return it before making her acutely aware of the fact that he was turned on

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skin, the fabric of a dress, the fabric of old photographs, and so on. Images that invite the audience to adapt a tactile way of seeing and allow the audience to analyze its elements and structures.

[22] As vehicles to sell commodities, but also as a commodity in their own right women's bodies often serve as objects of control and desire and even as symbols that are used to fight cultural battles between competing nations and religions (see for example the debate on Burkas in many Western countries where women wearing burkas have been symbolically signified to represent a backward and unfree culture, whereas Western women are portrayed as emancipated). These are examples of how female bodies are often used to transmit messages, or how they are being used as a spectacle to be consumed and controlled.

by her appearance. As we were not able to film this moment, the only record we have is one of

Maria filling in migration and customs forms before we tried to cross, with said police officer

visible in the background. While we struggled to capture this experience adequately through

words, we felt that it was important to create a filmic account that would allow access to the

uneasy experience we lived through that day. After reading about Marks' theory of haptic

visuality, I experimented with slowing down the image, zooming in and creating an unclear,

blurry impression to represent that situation (see figure 1.2). The final scene thus makes use of an

interplay between optical images that situates the audience by means of establishing shots at the

border, and haptic images that seek to access our lived situation in a more visceral and tactile

way. The blurriness of the image is meant to represent the blurriness of the situation and a degree

of disorientation that we felt being there, not sure how a reaction to this type of harassment might

affect our plan of crossing the border.

Figure 1.2 Maria filling out the migration and customs form with the border guard in the background (*Wanderlust* 0:13:30).

The complex and manifold ways in which visuality and the generation, production, and distribution of knowledge interrelate, point to the urgency of exploring ways of making bodies and places visible through cinematography without dominating and instrumentalizing. As a way of seeing that is not merely cognitive, but acknowledges its location in the body, the discussed cinematographic strategies can shift the viewer's attention from an optical focus to a way of seeing that focuses more on embodied and intersubjective involvement.

Bodies in Motion: German and Austrian Feminist Filmmaking

The filmic works discussed in the following section all deal with female bodies in transit and explore different ways of representing these bodies in motion. Moving through time and space, crossing internal and external borders, the works by German and Austrian feminist filmmakers create visual and/or conceptual ambiguities that operate productively with the representation of female identity. From embodied cinematography, to using the camera body as a mediator or withholding the female body completely from the visual level, the following examples engage with the female body in a way that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to assign simple meaning to it.

Traveling Subjects and Embodied Images

Sybille Schönemann's *Verriegelte Zeit* (1991) [*Locked-up Time*] provides a perfect example of embodied cinematography and how it affords the viewer a corporal sense of places and situations the filmmaker lived in and through. Largely using a hand-held camera the East German filmmaker takes the audience on a journey to revisit the places and people of her

imprisonment in 1984. Schönemann was arrested by the Ministry of State Security in November 1984 following her application for an exit visa. In February 1985, she was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and in July 1985 she was ransomed and moved to the Federal Republic of Germany. *Verriegelte Zeit* documents her return to the GDR in 1990 in a way that translates her prison experience from the past into a visceral experience and invites the audience to join her on a journey in which she tracks down former oppressors. By making perceivable the physical and emotional passages Schönemann moves through on her journey into the past, the film bears witness to and acknowledges her experiences as a gendered subject.

Revisiting her past with a camera and in a self-determined way establishes Schönemann as an image maker and allows her to claim authorship of her life. The interplay of shots, which show her both inside the former prison and behind the camera, create a visual framework through which the audience comes to understand the transition Schönemann underwent from being the bearer of the look to the one who returns as the onlooker.[23] The scene in which Schönemann and her former prison roommate, Punkt, talk to each other, offers a good example of this. As the two women recall their joint time in prison, Punkt and Schönemann sit in what appears to be their former prison cell. They remember how they were always at the mercy of the guards and recall a feeling of powerlessness of their bodies being "always available" for the orders and gazes of the prison personnel. With no authority over their own bodies, they describe how they had to eat when they were told, go outside when they were told, and sleep when they were told (*Verriegelte Zeit* 0:35:25). Interspersed with these interview scenes, Schönemann shows images of an eye that looks through the peephole of a prison cell door straight into the camera (0:33:25, 0:44:21,

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[23] Images that suggest Schönemann behind the camera are interspersed with enacted scenes that show her inside her former prison cell, cramped in a van (*Verriegelte Zeit* 0:52:09) or in a photo studio where her prison picture is taken (0:32:09), re-creating her imprisonment of/in the past.

0:53:00). This visual gesture reinforces the idea of being under surveillance and at the mercy of prison guards, but since Schönemann is the director of this visual gesture, the eye that looks is also representative of her emancipation from these conditions. Schönemann returns to the prison as the onlooker to track down those who formed part of a machinery that made her unjust imprisonment possible.

Reversing the dynamic from *being looked at* to *looking* is also directly connected to her transition from being *locked up* to *moving around freely*. Moving around freely allows Schönemann to travel to specific places, walk around and literally hunt down former oppressors by following them, walking behind them and confronting them. The importance of movement becomes perceivable right at the beginning of the film: *Verriegelte Zeit* opens with a scene at one of the former border control points between East and West Germany. After a brief interview with a couple of men who appear to be working there, the camera follows a border guard who quickly walks into one of the buildings of the seemingly abandoned border control point.[24] The camera films the border guard walking away from Schönemann, whose voice is heard from behind the camera asking him whether he can answer some questions, which he does not want to do. Representative for so many other encounters in the film, this scene shows how Schönemann uses her body as a vehicle on her quest for answers. Operating often from behind the camera, her perceptions and bodily movements are recorded along with the subjects in the frame and based on the gaze and reaction of the person interviewed, the audience gets a sense of where Schönemann stands, as well as the physical way in which her body is involved in the making of

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[24] The border guard's presence can be explained by the transition period between November 9th 1989 and the unification of Germany on October 3rd 1990. After the fall of the Berlin Wall border controls became little more than a formality, but the inner German border and the *Grenztruppen* were officially abolished only in July 1990 (Görtemaker 371 – 375).

Verriegelte Zeit.

The way the cinematography embodies her gendered experience becomes most strikingly perceivable when Schönemann engages with her former oppressors, who are often men in previous positions of power. In these confrontations her physical presence reveals a tangible difference between her body and those of former oppressors. The way the camera focuses in on the people she encounters creates an atmosphere of examination and confrontation. As her interview partners demonstrate anxiety, suspicion, embarrassment or disapproval of her endeavor, the footage often evokes the notion that the camera protects her from potential physical or verbal violence. Given the situations Schönemann provokes, it is not distorted to suggest that she consciously uses the camera body as a shield to protect herself in the process of finding answers to her questions. As an extension of her female body, the camera thus serves her both as a witness of her quest and as a protective shield from potential verbal or physical attacks.

Ruth Beckermann's *Eine flüchtige Reise nach dem Orient* (1999) [*A Fleeting Passage to the Orient*] is similar in the way that a female filmmaker uses the camera as a witness to document her passage and as a shield to guard herself in a setting that is marked by unfamiliarity. Unlike *Verriegelte Zeit,* however, the cinematography in *Reise* does not foreground the filmmaker's bodily movements. Instead of displaying motion through the camera-holding body, the filmmaker's passage through Egypt materializes through the changing landscapes and places she visits on her journey.

In this film, the Austrian filmmaker sets out to follow the footsteps of Empress Elizabeth of Austria (1837-1898) on her journey to Egypt in the late 19th century. As a non-linear travel report, her documentary film takes the form of a self-reflective essay on foreignness and the way myths and exotic stereotypes are created by images. In the film, Beckermann interweaves her

own travel experience with that of Empress Elizabeth, and while the film's primary focus is on the voyage of Empress Elizabeth, it is filled with meditative reflections on Beckermann's decision to embark on her own journey to make this film. The filmmaker's external journey to Egypt thus mirrors that of Empress Elizabeth, but also forms part of Beckermann's inner journey, revealing parallels between Elizabeth and herself. As mentioned before, *Reise* does not reveal the presence of the camera-holding body through bodily movement; instead, the camera operators' bodies (Nurith Aviv and Sophie Cadet) and the body of the director (Beckermann) are epitomized through the perception and reaction of those who are filmed. The stable, static shots and calm camera pans (as opposed to more jerky camera movements in Schönemann's film) often meet the gazes of people on the street, on markets, and in trains. The physical, social and cultural dynamics between the camera-holding bodies and the bodies that are being filmed are thus captured not so much through the camera as an extension of an embodied self, but through the camera as an intermediary between the self and others. Since there are no interviews or documented personal encounters between Beckermann and the local population, her film relies exclusively on cinematography for encounters with the other.

Encounters in the Frame: Intersubjectivity and Visual Ambiguity

Especially throughout the first part of *Reise* there are many moments where people look into the camera, wave at it, react toward the female camera operators, or literally point out the camera in some other way. Compared to *Verriegelte Zeit,* where the filmmaker's engagement is made perceivable through her *bodily* and *social* presence, it is thus the primarily *social* dimension of embodied cinematography that becomes visible in *Reise.* It is not the bodily movement of the filmmaker, which we perceive with the subjects in the frame, but the social

impact the camera-holding body has on the people and her surroundings.[25] Beckermann

describes the "social impact" of her body in the voice-over of the film as follows:

> Hier ist es unmöglich in der Menge zu verschwinden, es gibt kein Inkognito, alle zwei
> Minuten sagt jemand <<Hello how are you?>> <<Where are you from?>> […]. Und geht
> neben einem her, ob ich nun antworte oder nicht macht keinen Unterschied (*Reise*
> 0:21:00).[26]

As white, female, and Western, Beckermann's body is an "exotic" visitor in Egypt and

respectively causes attention. The resulting encounter between her body and those of the local

population manifests itself in the filmic image in such a way that it provokes (perhaps unwanted)

participation from the audience: Every recorded image of a person looking at Beckermann's

camera is not only an encounter between the filmed subject and the filmmaker but also an

encounter with the audience of the film. The "eye contact" established between Beckermann and

a person she captured on the street in Egypt is postponed and dislodged in time and place to her

audience. As the people captured on camera look straight into the lens and reveal the recording

device, the audience who looks at the screen is caught in the process of looking and prompted to

reflect on the illusion that the camera captures people in a sincere and natural manner.[27] The

person looking back at the camera thus renders the position of the audience as that of a safe

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[25] Dagmar Lorenz describes how, as women travelers in the "Orient," Elizabeth of Austria and Beckermann both
fail to simply go about their life as they please. During her stay in Egypt, and even when she is without the camera,
Beckermann finds herself spied upon by the hotel personnel and is accosted at almost every turn she makes (Lorenz
185). Lorenz further describes how neither Beckermann nor Elizabeth could imitate the orientalist attitude of male
adventurers and filmmakers and argues that no European male, certainly no professional filmmaker, would be
subjected to tirades, investigations and questions such as those men directed at Beckermann (184).

[26] "It is impossible here to disappear in the crowd, there is no incognito, every two minutes somebody says << Hello
how are you? >> << Where are you from? >> [...]. And walks next to you, whether I answer or not makes no
difference" (translation mine).

[27] The topic of subjects looking into the camera is often thematized in a much discussed scene of Chris Marker's
Sans Soleil (1983). In this scene a freelance cameraman sends letters to an unknown woman from different places
around the globe as he films people in the Cape Verde Islands waiting on a jetty. Several of the people he films stare
right into his camera while he comments: "Frankly, have you ever heard of anything stupider than to say to people
as they teach in film schools, not to look at the camera?" The scene thus thematizes the illusion that the camera
represents external reality as it is.

onlooker as inoperative, and instead reveals the onlooker in the process of looking. This visual

contact can open up a more complex relation of power than simple subject vs. object division

and thus has the potential to create visual ambiguity.

In *Verriegelte Zeit* the camera also serves as a "body" to return the gaze.[28] Instead of

involving the audience in a direct way, as *Reise* does, the camera mainly serves Schönemann to

return the gaze and shake up the power hierarchies from the past. As she is running up against

the opaque, oppressive system that continues to deny her answers and a genuine apology for her

imprisonment, Schönemann finds herself in a continuing balancing act between regaining agency

and feeling powerless. Angelica Fenner argues that Schönemann, as the director of the film, is

supposedly in charge of the situation but often fails to get the upper hand in all of the situations

she provokes (48). *Verriegelte Zeit* thus creates an ambiguity that allows the audience to see

Schönemann as both a subject and an object. Through her physical presence in front of and

behind the camera, Schönemann establishes not only a visual ambiguity regarding her role as a

filmmaker, but also a psychological uncertainty. Fenner further argues that Schönemann

centralizes this ambiguity in herself and recovers her gaze in a manner that does not duplicate the

dominant ways of looking that she has been exposed to, but instead emphasizes modes of

looking that are fluid and intersubjective:

> Schönemann reclaims vision, stressing the act of looking not as a form of domination but
> of emancipation. [...] This type of vision is to be distinguished from the so-called 'male'
> gaze, which fixes upon and fetishizes its object. For Schönemann's cinematography
> emphasizes not so much the object of the gaze as the very axis of vision itself. (Fenner
> 50)

How to look without dominating and how to represent something or someone without

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[28] Revisiting the place where she was incarcerated for several months, she places her camera between herself and
the world as she confronts former oppressors.

mastering, is also one of the central questions asked by Beckermann as she follows Empress

Elizabeth's footsteps in Egypt and wonders how to resist the creation of stereotypical images,

both of Elizabeth and of Egypt. In her voice-over, Beckermann wonders: "Sich das Bild von

einem Menschen machen – ist das möglich? Hat es sie [Elizabeth] überhaupt gegeben? Oder ist

sie eine Projektionsfläche unserer Träume und Wünsche und Fantasien, wie der Orient?" (*Reise*

1:04:36).[29] The interplay between the visual encounters with the people on the streets and

Beckermann's own reflections about her journey encourages the audience to embark on their

own inner exploration of what they "see" in the "Orient" and to revise stereotypical assumptions

and images.

Both films bear witness to a negotiation of self as a balancing act in relation with others

and thus exemplify intersubjectivity as being "[…] capable of mutual relation of recognition"

(Marks Ch 3.11, location 3069, par. 1). In other words, both films convey the idea that meaning

is based on one's position of reference to someone or something else. Schönemann negotiates

her past and present selves in relation to her former oppressors and her friend Punkt, and

Beckermann mediates her role in relation to Elizabeth of Austria and the unfamiliar setting of

Egypt, while she also creates situations in which the audience is encouraged to reflect on their

relation to the "Orient." Marked by ambiguity and a bodily/social connection, the camera serves

these filmmakers in two ways: first, as a means to regain agency because it affords them a way to

return the gaze, second, as a medium through which they, as filmmakers, can be looked at and

seen. Looking thus emerges as an intersubjective process in which there are no clear or stable

binary roles. Instead, it is presented as a process that is marked by constant (re-)negotiation and

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[29] "Visualizing a human being - is that possible? Did she even exist? Or is she a projection screen for our dreams and desires and fantasies, like the Orient?" (translation mine).

fluidity.

Depicting Bodies and Places

Another way by which the cinematography in *Reise* encourages a non-instrumental way of

seeing is by means of its haptic images. In many instances towards the end of the film, the

camera seems to caress the surface of houses (*Reise* 0:59:37), landscapes (1:03:47) or other

objects, and exemplifies Marks' description of haptic visuality as a "[...] visuality that functions

like the sense of touch" ("Audiences," location 608, par. 9). From an old bank note that is

jammed under an ashtray and wafts in the wind, Beckermann's camera moves to an

indecipherable image of a landscape and then pans closely over the fur of camels, slowly

revealing an entire herd (1:03:29). These images are accompanied by Beckermann's voice-over:

"Die Bilder falten sich und schichten sich. Immer neu arrangieren sich die Szenen, wie in einer

Bilderserie orientalistischer Maler, die meinten das Wüstenlicht in die dunklen Salons Europas

tragen zu können." (1:03:29).[30]

As a filmmaker who created those images, she positions herself within the heritage of

Orientalist painters who tried to retain the "Orient" in order to bring it home to "the dark parlors

of Europe." At the same time, however, she acknowledges the impossibility of "retaining the

light of the desert." Through her cinematography, she thus suggests a more visceral approach in

order to represent the "Orient," and evokes a two-dimensional plasticity ("Images fold and layer

upon each other"), promoting a contemplation of the image as material. Interspersed with more

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[30] "Images fold and layer upon each other. The scenes are always rearranged, just like in a series of images by
Orientalist painters, who thought they could carry the light of the desert into the dark parlors of Europe" (translation
mine).

distanced images that allow the audience to make out a clear scene (e.g. the scene which follows

shows three women who are crossing the road to catch a bus), she inspires a more tentative

image of the "Orient," one that is based on knowing and not knowing.

When it comes to representing the female body, it is striking that there are no images of

either Elizabeth or Beckermann in *Reise*. The one exception is the very beginning of the film

when the opening scene shows a person (presumably Beckermann) in a train holding up a

photograph of Elizabeth. In an attempt to interpret the absence of the female body in *Reise,* it is

interesting to note that Beckermann recounts how Elizabeth refused to be photographed after her

31st birthday (*Reise* 0:02:00). This refusal can be understood as a rejection of a means of

representation that can be used to instrumentalize and foster stereotypes. Coinciding with the end

of the 19th century, a time when photography became popular (and with it the notion that

photographs accurately depict reality), Elizabeth's refusal to appear in photographs can be

interpreted as an act of resistance. If women are objects to be looked at, the age of photography

exacerbates the mechanisms for realizing such a regime of seeing, while also diminishing

women's autonomy over the representation of their bodies. Refusing to have her body

photographed and thereby defying that type of visual knowledge, can thus also be construed as

part of a critical understanding of how visual representation works.[31]

A contrary strategy to Beckermann's refusal to show the female body is presented in Helke

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[31] Beckermann recounts how Elizabeth was often seen hiding her face behind a fan or whizzing by in a train, leaving an impression that is fleeting and transient (*Reise* 0:14:30). She also mentions that part of Elizabeth's motivation to travel came from the desire to withdraw herself from her role as a representative of the royal family and to escape duties and societal expectations. The cinematography in *Reise* embodies this image of a fugitive, ephemeral woman in many ways by implying continuous movement, suggesting brief visits to places which promise to alleviate the burden of culturally or socially imposed expectations. While being visible is commonly considered favorable when it comes to political and cultural representation, *Reise* renders invisibility, or rather a very fleeting visibility, as an advantage (which was partly accessible to both Elizabeth and Beckermann because of their privileged positions).

Misselwitz' *Tango Traum* (1985) [*Tango Dream*]. Foregrounding her own body, Misselwitz' 20-minute documentary film offers a different approach for the interaction between cinematography and women's bodies than the previous two examples. Her film is also different in the sense that Misselwitz documents a journey of *imaginary* travel, both into the past and to foreign places. Right in the beginning of her film, the East German filmmaker expresses a longing for travel and far-away places by opening with an image of a ship on a frozen sea and contrasts this scenery of winter with non-diegetic tango music. She expresses a strong desire to dance tango and visit Buenos Aires and Montevideo, but as a citizen of the GDR she cannot leave and simply travel to these places. Her film can thus be understood as a critique regarding her limited mobility. Unlike Beckermann or Schönemann, Misselwitz does not embark on a journey that physically translates her body to another place, and as a result her camera records movement only in the limited space of her apartment. The resulting cinematography in *Tango Traum* can be described as static, non-spontaneous, scripted and carefully constructed. Similar to still photography or paintings, the camera has a fixed field of vision with little or no motion. This provides the audience with time to analyze the individual elements and structure of the image and it allows enough time to perceive the materiality of what is being shown. Following Marks' insights about haptic images to access ineffable elements of a culture, Misselwitz' cinematography represents senses that are close to the body, such as touch, taste, feel, and smell, and these images translate a sense of embodied selfhood to the filmic image and anchor the audience in the materiality of Misselwitz' apartment in the GDR. The stationary, but intimate aesthetics of the cinematography are thus representative of Misselwitz' sedentary situation.

Tango Traum starts out with a female voice-over explaining the difficulty of making a film

about something that one needs to experience in order to understand it (Curtis 110):[32]

> Buenos Aires und Montevideo sind weit weg, sehr weit weg. Von dieser Frau, die an ihrer Schreibmaschine sitzt und sich fragt, wie sie aus all dem einen Film machen könnte. Seit Wochen liest sie alles, was sie über Tango bekommen kann; hört Schallplatten, sieht sich alte Filme an [...] Um zu empfinden, was Tango ist, legt die Frau immer wieder die Musik von damals auf. Ihr Herz nimmt die Musik an, aber Kopf und Herz treffen sich nicht. Alles liegt wie hinter Glas. (*Tango Traum* 0:01:49)

As these words are uttered, the audience sees the filmmaker herself at her typewriter. While her hands and upper body are visible, her head remains visually obscured as if to exemplify the perceived disconnection between the head and heart that do not meet. The film continues by showing several scenes in which Misselwitz surrounds herself with the textual and visual remains of a time and a place that is inaccessible to her: she studies photos from the area of Rio de la Plata and translations of tango lyrics, listens to music, and watches archival footage from Argentina and Uruguay. While the footage of Argentina and Uruguay is filmed from a distance and resembles the aesthetics of newsreels and reporting (marked by wide angles and distance), the interspersed images of Misselwitz' body in close up encourage a more intuitive approach and embodied understanding. Repeatedly obscuring Misselwitz' face, the cinematography accentuates the focus on her bodily movements and encourages a way of seeing that is characterized by incompleteness and visceral sensations.

Due to the stillness and "unexcited" depiction of Misselwitz' female body, *Tango Traum* resists and challenges stereotypical images of women. A scene towards the end of the film where we see Misselwitz' naked back as she lies on her bed illustrates this. The voice-over recounts:

> Seit Tagen hat die Frau immer wieder den gleichen Traum. Die feuchte Hand auf ihrem Rücken, die durch den Stoff ihres Kleides auf ihre Haut brennt. Der Druck der einzelnen Finger zeigt ihr an in welche Richtung sie ihre Füße setzen muss, der Druck der Schenkel dem sie zu entfliehen versucht. Der heiße Atem schlägt ihr ins Gesicht. Sie wendet den

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[32] The source of the voice remains undisclosed in the credits (Curtis 109).

Kopf ab, er trifft ihren Hals, er erregt sie, sie fügt sich, für den Bruchteil einer Sekunde. Der Druck der Schenkel bringt sie wieder zur Besinnung. Sie gibt ihm erneut Schritte vor, denn es ist ja ein Spiel und eigentlich will sie es, immer wieder, bis zur Erschöpfung. Aber, warum verlässt er sie? Die Musiker verbeugen sich. Sie setzt sich auf ihren Stuhl, fächert sich Luft zu und wartet innerlich fiebernd auf den letzten Tanz. (*Tango Traum* 0:12:40)

Although her body is not moving, Misselwitz takes the audience on a journey. The voice-over describes an imaginative tango dance, evoking an erotic encounter. Displaying her body in combination with the imagined, articulated movement allows Misselwitz to encode her own body with meaning. The camera rests on her naked back and forces the audience to look beyond any simple messages or symbols that present themselves at first. There is simply too much time to be stuck with a simple sentiment of a spectacle that her naked back is "sexy," for example. Instead, the viewer is encouraged to look at the image in detail and to perceive it beyond its function as a symbol.

This calm way of depicting the female body is carried throughout the entire film. The cinematography in *Tango Traum* is extremely intimate as it portrays Misselwitz engaging in a variety of activities such as dressing, ironing, typing, smoking, and dancing. These images are often unrecognizable due to the radical proximity of the camera which portrays separate body parts so that the audience only gets a fragmented impression of a woman who is getting ready for a night out: a hand brushing over a black dress, a thigh as she puts on her stockings, an ear, and some hair as she puts in her earrings. Showing her own body carrying out these tasks from close up, Misselwitz invites the audience to participate in those intimate rituals. There is an important difference between voyeurism (deriving sexual pleasure from looking without being seen and with the person being observed unsuspecting) and the embodied type of looking Misselwitz encourages. The graininess of the footage, the close up of her skin and the fabric of her dress

transmit a physicality and invite the audience to adopt a tactile way of seeing that is not sexualized. Exploring ways to depict the female body--one of the most heavily culturally coded of signifiers--Misselwitz embarks on a different path than Beckermann, namely by putting it on display, along with her complex desires and longings.

The examples outlined in this chapter so far exhibit various cases and ways that afford women filmmakers the possibility to renegotiate their own self-perception and relation with their surroundings. While I have decided to highlight those aspects of the camera work I found most relevant for this chapter, the described films display a number of other cinematographic strategies and combine many different ways of representing (fictionalized) reality. In our own filmmaking process, the camera often served as a negotiation agent between our bodies and those of others, our surroundings and even between ourselves. Looking at one particular scene from *Wanderlust,* I want to take a closer look at how these cinematographic strategies function in our film and how they afford a visual account of intersubjectivity that mediates our own discourses of self.

The Space Between – Embodied Cinematography and Intersubjectivity in *Wanderlust*

Our Journey Across the Mediterranean Sea

One third of the way through our two-and-a-half-month journey, Maria and I crossed the Mediterranean Sea from Israel to Cyprus by boat. Having arrived in Israel from Egypt, we had to continue our journey via water to Cyprus and then onwards to Turkey, both in order to avoid flying and also to circumvent the more dangerous land route through Syria. After being rejected by several shipping companies that made the journey from Tel Aviv, we met a young man from

Israel who wanted to sail with his friend to Cyprus in order to visit his mother, and was looking

for travel companions in order to share expenses and to take turns navigating the boat. Due to our

cultural backgrounds, personalities, and previous travel experiences, Maria and I reacted very

differently to this opportunity. Initially, I did not think about any risks, but rather was very

excited and simply felt lucky to have found a way to cross over to Cyprus. Maria, however, was

more reluctant. The idea of spending several days at open sea with two men we only just met

made her extremely uncomfortable.

Bodies do not appear to us outside of a historical and cultural framework, and confronted

with the possibility to embark on this sailing trip, the fear of unwanted sexual advances or

(sexual) violence was a fear that emerged and that was directly related to the perception and

reception of our own bodies. It took us many conversations over several days to understand the

different cultural frameworks we were operating with when evaluating the riskiness of the

situation we might put ourselves in, and the way our upbringing in our home countries and

societies shaped the way we reacted towards it. I particularly recall a conversation with Maria in

which she imagined how the news of us being harmed on this trip would be received in

Argentina. If something were to happen to us, she said, it would clearly be regarded as largely

our fault, in the sense that people would declare our decision to embark on this journey as stupid,

naive and reckless. We also recognized that the idea of women travelers being vulnerable to

(sexual) violence had created disruptions within our own ability to evaluate the real danger of the

situation. This is not to suggest that most women travelers are not at a higher risk of sexual

assault than many men, but that common cultural fantasies and stereotypes might play a role in

why this is the case. Fortunately, we did not experience any violence or threat thereof during our

journey, but these concerns shaped our experience and the way we struggled to represent this

part of our journey in the film.

Lived Experience and Embodied Images

After many discussions and some persuasion from my side, we decided to travel with the two young men. From Tel Aviv, we sailed first to Haifa where we stopped briefly to deal with travel documents before we left the coast and headed towards Cyprus. We spent a total of four days on the small sailboat, taking turns navigating and sleeping when possible. For four days our mobility was limited to circulating between the top of the boat staring at the horizon, and the bottom of the boat where we rested or used the kitchenette to prepare food. After the initial excitement of being at sea faded, I started to notice a prevailing feeling of confinement. Restrained of the liberty to go where I wanted, I felt restless. Going to the bathroom, washing oneself or changing clothes became actions that often needed to be preceded by an announcement as they blocked a part of the boat for the other passengers (the bathroom, for example, also formed the passageway between the first two beds and the third one in the front of the boat).

Filming itself was marked by limitations of different kinds. While the two men tolerated that we filmed and that they would appear occasionally, there was a sense of uneasiness every time we, as their guests, took out our cameras. The practical limitations of not being able to charge our camera batteries forced us to be economical with our camera usage, in addition to which the movement of the boat on the water made it difficult to look through the screen for longer periods of time without getting seasick.

The sequence in *Wanderlust* that documents our voyage starts out with an image of me holding the tiller of the sailboat. This is followed by images of the sun coming up on the horizon,

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sailing instruments, a detail of the front of the boat with buoys, an image of Maria who has now

taken over the tiller, Maria and I staring beyond the camera at the horizon, a detail of Maria's

hand on the tiller, a close up shot of a piece of sailing rope, the interior of the boat with the fruit

net swaying from side to side due to the movement of the water, a close up of four toothbrushes

in the tiny on-board bathroom, a reflection of me and my camera in the mirror (see figure 1.3),

and an image of one of the men lying on the bed at the very front of the boat. These images are

accompanied by my voice-over saying: "La navegación en aguas abiertas por días es mucho

menos romántica de lo que suena. Mareo, insomnio, y estado de alerta constante para no entrar

en aguas libanesas" (*Wanderlust* 00:36:51).[33]

The image sequence, which starts with a shot of me holding the tiller and ends with the

bed at the front of the boat measures the total space available to us on this trip. Since Maria and I

are always either visible or implied in the act of producing these images, the sequence provides a

spatial impression of the boat and the bodies that lived on it throughout this trip. The depiction of

our bodies, along with the spatial limits of the boat also seeks to transmit a sense of the cramped

area, a notion of confinement, and the endurance of our bodies. Being forced to stay in a small

place which we could not leave, manifests itself in our cinematography because we were always

close to everything we filmed on the boat. Unable to put more than a few meters of distance

between us and the environment we were in (and the people we were with), the images our

cameras recorded are intricately linked to our anxiety of the physical restriction we felt. The

sustained proximity between us, the environment, and the two men did not allow us to simply

represent them, in the sense that they unfold before us and become objects to look at. Instead our

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[33] "Navigating in open waters, for days, is much less romantic than it sounds. Motion sickness, insomnia, a constant state of alertness to avoid entering Lebanese waters" (translation mine).

visual representation is implicated in the tactile experience that corresponds to the lived,

embodied experience of *being* in that environment. Since sailing across the Mediterranean Sea

(in the context of tourism and travel) appears like a pleasant and amusing pursuit, it was

therefore important to us to convey the prolonged exposure of our selves to the physically and

emotionally taxing activity when actually undertaken.

Figure 1.3 Crossing the Mediterranean Sea (*Wanderlust* 0:37:54).

Another way in which our camera work makes perceivable the physical and social

conditions of this trip is by revealing off-screen spaces that are not visible in the frame but

sensed through interpersonal movement. The described sequence, for example, is followed by an

image of the two men playing chess outside and an interview between Maria and me. In this

interview Maria is holding the camera and asking me questions. While I am the only one who is

visible on camera, I try to find Maria's gaze behind the camera by moving to all four corners of

the screen asking her what she is laughing about. I also look over to our travel companions who

are sitting less than two meters away. These visual cues reveal other people behind the camera

and thus provide the audience with a way to imagine the spatial and social arrangement of the boat.

Filming Each Other and Embodied Intersubjectivity

The fact that the two men spoke some Spanish led to the situation that Maria and I could hardly talk openly about our previous concerns and feelings while we were on the boat. The medium shot of them playing chess at the beginning of the interview scene, along with my reaction towards them at the very end of the interview, serve as a visual bracket to suggest that their presence lingers over the entire conversation Maria and I have. Towards the end of the interview I hope to end my conversation with Maria by claiming that I find it difficult to speak in Spanish, but Maria pushes me by saying that I should speak in German instead. When I switch to German (a language which nobody else on the boat can understand), I finally start to address some of my uneasiness and concerns. I express the fear that Maria might be angry at me for pushing her to agree on taking the sailboat and I also admit that I am more than ready to arrive on land and that I look forward to finally having more space. I also briefly comment on our two traveling companions, indicating that we really could not complain about them. The switch to German causes both of them to interrupt their chess game and to look at me. Curious, and maybe also suspicious with regard to what I am saying and whether I am talking about them, they look at me, and as I realize this I turn to them and lie, saying that I haven't said anything about them. Then I call the interview off (*Wanderlust* 00:40:57).

In retrospect, this moment is representative of the relationship between the four of us, which can be best described as a distant but friendly companionship, overshadowed by a tension that may be ascribed to several interconnecting factors that came together on this journey: the

cramped area and lack of privacy over the course of several days (spatial), a frustration in terms of communication (verbal), suppressed sexual tension, and the friendship crisis between Maria and me (emotional). When we first met the two men, we sensed that one of them was attracted to Maria. Maria led him to know that she was not and this was taken with good humor by him. There was no incident that I am aware of (assuming that Maria would have told me) where he pushed her or insisted while we were on the boat. Before embarking, however, his advances increased our anxiety in terms of fueling the notion that unwelcome sexual advances could become a problem on this trip. Of course, not every incident of sexual advances results in rape or violence, but on a boat, without an escape route, this fear lurked in our consciousness and provoked anxiety. I only realized after the boat trip that the other man appeared to have been attracted to me. I had the impression that he did not want to tell me earlier so as not to make me feel uncomfortable. In hindsight, I was latently very aware of it, but in denial, because pretending I did not notice put me in a more comfortable position than dealing with the situation and potentially upsetting the fragile atmosphere on the boat even more.

In the process of narrating this sequence for the film, we had long discussions about whether we wanted to include this part of the story, and decided to not make any explicit references towards it. We did not want to fuel stereotypical ideas about women travelers and easily made assumptions that unwanted sexual advances were to be expected on such a trip. Additionally, we were afraid that bringing up this story would make it grow out of perspective. We wanted our relationship (between Maria and me) and the endurance of our bodies on this boat trip to be the most important element of this sequence, and we did not want our conflict to be overshadowed by thematization of sexual interests.

The way the camera alternates between Maria's face and my face (and integrates the

lingering presence of the two men) thus presents not just the interpersonal spatial conditions during this interview, but also transmits some of the internal tensions we experienced on this crossing. The impossibility of an open conversation between Maria and me on a verbal level manifests itself in the visual realm. Both of us look exhausted and there is a tension between us, which materializes primarily through bodily articulations such as nervous laughs, absent gazes, blinking, gestures, and postures. When Maria opts for a closer framing of my head towards the end of the interview, the image translates the "inside" of my emotional life (marked by a sense of confinement and the desire to escape) to the "outside" of the visual realm. The camera both shapes and documents the social interaction between us and produces a visual account of intersubjectivity which reveals how those four days we shared on the small sailboat were marked by a tangible emotional distance between us. While what we are saying in the interview scene remains mostly on a factual level, the embodied intersubjectivity captured through the camera opens up a subtext of our disrupted relationship.

In order to reinforce this idea of a dissociation, we decided to artificially create a dialogue which never happened that way. At the moment of image production, I first interviewed Maria and then she interviewed me. The final sequence, however, presents a seamless conversation between us: I am seen in the image without a camera and I ask Maria how much time we have spent at sea, then we cut to Maria who also does not hold a camera and appears to respond to my question. Under different circumstances such a shot reverse shot editing, which temporarily erases our camera-holding bodies, might be read as an attempt to create the illusion of a seamless conversation. In our case, I would argue, such a technique has an opposite effect. Since Maria and I are the only camera operators in our film, most images the audience has seen up until this point feature either Maria or me, often with our cameras. Instead of hiding editing decisions and

creating a smooth flow, this interview thus falls out of line compared to the rest of the film. Consequently, this scene can be understood as bringing forth the artificiality of the situation and the disconnected relationship between Maria and me.

Landscapes and Fluid Selves

In light of the preconceived ideas and fears about crossing the Mediterranean on a sailboat, we were faced with the challenge of how to tell our story without becoming the images projected onto us, but also without obfuscating our lived reality. From the moment at which Maria raised her worries about the crossing, the boat journey is marked by a sense of uneasiness. At the same time, however, it is also marked by a sense of openness. Similar to the way that our physical and emotional relationship to each other and to the two men influenced our sense of self, the landscapes and material conditions also determined our self-identity. On this boat trip, we found ourselves in various in-between spaces, which had an impact on the way we perceived our selves. The water we were sailing in belonged neither to Israel nor to Cyprus. In theory, we were sailing under an Israeli flag, but in practice, this tie to Israel became more and more irrelevant the further we moved away from the Israeli coast. As an extended space that spreads out between several mutually exclusive states, the sea transmits a simultaneous feeling of openness and uncertainty.

In the interview scene, Maria asks me how I am feeling and I say that I feel disconnected from myself (*Wanderlust* 0:38:50). My first reaction as I was watching the footage of this moment was to attribute this statement to seasickness. Seasickness, as it is described in layman's terms, is the result of the brain receiving conflicting signals. While the eyes see a world that is still, the body senses a moving environment and as a consequence, the human body feels out of

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balance. While we were certainly feeling a mild level of seasickness throughout the duration of

the journey, I later had to acknowledge that my utterance also refers to a disconnect between

myself and who I thought I am, in the sense of self-identification (as in "I do not identify with

myself"). Induced by motion and characterized by nausea, sea-sickness can be understood

metaphorically as a feeling of uneasiness that is caused by moving one's body away from

familiar, stable grounds. On any journey into unknown terrain, the traveler strips herself of some

of the social, cultural and political frames of references that she operates in at home, and in

hindsight, I believe that the Mediterranean Sea, as a geographically undetermined place, brought

with it a notion of imbalance that stems from the impossibility to define all the characteristics of

the situation we were in. While taking away some of these identity-granting frameworks can

provoke anxiety, it can also provoke a sense of freedom and possibility to re-negotiate one's

values, roles, and perspectives.[34]

It was almost two years later, during post-production, that we returned to this scene and

were able to see the potential of the 'in-between spaces' our journey had carved out for us. The

journey at sea, both nauseating and liberating, provided an opportunity to re-assign meaning to

our own understanding of selves, to reconfigure the seemingly rigid rules of how our female

bodies should be seen and what they should be doing. As our bodies moved through ambivalent

geographical and social spaces, the recorded footage became the material we later used to

(re)negotiate our subjectivity. It allowed us to re-address some aspects that did not make sense or

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[34] While all social situations are marked by small perturbations that demand a negotiation of one's place and role, we usually have enough context in our familiar environment to make fine adjustments in order to keep the balance. Going to a restaurant, for example, is also an act of 'negotiating a social situation', but we seldom experience it as such because there are enough fixed parameters to keep the situation in balance (e.g. there are 'guests', and 'waiters' and expected roles of behaving). In the unfamiliar terrain of being at sea, we bypassed some of these role-defining parameters.

were difficult to grasp at the moment they occurred. Showing ourselves navigating, holding the tiller, and so on, literally reminded us of the self-determined maneuvering that was our film, and our exhausted bodies became symbols of our endurance.

At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that cinematography stems from the Greek words *kinema* (movement) and *graphein* (to record) and suggested that the relationship between camera work and the body is concerned with the recording of the movement of bodies and/or the role of the body in recording movement. The visual accounts of negotiating between self and other, subject and object, victim and perpetrator, and between visitor and local, create places of negotiation that are full of ambiguity and uncertainty. In the examples discussed in this chapter, as well as in the scene discussed from our film, these spaces of ambiguity are often also the spaces where self-development happens. While the camera can serve as a shield in moments of vulnerability (see for example the way Schönemann's camera serves as a shield in her confrontation with former oppressors, or the way Beckermann uses the camera on her journey through Egypt), the recorded material provides an account of these encounters with others and/or other cultures and prompts the filmmaker to reflect on them. I would argue that such work with the recorded material of lived experiences also lets subjects move beyond who they were in the moment of image production, *precisely because* of the ambiguity involved at the moment of filming. Schönemann, for example, chooses to reveal herself as vulnerable in some encounters and Beckermann decides to include the gaze of others upon her and her audience. Both filmmakers thus represent the ambiguity they experienced and create an intersubjective representation of themselves. While the case of Misselwitz is slightly different, one can see her interplay of voice-over and images as embracing her multiple desires and as opening up her work to more than one interpretation. In the liminal space of unfamiliarity and encounters with other

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cultures, these filmmakers create filmic spaces of uncertainty and fluidity.

For the woman traveler and her visual self-representation, the act of translating one's body into new cultural and social contexts provokes a similar experience of self as unstable and/or a self that renders her environment unstable. Schönemann and Beckermann's ambiguities are triggered, for example, by their emotional and physical passages, and Misselwitz' critique of the GDR emerges out of her engagement with the dancing culture and history of Argentina and Uruguay. Not being fixed to a place, an idea, or an image, might then encourage the woman traveler to negotiate not only *her self*, but also her relation with *other selves*. Following the notion that meaning is based on one's position of reference to someone or something else, travel and movement – literally and figuratively speaking – can complicate the allocation of single meanings to subjects and places.

As Maria and I come from different countries and are crossing borders and cultures, our recorded footage operates at the crossroads of different cultural regimes of knowledge and can never be fully established or understood within the terms of just one set of cultural or social norms. For example, the Mediterranean Sea, which evoked the risk of increased vulnerability, now also presents a fear that has been overcome, and a milestone in our friendship. Simultaneously, it might evoke associations with other forms of human mobility, particularly the life-threatening crossings of migrants and asylum seekers who set out to reach the European Union. Hence, ambiguity does not dominate, but it opens the door to explore multiple meanings, new sides of self, contradictions, and discrepancies, as well as one's cultural baggage and position in global power structures. In the epilogue, I will further explore questions of our own embeddedness in power hierarchies as women travelers from Germany and Argentina, particularly in relation to less privileged forms of human mobility.

Chapter Two: Narration and Voice

In the previous chapter, I have argued that unfamiliar terrain brings with it a notion of instability and can thus trigger a mental state where unknown "mind territory" can be explored. While travel might appear to us first as a predominantly physical experience, it has an impact on us beyond the physical action of moving our bodies through spaces. As any embodied experience, it influences our sense of self and personal development overall. In *The Art of Travel* Alain de Bottom suggests, for example, that movement through geographically unknown places can trigger new ideas and mindsets, which might be more difficult to access in familiar surroundings: "There is an almost quaint correlation between what is in front of our eyes and the thoughts we are able to have in our heads: large thoughts at times requiring large views, new thoughts new places" (De Botton Ch. 2.7, location 547, par. 2). This is also true the other way around in the sense that the generation of new thoughts and intellectual processes is to a large degree based on our physical movement and our encounters with others. While encountering new landscapes, cultures and people could in theory be accomplished from the comfort of our homes and without leaving our familiar environments, there is something about the embodied encounter with the unfamiliar that prompts our mental movement in a different way. Eric Lee points to the importance of the physical movement through places, in order to develop a set of intellectual skills, like observation and sensing distances, but also to cultivate our subjectivity:

> The mental effects of passage – the development of observational skills, the concentration on forms and relations, the sense of distance between an observing self and a world of objects perceived first in the materiality, their externalities and surfaces, the subjectivity of the observer – are inseparable from the physical conditions of movement through space. (Leed qtd. in Helmers and Mazzeo 6)

This link between the embodied experience and the impact this experience has on our selves overall is relevant for autobiographical representations of travel, and this project in particular, as

it raises the question how the various geographical, cultural and social settings find their way into our voice (-over) and narration. What do we do with the experiences our bodies lived through when we look back and start recounting our lived experiences?

As Maria and I passed through many unfamiliar places on our journey, it was impossible to immediately reflect on those lived experiences without some distance. Roland Barthes summarizes this premise of self-life-writing by saying: "The one who speaks" (in the narrative) "is not the one who writes" (in real life) "and the one who writes is not the one who is" (*Analysis of Narrative* 261). While I agree with Barthes' notion that the author of a narrative can never be temporally congruent with the narrator of a story, I disagree with the conclusion he draws that both "narrator and characters are essentially 'paper beings'" (*Analysis of Narrative* 261). The notion of "a paper being" limits my self to the question of how I *create* my narrative 'I' through a process of reflection, editing and voice recording, but neglects the *physical* work of revisiting and acknowledging the way lived, embodied experiences impact me and the physical work that is involved in writing, editing and voice recording. It also neglects the role of others in both the *creation* of the narrative and the *experiencing* of the journey. Especially in the context of travel this is important. If physical movement influences the way we come to think about ourselves, it also affects our relationships with others.

Unlike the traditional form of autobiography which presents an account of a person's life through alphabetic language, written by one author who has already undergone the process of pondering, our film uses voice-over narration as a second level of engagement with our lived, embodied experiences.[35] Voice-over and narration thus function in two important ways in our

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[35] I use the term "alphabetic language" in order to delineate it from "filmic language." What I mean by "alphabetic language" is thus a writing system based on a set of letters, compared to "filmic language," which is based on cinematography, sound, editing, alphabetic language, and so on.

project. First, they are tools through which we alienate our (later) selves from our (previous) selves and "process" our lived experiences. Second, voice-over and narration help us reframe what our cameras have captured. Together, then, narration and cinematography present a type of parallel account of the same journey. Taking place side by side and often at the same time, they allow the simultaneous representation of "processed" and "unprocessed" lived experiences.[36] As a counterpoint to our images, as an exploration of our cultural differences, or as an afterthought to address the lingering residue of a lived experience, our voice-over narration emerges in the form of a dialogue between Maria and me, but also between our film and the audience, creating multiple perspectives within one narrative.

In Chapter One, I argued for the importance in feminist filmmaking of paying attention to the body that is being filmed, but also, of acknowledging how the camera-holding body influences what is recorded without actually becoming visible in the image. It is likewise important to acknowledge the role of the body in producing voice and narration even when it is not visually perceptible and to recognize the things a (female) voice communicates without actually saying them verbally. Likewise, the ways we relate to others through camera work calls for an exploration of how intersubjectivity is expressed in voice and narration. I therefore focus on three aspects that I believe are at the core of an emancipatory agenda for women filmmakers and situated at the rich intersection between narration, voice, embodiment and ways to articulate the relational self: 1) The Embodied Voice, which explores the relationship between the female

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[36] This is not to suggest that anything our cameras captured during our journey is "unmediated reality." What I mean when I say "unprocessed" is the idea that in the moment of image production we did not meditate on what this experience means or how it might affect our development of self. In a similar vein, the term "processed" should not be understood in the sense of something that is definitely dealt with; it is rather a "processing in progress." Finally, the work of editing is, in many ways, part of the "processing." In the last part of this chapter I address this relationship between voice-over narration and editing in detail.

body and the female voice, 2) Speaking With, To, and Through Others, which addresses

questions of how (inter)subjectivity is experienced/learned, expressed, shaped and performed

with others and in relation to others through the voice (-over), and 3) Bi-autobiographical

Narration in *Wanderlust*, thematizing and exploring how to move beyond the idea of voice as the

singular expression of subjectivity of a unitary subject.

While alphabetic language in its vocalized form is the main focus in this chapter, it is

important to highlight that filmmakers express themselves by all the means of representation that

are available to them like image, sound, light design, music, the spatial arrangement of figures,

montage, and so on. In this sense, film differs significantly from alphabetic writing. While

written autobiographical accounts conjure bodies, visceral reactions, and atmospheres solely

through the power of words, filmic autobiographical accounts communicate in a variety of ways

that are closer to the body (e.g. through the senses of hearing and seeing).[37]

The Embodied Voice

Film scholar Christine N. Brinckmann suggests that voice attains a particularly visceral

quality from its origin in the body and a person's biography. She argues that an individual's

voice has the unique power to transmit emotional states and to convey visceral presence because

of its direct connection with the body (110). Since the voice originates in the body, each

individual's voice sounds different and depends not only on the shape and size of a person but

also on the way this body and its speech has been formed (Brinckmann 110). Pronunciation,

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[37] Written autobiographical works also sometimes include photographs or other artifacts. A representative of such works is for example Barthes' autobiography *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1977), which features several images of himself, his family, and childhood.

accents, pauses, intensity, and volume are all elements that are developed in an individual's life over time in a specific cultural and social context and convey information about a person's personality, upbringing, social class, and mood (Brinckmann 110). Originating inside the body, voice is therefore often understood as a metaphor for the self expressed in proverbs such as "finding one's voice," which usually refer to an individual discovering and expressing his or her "true," and "original" self.

At the same time, voice is also *experienced* through the body. Brinckmann explains how voice can work as a "second track of sensual contact," and highlights how it fulfills important psychological functions since it allows us to understand each other not only on a factual but also on an emotional level:

> Bekanntlich ist das Gehör der Sinn, der psychologisch am wichtigsten ist (auch wenn den Augen weit mehr praktische Bedeutung zukommt) weil er Wirklichkeitsdaten erfasse, die sich in unmittelbarer Nähe abspielen, im Rücken in der Dunkelheit, im Versteck. Es ist außerdem der Sinn über den sich sprachliche Kommunikation vollzieht – und zwar nicht nur in ihrer verbalen Sinnvermittlung, sondern zugleich und auf einer tieferen Ebene als Vermittlung emotionaler Gegebenheiten (110).[38]

The relationship between voice-over and body in documentary filmmaking is often marked by an endeavor to keep the two separate. This becomes strikingly perceivable when looking at one particular form of voice-over in documentaries, often referred to as the "Voice of God." The "Voice of God" is a voice-over commentary, predominantly found in classical documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s where an omnipresent, authoritative, but disembodied, voice guides the viewer through the film and provides meaning to what is displayed on the visual level from a

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[38] "As is well known, hearing is the sense that is most important psychologically (even if the eyes are considered much more on a practical level) because it captures reality that takes place in the immediate surroundings, behind one's back in the dark, in hiding. It is also the sense through which verbal communication takes place--not only by the transmission of meaning through spoken language (what is said), but at the same time and on a deeper level as the mediation of emotional realities" (translation mine).

position of alleged superior knowledge. While the "Voice of God" is never embodied or thematized, it is of course not bodiless, but traditionally white and male. This exemplifies how the voice of a white, male subject is often granted unquestioned authority, while other voices, such as those associated with female subjects or marginalized groups are rendered as powerless/non-authoritative.[39] This voice-over gender bias not only manifests itself on the level of endowed authority and power, but also on the level of demands put on the body. Female subjects, for example, are more likely to be held to a unity of sound and image, meaning that a female voice also has to become visible as a body (Silverman 39). As a consequence, the female voice is kept from being endowed with authority because "[…] the voice-over is privileged to the degree that *it transcends the body*. Conversely, it loses power and authority with every corporeal encroachment, from a regional accent or idiosyncratic 'grain' to definitive localization in the image" (Silverman 49, emphasis in original).

The "Voice of God" is imagined as being disembodied *because* it is uttered from a male body, while other voices are not because they are uttered from a female or marginalized body. This calls attention to the question of when and how gendered voices are presented and reveals that *even when* the voice-over in film requires that we, as Sjogren says, "lay down the gaze to 'see' through our hearing" (21), what we *see,* as Walker points out, are bodies (205). This is why the body-voice conundrum marks the starting point in my exploration of expressing the self through embodied voice in women's autobiographical filmmaking. How to speak with authority from a female body if her voice has traditionally been deprived of authority? Or considering the

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[39] Britta Sjogren argues that not all mainstream films follow such a restricting sound regime. In her investigation of 1940s Hollywood films with female voice-overs she shows how female subjectivity is often used as a positive structuring. While it is of course welcoming to see, or rather hear, an increase of women's voice-overs in films and to see how, as Kozloff argues, "barriers for women as narrators are crumbling now" (qtd. in Pillai 3), it is important to be aware of the gendered bias for voice-over in film, and acknowledge the rarity of a woman's voice as narrator.

alternative: how to look into the autobiographical mirror without material substance? For the self-narration of feminist autobiographical (travel) filmmaking, these two unsatisfactory options point to the urgent task of reclaiming the female body as an origin for a voice that can speak with authority. If a woman's agency, her ability to draw on "voice" is conditioned by her bodily presence, we need to focus our analyses on both body and voice.

In autobiographical studies, the importance of linking the narrating/speaking subject with a body that has tangible, embodied experiences, has been pointed out by several feminist scholars concerned with life writing. Shirley Neuman, for example, states that a definitive feature of autobiography needs to be a correspondence between a narrative 'I' and a subject that is actually in the world (217). She highlights how a conception of the autobiographical subject as a product of discourse must simultaneously include the autobiographical subject as a body that is "[…] also a product of oppressive historical and material circumstances" (217) and argues that not recognizing that power relations are most fundamentally experienced at the level of the body denies women the experiential and corporeal sources of self-knowledge (217). In autobiographical filmmaking (compared to written autobiographies), the voice (-over) provides a unique possibility to conjoin the narrative 'I' and the subject that is actually in the world. This is because in film we can see and hear people simultaneously. In other words, we can make the female body visible (through the image) and hearable (through the sound). While this may seem obvious and trivial at first sight, film as a medium is unparalleled in giving us the unique opportunity to explore the many identity markers – like, gender, race, class or age – that shape our experiences. In the context of a travel documentary, film can then also help us better understand how these identity markers operate in different cultural contexts. It allows us, for example, to document and explore how our skin color or accents work differently in distinct

places. The possibility for voice in film to simultaneously contain the discursive level (e.g. *what is said*) and an embodied level (e.g. *how* something is said), makes up what I refer to as the embodied voice.

Finally, embodied voice also raises questions about the borders that exist between visual and non-visual realms. The embodied voice can emphasize the bodily materiality of a subject without the body becoming visible in the image. Unlike skin, for example, which is material and becomes visible every time the rest of our bodies make an appearance on a screen, voice can appear with, or without the body. The intangibility of voice thus renders it a medium that can inhabit non-material in-between places: between the conscious and unconscious, between the body and the mind or between other bodies (Sjogren 14). Representing a materiality we cannot see, but perceive through hearing, illustrates how something that is out of sight and intangible fails to be simply absent. Embodied voice thus also emerges as a tool to sabotage and destabilize the authoritative position of images (Sjogren 15).

Speaking With, To, and Through Others

While it is sometimes difficult to clearly demarcate autobiographical filmmaking, one principal assumption is that the filmmaker in autobiographical accounts speaks from a subjective position that departs from her own life and experience. This assumption seems to imply that a central and important pursuit of the filmmaker's work is to overtly explore her biography. However, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Contemporary voices and examples in autobiographical studies suggest that autobiographical accounts are seldom just about the self, but usually about the self's surrounding, relatives, friends, and places. Alisa Lebow argues that "[…] being one is never singular, but always implies and indeed embodies another"

(Introduction, location 252, par. 4). A filmmaker's biography and experiences can thus be a departure point for this subjective mode of address, but many autobiographical works often draw only partially on the filmmaker's biography. Instead, thus Lebow, they focus deeply on something else close to the filmmaker which informs her sense of self (Introduction, location 223, par. 2).

Paul John Eakin links his argument that "all identity is relational" (43) to gender, describing how men's identities have traditionally been characterized as autonomous and individual/autogenous, while women's identities are developed in terms of their relationships to others. Marsha Meskimmon supports this notion, but adds that the presumption for women to assert their identities in a relational way is not based on an exclusively female inclination to think of themselves as relational, but rather on exclusion: "[…] the authoritative 'I' who authors texts, [...] is not a neutral subject, but masculine, heterosexual, white, Euro-ethnic, middle class and able-bodied" (Meskimmon 71). In other words, the notion of individuality and self-determined identity formation was something that was accessible primarily for white, European, heterosexual men.

In the genre of travel representation, the notion of a male, authoritative, independent, 'I', manifests itself most obviously in the trope of the lone hero. The solitary male protagonist who sets out on a journey of (self-) exploration suggests the lonely road as the only viable path to self-discovery.[40] While his journey often includes encounters with others, these subjects usually remain 'add-ons', in the sense that they do not fulfill a purpose in the traveler's story beyond

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[40] The idea of a journey as an educational rite of passage with the aim of gaining knowledge about self and others is also found in the concept of the Grand Tour, a journey undertaken mainly by European, upper-class men in the 17th- and 18th-centuries.

helping the protagonist discover what he was made of all along. In many cases, the lone hero's actions are largely independent of significant social relations. Beyond its problematic construction of limiting images for male travelers, this also has consequences for female traveling subjects: the lone-hero model is largely based on the exclusion of women and others and fails to accommodate the specificity and the possible agency of subjects of all genders that conceive of themselves as more relational. For reframing the woman traveler it is thus important to foster more inclusive understandings of subjectivities and ways these subjectivities can be expressed, for example, by freeing the narrative I from the constraints of limited concepts that have tied it to ideas of autonomy, independence, and solitude.

In the autobiographical films by German and Belgian women filmmakers discussed in this chapter the idea of "relational selves" is often explored and performed in terms of family relations with the mother. By means of their voice-over these filmmakers enforce the idea that their self is fundamentally connected to their mothers' selves. The idea of relational selves, however, is also conceptualized outside the mother-daughter relationship. These filmmakers also interweave their own life with those of other individuals, places, and times, quilting together a narration which breaks up the origin, and sometimes even articulation of the self, into many different parts.

Bi-Autobiographical Narration in *Wanderlust*

In contrast to the examples by women filmmakers from 20th century Germany and Belgium, our film was not created by one filmmaker. This means that decisions in writing, editing and filming were made in collaboration between Maria and me, in a mutually dependent relationship throughout all steps of the filmmaking process. In search for ways to expand the

concept of relational selves to include this bi-autobiographical dimension, I turn to Jean-Luc

Nancy's concept of the 'I' not being singular, but "singular plural" (Nancy 1). Nancy proposes

the idea of "speaking with" where the "with an other" is not seen as an addition to some prior

being, but instead, "with the other" is placed at the "heart of being itself" (Nancy 30). Instead of

positioning the "with an other" as always second, as an add-on, it is here presented as inherent to

the being of self. Subsequently, Nancy shows how philosophical exposition, across the whole

history of philosophy, subordinated 'being with' to 'being' and, according to this very

subordination, 'being with' has become something we find so difficult to comprehend (Nancy

31-32).

In our bi-autobiographical film this idea of "speaking with" materializes on two temporal

levels: 1) the moment of lived experience, and 2) the moment of reflection which includes the

activity of writing the self. Expanding Eakin's idea of "relational selves" by the dimension of

another person who is involved at the level of creating the narration about the self, means that

Maria does not just *inform* my sense of self (by means of a shared lived experience), but that in

writing about myself, she is speaking with, to, and through me as we jointly create our bi-

autobiographical account. Lebow provides an intriguing illustration of how language, which we

often use to narrate our life stories, already reflects this element of "speaking with":

> [...] language itself, though spoken by an individual, is never entirely our own invention,
> nor anyone else's. Despite the fact that we believe it to express our individuality, it
> nonetheless also expresses our commonality, our plurality, our interrelatedness with a
> group, a mass, a sociality, if not a society. This is as true about the expression of
> individuality and subjectivity in first person films as it is in language itself. (Lebow
> Introduction, location 252-255, par. 4)

That means that even when we speak as 'I' it is always already in relation with others. Our words

are not really ours, nor do they come from some sort of origin within us; instead they are

developed in a reciprocal interaction with others. This, in turn, means that *any* autobiographical self is not the sole originator of his or her autobiographical work, but that the origin of their writing is the emerging existence (and use of language) with others. This way of thinking about the self (and the representation of self) can assume a particularly important role in the context of cross-cultural collaborations, and the context of travel representation. Concerned with the depiction of other cultures and places, travel representation in literature and film is often based on an "us vs. them" approach, where other places and cultures are everything that one's own culture is not. Thinking of the self in emerging existence with the other redirects the search for a unique or exclusive origin of self and others (Nancy 20), to the idea that the *one* origin of self is unavailable because it is indeed constituted in the in-between. The idea of an "origin" then takes on another meaning, as it no longer represents something that is external to me, nor something that I want to exclude: "Its negativity is neither that of the abyss, nor of the forbidden, nor of the veiled or the concealed, nor of the secret, nor that of the unpresentable" (Nancy 12). Providing an understanding of a self that is based on multiplicities, this philosophical framework can focus on co-appearance, and the creation of meaning in co-existence (Nancy 20).

While this sounds compelling in theory, the praxis of conceiving and representing the self in emerging existence with another raises a number of issues and questions. In the last part of this chapter I will draw on *Wanderlust* and the processes of the joint post-production between Maria and me in order to address some of the practical implications of co-existence, co-appearance, and co-speaking in our bi-autobiographical film. Before I discuss these practical and creative implications of the reciprocal entanglement which forms the ground from which Maria and I work, I now turn to the way in which other women filmmakers from Germany and Belgium shape and articulate their selves in emerging existence to others and their environment.

Personal Histories and Collective Narratives: German and Belgian Feminist Filmmaking

The following examples show different ways in which the voice (-over) and narration in autobiographical films exemplify the connection between voice and body, and how filmmakers' voice-overs render hearable their relational identities. I turn to these examples as inspiration to see how feminist filmmakers from Germany and Belgium use narration and voice (-over) in their quests for female subjectivity in relationality with others.

Embodied Voices in H[er]story and Biography

Addressing the rich relationship between narration, voice, embodiment, and ways to articulate the self, German film director and writer Jutta Brückner provides textbook examples. In her essay "On Autobiographical Filmmaking," she traces her own development as a filmmaker and outlines the challenges of her autobiographical endeavors. Brückner recounts: "I was really not aware that nothing interested me so much as the complex 'women and writing', the contradictions and obstacles contained in it, the relation between life, the desire for expression, and social representation (10)." Before turning to filmmaking, Brückner recalls how she wanted to write but was never satisfied with what alphabetic language brought out of her. She depicts her dissatisfaction with her own writing as grounded in a sense that it "[…] never reached the center of [my] desire to write, the center from which legitimation must come" (1). Her quest for self-expression was missing a way to ground herself in the material world: "I wrote in the third person; it was impossible for me to say 'I', but this third person remained a phantom." Brückner then recounts that it was her discovery of filmic images and the relationship with her mother which eventually helped her find a way to anchor herself in the lived, physical reality of her body, and to overcome her sense of self as a bodiless phantom (4).

Inspired by August Sander's photographs, Brückner developed the idea for *Tue recht und Scheue Niemand* (1975) [*Do Right and Fear No One*], her first autobiographical documentary (Brückner 3).[41] Juxtaposing Sander's photos with long conversations between herself and her mother, Brückner proposes viewing the life of her mother, Gerda Siepenbrink, as a 'prototypical life' of a woman of the 20th century in Germany. Coming from a middle-class milieu, Siepenbrink reveals the sorts of struggles, fears, and regrets that were typical for a woman in her position of that time. After the early death of her father, she lives almost her entire life with the fear of social and societal exclusion and hopes that a life full of work and decency will shield her from a social decline. As a consequence, she imposes a number of strict social, moral and sexual norms on herself. Only through a private disaster--her husband's affair--does Siepenbrink manage to free herself from these constraints. Her coming-to-consciousness in the last years of her life is marked by regret and realization of the kind of person she could have become.

It is through her mother's life and their joint journey into the past that Brückner comes to see how much external conditions influence one's life and "[…] how difficult it was to distance oneself from collective expectations and assumptions--and how necessary it was nonetheless" (Brückner 4). Virtuous conduct, decorum and a childlike subduing of one's self under the reign of a husband or father are some of the recurring themes Siepenbrink mentions in her narration that reveal how the period in history she grew up in burdened her with expectations that significantly influenced her sense of self. Brückner recounts that her mother was initially not a conscious or obvious choice for this film. However, unconsciously, her mother (and her mother's struggles) marked the starting point for her own journey of self:

When, after my first two failed attempts to look into the (autobiographical) mirror, I was

[41] August Sander's series *People of the 20th Century: A Cultural Work of Photographs Divided into Seven Groups* displays a sampling of society during the Weimar Republic from the mid-1920s to the rise of Nazism.

finally able to see something, I saw my mother. The image horrified me, and my horror frightened me even more. I was forced to understand that there was no way around it, that my autobiography did not begin with me, but with my mother. (Brückner 4)

This beginning with her mother manifests itself almost exclusively on the level of voice and narration. Unlike the largely anonymous bodies in the photographs by August Sander that make up the "collective corpus of the film" (Brückner 6), the narration in *Tue recht* is subjective and particular. It consists of Brückner's voice-over and the recorded interview with her mother. Brückner's voice-over confronts and comments on her mother's life from her birth to the 1970s. She uses a third person register, which often comes across as distanced, disembodied, and authoritative. However, the proximity between daughter and mother becomes clearly perceivable in her mother's reactions. Gerda Siebenbrink often addresses her interviewer using the intimate "du," suggesting closeness. Generated by two bodies, the voices which guide the audience through *Tue recht* thus also convey the tension of their relationship and end up communicating more than what is verbally said. In many ways Brückner's distanced, third-person voice-over reflects her desire to portray her mother as a pure 'prototype', but the interplay between the two voices reveals the intimate relationship between the two women.

Tue recht exemplifies how biography ultimately begins with the body of another and thus reminds us how our bodily existence is dependent on others. In Brückner's film, the body of the mother becomes perceivable primarily through Siepenbrink's voice: a voice that narrates her own individual life story, but also a voice that Brückner listens to, and that eventually enables her to speak through her film. The narration that emerges as a result of the verbal interaction shows how Brückner literally and figuratively feeds on her mother's narration in order to express herself. Upon reflection, Brückner expresses that in fact there would be no life to comment on if it weren't for her mother: "She [my mother] was the matter that I fed on during my breaking

away into the symbolic order. The empty autobiographical desire circling within itself had finally found its matter. If I had not been able to make this film, I probably never would have made one" (Brückner 7).

At the same time, Siepenbrink's narration also exemplifies the circumstances that shaped the lives of many other women during that time. In a way, Brückner is then not only writing her own autobiography through her mother's biography, but she is simultaneously challenging official history. Siepenbrink's life story illustrates in detail how women were affected by particular historical developments and it reveals facets of a time and place that would otherwise not be available. Feminist historian Barbara Caine points towards the rich possibilities of individual life stories as a way to shed light on problems and challenges for women previously neglected in historical analysis (Cain, *Biography and History* 1). *Tue recht* is an example of this as it offers insights into the ways in which large-scale social, economic and political changes were lived and interpreted by one particular woman at that time. Finally, this entanglement of (auto)biography and history becomes perceivable as underlying both Siepenbrink and Brückner's struggle for female subjectivity. Both mother's and daughter's struggles in finding their voices can be ascribed, in part, to the chasm between the selves these women imagine for themselves and the public notion that demands that they conform to society's expectations and norms.

Another example illustrating the connection between history and biography by means of embodied voice is Helke Misselwitz' film *Winter Adé* (1988) [*After Winter Comes Spring*]. Her 116-minute long documentary is set in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) where Misselwitz was born and trained as film producer and director. In her film, Misselwitz embarks on a journey through the GDR to talk to different women about their lives, while interweaving her own life story with those of the women she meets. The autobiographical frame Misselwitz

sets up around her encounters with other women is most perceivable at the beginning of the film,

when her voice-over reflects on her birth:

> Vor dieser geschlossenen Bahnschranke bringt mich meine Mutter auf die Welt. Im Krankenwagen. Grossmutter hilft ihr. [...]. Meine Mutter wird an diesem Tag 27 Jahre alt. Sie schreibt in ihr Tagebuch: 'Welch ein herrliches Geburtstagsgeschenk bist du mir. Papi ist sehr glücklich, auch wenn du wieder nicht der gewünschte Sohn bist.' (*Winter Adé* 1:51:42)[42]

As Misselwitz tells the story of her birth, the camera looks from inside a car to a railroad

crossing, to family photographs and then it cuts back to the railway crossing, showing a medium

shot of a man who is opening the railway gates.[43] After crossing the tracks, a second part of the

opening scene occurs in a train station with the camera panning through the hall and Misselwitz'

voice-over giving a brief overview of her life:

> Mit neunzehn Jahren verlasse ich diese Stadt, um meine Wege zu gehen. Berufsausbildung, Hochzeit, Scheidung. Möbliertes Zimmer, wechselnde aber intensive Beschäftigung. Eine feste Arbeit, Geburt der Tochter, zweite Ehe. Studium mit Kind, zweite Scheidung. Beharren auf sinnvolle Arbeit. Ich kenne viele Frauen, deren Sorgen und Sehnsüchte ich teile. Das Selbstbewusstsein meiner fast erwachsenen Tochter macht mich unsicher und gleichzeitig hoffen. (*Winter Adé* 1:49:57)[44]

Referring to her birth, showing family photographs and then noting major life stages (marriage,

divorce, childbearing, work), Misselwitz provides an account of her life in the classical sense of

a biography. She presents fragments of her life, important events and experiences, but also

reveals her own investment in the film: after the title appears and the loudspeaker announcement

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[42] "In front of this closed railway barrier, my mother gives birth to me. In the ambulance. Grandmother helps her. [...]. My mother turns 27 years old on that day. She writes in her diary: 'What a wonderful birthday present you are to me. Dad is very happy, even if, once more, you are not the desired son" (translation mine).

[43] The first photograph is of Misselwitz' parents, grandmother and the two daughters. This is followed by another photograph of Misselwitz and her sister as they are receiving their high school diplomas.

[44] "At the age of 19, I leave this city to go my own way. Vocational training, marriage, divorce. A furnished room, changing but intensive employment. A steady job, my daughter's birth, a second marriage. Studying with a child, a second divorce. Insisting on meaningful work. I know many women whose worries and longings I share. The self-confidence of my almost grown-up daughter makes me insecure and hopeful at the same time" (translation mine).

at the train station informs that passengers should now board the train, Misselwitz' voice-over

informs the audience that she is embarking on this journey to learn about other women's lives,

their desires, longings, and problems (*Winter Adé* 1:48:44).

Similar to *Tue recht*, the narration in *Winter Adé* refers to the idea that it is always

through our own life story that we have to experience, narrate and understand ourselves in

particular locations and historical times. As a 40-year-old woman, Misselwitz looks back at her

own life but also glances at others' lives, the present, and the future. Like Brückner, she also

embarks on her autobiography by beginning with her mother. Narratively she anchors her own

body and voice in her mother's biography by quoting from her mother's diary. She then sets out

to explore the ways in which she, as an individual, relates to the world she was born into and

comes to the conclusion that having been born female into a state of supposed gender equality,

is, indeed suboptimal. The point in time from which she now looks back at her life enables her to

see the lingering sexism she had been exposed to from the moment she was born. Her mother's

comment about how Misselwitz' father would have preferred a son over a daughter is an obvious

example of this, but as Jennifer Creech points out, the opening scene of *Winter Adé* is ripe with

other references, such as the man at the railway crossing, who is covered in tattoos of "beautiful

women," and serves as a symbolic gatekeeper to Misselwitz' mobility (Creech 415). Another

example is the way the camera in the train station closes in on "a pair of woman's legs in nylons

with a pinstriped seam," referencing the eroticization of the female body and her to-be-looked-at-

ness (Creech 416).[45] Intervening in an official discourse that fails to acknowledge her struggles

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[45] Including such a shot in her film can be interpreted as a reference towards the lingering sexism as pointed out by Creech (416), but it may also be interpreted as a subversion of women's to-be-looked-at-ness. The legs in nylons emerge as a reminder of historical gender divisions between the predominantly male onlooker and the female receiver of the look and emphasize its powerful legacy. At the same time, however, Misselwitz, as a creative agent, is claiming authority over this particular filmic representation and challenges the to-be-looked-at-ness of the

and lived experience as a woman in the GDR, Misselwitz enlists the help of others. Through the interviews with women she meets on her journey and her own voice-over, *Winter Adé* shows how the idea of gender equality is often contradicted by direct, lived experiences of women. It was born out of a similar motivation as *Tue recht*, namely the sense that the experiences of women in 20th century Germany were insufficiently told.[46]

In a slightly different way Chantal Ackermann's autobiographical film, *News From Home* (1977)*,* joins Brückner's and Misselwitz' works in using embodied voice to link her life story with (family) history. In the experimental documentary, Ackermann deals with her new life in New York. Her camera portrays the city of New York, while her voice-over reads out letters her mother sent her from Belgium. Akin to *Tue recht* and *Winter Adé*, *News From Home* links the filmmaker's body with her mother's body through voice and narration. Unlike *Tue recht* and *Winter Adé,* however, Ackermann's voice-over is the *only* voice that is audible in *News from Home*. Occasionally overshadowed by the noise of the city, Ackermann reads her mother's letters from Belgium and the sound of her French voice contrasts with the distinctly American city, making her foreignness and unfamiliarity in New York viscerally perceivable. The content of the letters, along with her embodied voice, embeds Ackermann in a haptic way in her film without her body ever becoming visible. Her embodied voice renders a young woman who is far away from home for the first time, trying to establish herself as a filmmaker and emancipate herself from the familiarity of her home.

The geographical distance between the bodies of both daughter and mother also manifests

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woman's legs by embedding it in her autobiography and by exposing the sexist representation of women.

[46] Brückner declared her mother's "masochistic compulsion to pursue real life" and her "passion for consumption and her hectic urge to make up for missed opportunities" as a generational issue, and thus presents a female view of history (4).

itself in the voice-over narration. The repeated wish expressed through the mother's letters, that her daughter should write more, and the constant questioning of when she will come home, show how painful the separation from her daughter's body is for the mother. The mother's unfulfilled desire for more letters and quicker answers thus also finds expression in Ackermann's voice-over (e.g. when her mother becomes impatient and notes in a letter: "Please answer my questions for once. For Heaven's sake. Please try" (*News from Home* 0:30:36). Or when she is worried about her daughter's well-being and her honesty with regard to how she is actually doing in New York: "You never write how you are really doing" (*News from Home* 1:09:56)). As Ackermann reads her mother's words in a calm way, however, the mother's anger and worry are combined with the tranquil, monotonous voice of her daughter. In that combination, both the pain of separation and the daughter's need for emancipation become embodied in Ackermann's voice. Finally, the letters from her mother reveal Ackermann's biography as part of a family history. The content of the letters introduces Ackermann's family, fragments of her childhood, memories of her mother, and family events (e.g. when the mother talks about her younger sister's birthday, which they had to celebrate without Ackermann: "[...] we celebrated Silvain's birthday. Without you" (*News From Home* 0:28:00).

Voice, as these examples suggest, can indeed transmit a visceral presence, emotional states and the nature of a relationship between people. Embodied voice, however, often also means a voice that draws on one's own life and puts that life in a context of a historical time and place. In other words, an embodied voice is also a voice that tells about lived, bodily experiences. In conversations with the women Misselwitz meets on her train journey, for example, she raises very ordinary, practical issues like the struggle between work and private life or the everyday labor of motherhood and marriage. This focus, on ordinary details of the lives of

women, allows a critical encounter with the times and spaces that shape the self.

Self-Exploration Through Time, Space, and Encounters

The works by Brückner, Misselwitz, and Ackermann all use the passing of time in some way to reflect on their lives, but they also draw on bodily, lived experiences, physical spaces and the (bodily) encounter with others as important sources of self-exploration. In *Tue recht,* for example, it is through the process of looking back on her life and specific lived experiences that Siepenbrink develops a sense of understanding of herself as an individual (Brückner 6). While through large parts of the film she speaks of herself only in the third person (e.g. "one does not do this"), the last part of the film is marked by her becoming a person who says 'I'. This shift from the third person to the first person is reflected on the visual level by her sudden appearance on the screen: "the picture of *one* face and *one* body, both of which are hers" (Brückner 6).

Starting her autobiographical journey all the way back with her birth, Misselwitz clearly uses the passing of time to understand her positioning as a woman in the GDR. Additionally, she physically moves her body away from her hometown to other places and encounters, which allow her to look back on her younger self in a spatial and comparative way. *Winter Adé* thus suggests that in addition to a temporal distance, a reflection on one's life is also aided by geographical distance and encounters with others. The train station serves as a figurative and literal departure point for Misselwitz' self-exploration, and her train travels can be understood as a metaphor for different life stages, evoking the notion of a trip with milestones and destinations. Since she returns to her point of departure, her destination can hardly be considered a geographical point; instead, her journey creates a narrative frame that facilitates encounters with

self and others and enables new perspectives on her own life.[47]

Ackermann's *News from Home* provides yet another example of how a geographical journey does similar things as a temporal distance in terms of exploring subjectivity of the gendered speaking self. Similar to *Tue recht* and *Winter Adé,* the visual level in *News from Home* evokes places that are unfamiliar and external to the filmmaker. In *Tue recht* August Sanders' photos transport Brückner into early 20th century Germany and in *Winter Adé* Misselwitz' train journey takes her to a variety of unfamiliar places. In *News from Home* Ackermann takes the audience on a visual journey exploring her new home, New York City.[48] Physically in a new place, she has to negotiate between her new-found independence and her attachment to her home and family. Geographically separated, Ackermann embarks on a journey to emancipate herself from the emotional guardianship of her mother.[49] While the geographical distance in *News From Home* allows reflection and emancipation from familiar thoughts and codes, Ackermann also *relies* on her mother's words to convey her experience in New York and to construct her own life narrative. In that sense, *News From Home* shows how the distancing from her mother is marked by simultaneous connection to her. Ackermann's voice-over can thus be understood as reflecting on how deeply her identity is connected to her mother, not only in becoming who she is but also

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[47] Creech argues that the final sequence at the train station functions as a conclusion to the foregoing narratives of the other women and so Misselwitz also uses the return to the train station as a way to reflect on the "artistic and critical goals of the film" (424). Creech interprets: "Meaning 'good-bye winter' or 'adieu winter,' the title suggests a movement away from a season of cold, death, emptiness, and silence. The 'winter' in the title can easily be read as the state in which Misselwitz reads women's voices and narratives in the GDR of the late 1980s. The marginalization of these women's stories from a mainstream discourse of women's experience under socialism is the winter from which women must depart" (424).

[48] The images in *News from Home* show the audience all the things that are also new and foreign to the filmmaker herself: American cars, people playing baseball, the New York subway, donut shops, and so on.

[49] The agency Ackermann gains from the physical distance is, for example, exemplified by the fact that the mother is forced to await her daughter's letters (which have to be shipped across the Atlantic Ocean). Not being able to demand immediate answers by confronting her daughter physically, Ackermann is in charge of when and how she wants to inform her mother about her life.

in the process of talking about herself. In fact, everything the audience learns about Ackermann is written by her mother. Based on the mother's letters we know, for example, that Ackermann moved several times, got different jobs, made friends, and is doing well.

Ackermann's voice-over in *News from Home* is thus marked by a seemingly paradoxical dynamic: on the one hand, the distance from the mother, and on the other hand a strong entanglement with her mother, which is represented by an interweaving of the mother's words and the daughter's voice. Ivone Margulies argues that the voice Ackermann creates "[…] echoes from a paradoxical space, both source and end […]" where "[…] the pronominal shifters 'I' and 'you' ordinarily signal one subject in relation to another, but here these carriers of subjectivity are shown as precariously rooted" (qtd. in Barker 43). It is in this paradoxical space that the mother becomes both the foundation Ackermann has to leave behind and the ground from which the filmmaker speaks with authority, as a woman in the process of (re)claiming her own place in the world. The voice-over in *News from Home* thus brings together two perspectives in one single voice and sustains, as Sjogren puts it, "the paradox of difference in a positive sense" (15). *Tue recht* also displays this seemingly paradox dynamic: Making a film about her mother demands that Brückner looks at both her mother and their relationship from a certain distance. At the same time, she is dependent on her mother in embarking on this journey in the first place. Both, the connection and the distance, are necessary in order for her to break away and embark on her own quest for subjectivity. In both examples, *Tue recht* and *News from Home,* the filmmakers' quests for subjectivity are thus marked by push and pull factors, which work in a dynamic equilibrium: pushing the daughter away to embark on her own journey, and drawing her in, to feed on her mother's life.

Misselwitz' *Winter Adé* illustrates a slightly different way in which encounters with

others further the filmmaker's self-exploration. Anna Stainton argues that *Winter Adé* creates a "multi-vocal autobiography" (87) by interweaving together different voices that lead "[…] to women's autobiography in the plural" (88). As Misselwitz relates herself to others through her own voice-over and the direct speech acts of other women, she maintains the diversity of the individual voices, but also constructs her own autobiography as one narrative perspective among others. Embedding her quest for subjectivity in polyphony, her autobiographical 'I' is pushed to the back by a less stable and multi-voiced 'we' (Davies qtd. in Creech 415). Creech argues that "[t]his use of various positions, of an assortment of women in different social positions and family roles speaking into the camera, makes it more difficult to generalize about the particular women interviewed and creates a differentiated, less stereotypical, and therefore more 'authentic' picture of GDR 'womanhood'" (Creech 414).

The notion that subjectivity emerges as a function of relating to others, and that it arises and articulates itself only through its relation to others (Barker 44), thus links these works and complicates the question 'Who speaks'? The difficulty in answering this question becomes particularly perceivable in *News From Home*, since Ackermann combines both her mother's voice and her own voice, but *Tue recht* and *Winter Adé* also convolute the disclosure of an origin of the narration by interweaving the filmmaker's life story with the lives and voices of others. At the same time, however, all works are based on the singular, creative experience of life-writing of one filmmaker. None of the examples are bi-autobiographical. While rooting their subjectivity in multiple voices and fragmenting narration into different statements, they also assert their directorial construction through writing, editing and contextualizing these different elements. While enabling and integrating other voices, it is the one filmmaker who retains artistic control over the film.

Narration and Voice in *Wanderlust*

Slow Travel and Self-Reflection

At the beginning of this chapter, I raised the question of how changing geographical, cultural and social settings find their way into our voice (-over) and narration. One of the ways in which the physical act of traveling influenced our sense of selves was through intentional slow travel. Our journey between Egypt and Germany was characterized by the self-imposed rule not to not take airplanes as a means of exposing our bodies to greater levels of discomfort. It also created time to reflect and allowed for the self to unfold in time and space. The geographer and social theorist David Harvey discusses fundamental changes in the experience of traversing the spaces of the world in terms of *time–space compression.* The compression of time and space, so Harvey, renders the world increasingly void of material resistances and dramatically reduces the time it takes us to get from one place to another (Harvey 284). Air travel frees most journeys today of the discomfort that is triggered by crossing geographical distances and obstacles, but at the price of increasingly disembodied experiences. What I mean by slow travel thus makes reference to a type of travel that reminds us of the fact that we actually take our bodies with us when we travel. One example of this slow travel occurs about half-way through *Wanderlust,* on a 10-hour-long bus ride from Taşucu to Cappadocia in Turkey.

The bus we are in is empty, so Maria and I can each occupy two seats. As Maria films me from where she sits, we can see her foot. I sit opposite her, looking out the window of the moving bus. From a wide framing which shows my whole body, the image changes to a closer framing, and then to my point-of-view (POV)[50] displaying the passing landscape. My voice-over

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[50] A point-of-view in the context of film analysis usually refers to the camera shot or scene that shows what a character or person is seeing. It is the position from which something is viewed represented through the camera.

sets in and goes at follows:

> Para mi, hay pocos lugares mejores para mantener conversaciones conmigo mismo, que en un bus. Siento que un bus tiene la velocidad perfecta. El transcurso del paisaje me invita a sumergirme a un flujo de recuerdos, asociaciones y pensamientos dentro de mi. (*Wanderlust* TC: 0:53:38)[51]

In this scene I draw on the lived experience of spending several hours on a bus looking at the Turkish countryside and the sense of self which emerged that was intimately linked to time and space: I am not the same as I was when I arrived in Egypt or as I was when I arrived in Turkey or even as I was when I recorded this voice-over (or when I wrote this sentence). The decision not to take airplanes and the resulting relatively slow travel triggered a self-examination that was significantly shaped by the physical condition of a movement which was "slow enough" to allow a sensing of and reflection on this.

As my body moved from Egypt to Germany, and later via the USA to Argentina to edit our film, my voice-over becomes a place of reflection on my lived experience. Voice, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, can articulate these developments through *what* is said, but also through *how* something is said. We arrived in Germany in July 2014 but did not record our voice-over until the end of 2016 in Argentina. The temporal and spatial lag between the end of our journey and the recording of our voice-over manifests itself in two main ways: first, the temporal and spatial changes manifest themselves in terms of how my voice changed from a more neutral Spanish accent I have in the on-camera comments in the film, to a much more Argentinian accent (with certain local attributes from the area of Buenos Aires). My intonation, pronunciation, and choice of words were no longer the same as they were when I set out on this

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[51] "For me there are few better places to have a conversation with myself than on a bus. I feel like a bus has the perfect velocity. The passing of the landscape is like an invitation to submerge myself into a flow of memories, associations, and thoughts inside of me" (translation mine).

trip with Maria. At the point of voice recording I had been in La Plata for several months and as a result of that my Spanish had changed and I had adapted to the idiomatic expressions and intonation I heard on a daily basis. Second, and perhaps more significantly, the temporal lag becomes perceivable in terms of how memory and distance to the lived experience influenced my thoughts. The physical movement of my body to Argentina also had an influence on the way I reflected on our journey, as I now had a deeper understanding of the culture Maria grew up in and was able to relate better to some of her ideas and concerns she expressed throughout our journey over a year ago. The visceral difference in my voice and the way I was reliving parts of our journey with Maria while working on the film in post-production exemplifies the transformations of my body through time and space. This demonstrates how embodied voice can exhibit the time-gap between the 'I' that narrates and the 'I' that is experiencing a situation, as well as the psychological development that the 'I' undergoes when translating between different cultures and languages (Pillai 4).

The way embodied experiences formed and influenced this scene is also expressed via the editing. In the described scene, my voice-over is followed by a few seconds of silence in which the camera remains looking at the landscape from my POV (see figure 2.1). This moment attempts to make the experiential dimension of this bus ride perceivable through our film and invites the viewers to immerse themselves for a short moment in the feeling of being on a moving bus. The approximately 20-seconds-long POV shot experiments with the idea put forward in Chapter One that the sensation of embodied selfhood, which is based on impressions, can also be reproduced in film.

Figure 2.1 Anne's POV on the bus ride from Taşucu to Cappadocia in Turkey (*Wanderlust* 0:54:00).

The Mutually Dependent 'We'

The idea of a self that is singular plural, as argued by Nancy, raises the question of how this multiplicity of self finds its manifestation in narration and voice. As the works by Brückner, Misselwitz, and Ackermann have shown, there is no one way to express one's relationality with, or dependence on, another human being. Instead, the examples discussed by German and Belgian filmmakers illustrate the variety of ways in which a relational self can be expressed in autobiographical narration. In the case of Maria and me, the reciprocally dependent relationship, as well as our differences, materializes most perceivably in our on-camera conversations during production, our off-camera conversations during post-production, and our voice-over narration.

'We' During Production: Subjectivity, Voice and Becoming Able to Speak

The unfamiliarity of the places we traveled through has as a consequence that neither Maria nor I felt at home in them. Putting ourselves into those spaces together created a solidarity

between us, along with a sense of responsibility for each other and our joint endeavor to make this film. At the same time, however, this bond was constantly challenged by the differences between us. Our joint narration is thus marked by a simultaneous *listening to* and *questioning of* each other.

About 18 minutes into our film Maria and I are sitting in a bus going from Israel to Palestine. The scene starts out with the image of an interior take of the bus from my position. The camera is at eye level and is barely able to look over the rest of the seat before me (*Wanderlust* 0:17:09). Maria's voice comes in and says "Prendemos nuestra aventura del día de hoy."[52] Following Maria's comment, we see a medium close up shot of her sitting next to me as she announces where we are going: "Ramallah, Palestina" (0:17:57). This statement is followed by a quick sequence of shots that show her looking out the window and my POV as I look to the front of the bus. Next, I film Maria's camera filming the border crossing between Israel and Palestine while saying: "Apenas cruzamos la frontera y ahora estamos en Palestina."[53] Both of our cameras are filming the same thing, but from different perspectives; in each case our on-camera statements are synchronized with the image.

Maria then starts talking about how striking it is that the landscape changes within just ten minutes, and how her first impression of Palestine is very similar to that of Cairo. As a response to her observation, I try to start talking about how arriving in Palestine generates strong feelings for me, because I never imagined that I would find myself here. As I struggle to find the reasons and right words to express why and what I feel, Maria keeps alternating between gazing out the window and looking to the top left corner of the frame where my face must have been.

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[52] "We are starting our adventure of the day" (translation mine).
[53] "We just crossed the border and now we are in Palestine" (translation mine).

After I finish my failed attempt to explain why I feel strongly about arriving in Palestine, she responds to me and says "No todo tiene que tener un porqué"[54] (*Wanderlust* 0:19:00). Because of the noise of the bus and the streets, this is not very clearly understandable, so in the take afterwards, our hands are visible adjusting the microphone so that the other things Maria is about to say can be understood better.

After adjusting the microphone, Maria starts speaking again and she talks about how there are some things you just feel through your body and reveals how she is sometimes annoyed by me because I often ask her *why* she is feeling one way or another. The example she uses to illustrate her point is our experience from the previous day when we went to the Wailing Wall, and I asked her several times why this place made her so emotional. Maria recalls this situation and uses my speechlessness to conclude that sometimes it is possible to just feel certain things, without being able to explain them. I have to admit to her that after my own inability to express myself, I now feel like I can relate to her reaction from the previous day much better.

In terms of voice, narration, and embodied experiences, there are a couple of things happening in this scene. First, the reciprocal dependency in narrating our journey becomes apparent in the short interview situation on the bus. Unlike traditional interviews in documentaries, where the filmmaker behind the camera addresses questions to the film*matter* in front of the camera, all of our interview situations in *Wanderlust* are marked by a mutual reliance that both of us can exercise our right/authority to remain silent, respond, or to ask a question ourselves. This does not mean that our interview situations are devoid of power dynamics, but that the formal set-up as co-authors opens up a space in which roles are less fixed than for

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[54] "Not everything has to have a reason" (translation mine).

example in the interview situations provoked and presented by Brückner or Misselwitz. In the

interview on the bus, for example, Maria turns around the initial set-up (where I am holding the

camera and asking her to talk about how she feels) and addresses a topic which provokes me to

answer to her. Second, the scene shows how the same place and situation can trigger different

experiences for different people, but also demonstrates how subjectivity is developed as a

function of connection *and* differences with others. When I fail to express why the arrival to

Palestine generates strong feelings in me, it is not only the inability to express complex feelings

in Spanish but also a genuine lack of understanding about myself. Maria's comparison to her

inability to express herself, the previous day, prompts me to think about how *my* cultural heritage

and *my* origin might play a role in my reaction. In this situation it became possible for me to

perceive how my own cultural framework influences how I see and interpret Maria's reactions.

Third, the scene on the bus reveals how our embodied lived experiences facilitate an

understanding between Maria and me, even though neither one of us could relate to the other's

emotional response naturally. Despite the fact that we both remain silent (as in not offering the

other an explanation for our emotional reaction), we come to understand each other on a more

visceral level through a similar bodily experience.

After the interview, the next cut takes us out of the bus and into the streets of Ramallah

where an old car stands on the side of a street with a Palestinian flag attached to the windows of

the back seats. As the images change from the parked car on the site of the street to a busy

commercial street in downtown Ramallah, to a medium shot of me walking through the city next

to several other people and a wide medium shot of Maria walking in front of me, my voice-over

reflects:

Palestina es un lugar que conocía exclusivamente por los medios de comunicación. No

tengo amigos o familiares que viven allá. Ni siquiera conozco gente que visito este lugar. Al llegar sentí que rompí esta frontera entre la ilusión y la presencia física y entendí que a vos te había pasado algo parecido el día anterior en el muro de los lamentos. (*Wanderlust* 0:19:51)[55]

Maria's argument that some things are simply felt via the body because of the stories and cultural background that we each carry within us, guides my reflection and eventually informs the voice-over, which exhibits a type of self-exploration, trying to understand my visceral reaction.

As indicated in my voice-over, the intensity I felt because I was in Palestine has a lot to do with my previously exclusively mediated encounter with the place: on the one hand, a sense of anxiety fueled by the mainstream narratives of Western media that broadcast footage of hooded, stone-throwing Palestinians and enraged protesters in this place of ongoing conflict; on the other hand, empathy for generations of Palestinians living under a military occupation fueled by documentary films and independent/non-Western reports.[56] Coming to Palestine and moving around without restriction, feeling comfortable, and even stumbling upon a concert rehearsal of an international music ensemble (*Wanderlust* 0:20:36), did not really correspond with either one of these images. Given that we only spent one day in Ramallah and did not go beyond the city center, I cannot claim that the normality is fully representative of Palestine or even other parts of the city, but it did dismantle the binary divide between the two images that had been cultivated in my imagination. The German expression *die Mauer im Kopf*[57] is often used to refer to persisting

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[55]"Palestine is a place I only know through what is shown in the media. I don't have friends or family who live here. I don't even know anyone who has visited this place. When I got there, I felt as if I tore down a wall between my image of the place and actually being there. And so I got a sense of what must have happened to you that previous day at the Wailing Wall" (translation mine).

[56] One example I remember specifically is the 2012 Sundance Winner *5 Broken Cameras.* Co-directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, the autobiographical documentary is a film about the conflict between the villagers of Bil'in, a Palestinian village close to Ramallah, and the Israelis who set out to separate this village from the Jewish Settlement Modi'in Illit. In order to create a frontier between the two villages they seize Palestinian farm land. While the film documents the attempts by the Palestinian villagers to resist this seizure of their land, the film also documents the birth and growing up of the Palestinian co-director's children.

[57] *The Wall in the head* (translation mine).

stereotypes and assumptions regarding cultural differences between East and West Germany even after the fall of the Wall in 1989. As a metaphorical barrier, this idea of a wall inside one's head is expressed in my voice-over. Arriving in Ramallah tears down this imaginary wall, unblocks my view, and allows a seeing and thinking beyond those previously established binaries.

At the same time, the scene in Ramallah and the ensuing return to Israel, allude to what it means and feels like to be German in different places. While our travel through Israel had confronted me with Germany's historical obligations towards Israel, our visit to Palestine enforced the notion that my country also had historical responsibilities to Palestine. After all, there would have been no partition of Palestine without the Holocaust. The return journey to Israel emphasized the weight of this responsibility as the enclosure of Palestine and the policing/control of its people became painfully perceivable: We had to undergo meticulous border controls, which on our way to Palestine were non-existent (see *Wanderlust* 00:21:21).

'We' in Post-Production

While the examples of other filmmakers were helpful in exploring ways to *represent* relationality in voice-over and narration, these films did not provide much guidance when it came to dealing with the *process* of negotiating differences *behind* the camera, or in the editing process. Our approach in writing the voice-over differed from the examples provided by Brückner, Misselwitz, and Ackermann because Maria and I were working as co-authors. This means that we could not think about the creation of our autobiographical account by beginning from the one, nor from the other (e.g. as in the case of Brückner who begins from her mother).

Nor could we think of our narration as a "now as the One, now as the Other" (Nancy 34) with one of us maintaining artistic control over the text (such as in Misselwitz' *Winter Adé*, where the filmmaker oscillates between herself and the other women, creating a sort of collage of women's voices that are curated by her). While our film draws on some of these strategies, in the sense that a particular idea might emerge from my perspective or from Maria's, or because our different voices and perspectives take turns, the ideological, overall approach for our co-speaking had to be a different one. Our creation of the voice-over, and overall narration had to begin by thinking of ourselves as "with," as being "with-one-another [I'un-avec-l'autre]" (Nancy 34).

As a first step in creating the voice-over narration, each one of us set out to write down ideas for each chapter of the film (we divided the film into chapters that loosely corresponded to countries or geographical regions). In a second step, we compared and discussed which elements we wanted to focus on, and in the next step, we started to assemble on-camera voice, interviews, and images that corresponded to those elements. Based on a loose chronological order and thematic focus we arranged the footage and started writing the voice-over. This voice-over then became the first draft based upon which we modified the images. In turn, we allowed the voice-over to be inspired by the images and rewrote it. The new voice-over would then influence the images again, and so on. In the same way, Maria and I were in constant dialogue to create the voice-over, and the images in our film were in constant dialogue with the voice-over narration of the film. Both the relationship between Maria and me, and the relationship between image and sound, are characterized by mutual dependency. Contrary to the unidimensional "Voice of God," Maria and I use multiple voice-over perspectives. We speak as a 'we', but we also address each other in our dialogue and continue some of our on-screen conversations in the form of off-screen interactions.

My voice-over which occurs with the images of Ramallah is then not just influenced and shaped by Maria; rather, our on-camera conversation, as well as numerous off-camera conversations, *co-wrote* it. Much of the work that went into the voice-over in general is not explicitly perceivable in the film. It took many conversations with Maria, re-writing and editing, to finally come out with a voice-over that both of us were satisfied with. Because of my non-native Spanish, I also needed linguistic help in phrasing my ideas in a way that would be grammatically correct and match the tone I wanted my voice-over to have. At the same time, I also adjusted and questioned Maria's voice-over. This co-speaking eventually resulted in each scene in our film being preceded by so much discussion and followed by so much re-writing and re-editing that the final version can only be seen as a joint effort of both of us, a product of mutual correction, convergence, but also acceptance of differences.

Andrea Stöckl describes writing about oneself as an alienating process, where "the self we write about is turned into 'an other' when we progress in time" (2). Given this statement, we might wonder what happens when we embark on the task of life writing with 'an other'? What happens when we set out to deduce thoughts and emotions from lived experiences and turn them into words *with someone else?* Trying to answer this question from my own experience of working with Maria on making *Wanderlust,* it seems to me that working with a co-author can create an even more destabilizing and alienating process. The self who sets out to write an autobiography will inevitably feel dissociated from her previous self in the process of reflection, but in the process of writing she usually operates within the assumption that the text produced is hers. However, as a co-author of a bi-autobiographical account I often found myself wondering how much of the text was "mine" (text can be understood here as the film itself, but also just as the voice-over text). The process of writing myself *with* Maria thus reveals the dilemma with that

concern as it becomes impossible to really disentangle each individual's contribution. This difficulty thus also points back to the idea that "[…] language itself, though spoken by an individual, is never entirely our own invention [...]" (Lebow Introduction, location 252-255, par. 4). Consequently, the process of writing the self in co-existence and co-speaking with someone else is destabilizing because it acknowledges the "ever-renewed alterity" (Nancy 20) within ourselves: if subjectivity emerges as a connection and function to something external to our bodies – whether this is another body, new landscapes, or language – the external element will always renew our alterity as long as we keep on moving (in both a literal and a figurative sense). This is not to suggest that an autobiography by a single author does not allow that insight as well, but that in a bi-autobiographical account this idea of "ever-renewed alterity" is more intrinsically embedded in the process of creation.

Now, what does all this mean for women travelers, and specifically for reframing the woman traveler? What does it mean to be a female subject who speaks or rather female subjects who "speak with"? As the examples by German and Belgian filmmakers and our own film have shown, first-person accounts can provide knowledge about women's lived experiences and reveal information that is hard to find in official, historical documents. For women travelers and filmic accounts of women travelers it is important to construct material voices that foreground the lived, embodied dimensions of those travel experiences in order to understand the material ways in which women travelers navigate the world. In addition to constructing material voices, a female subject who speaks can play with diverse perspectives to invite polyphony and thereby challenge simple meanings. Especially the experience of moving through unfamiliar spaces and cultures can trigger these multiple voices within the subject, or through inviting other voices on the level of narration. *Winter Adé* shows how the voices of many make it harder to fall into a

type of narrative that proclaims just one truth. Speaking with Maria, and telling our journey based on the experiences of our two bodies, does something similar as it creates a narrative with contradictions and differences. A recognition of differences within one voice can enable a type of knowledge that sustains difference rather than denying or punishing it (Sjogren 14). This type of narration then also presents a way of knowing self and others that leaves the door open to disputability because its "ever-renewing alterity" (Nancy 20) refuses one fixed reality and rejects one single right answer.

A revisiting of the recorded visual material by means of the voice-over narration (as we did in our film) can fulfill a similar purpose in terms of rendering simple meanings unstable. As a method of estrangement and process of self-reflection it can help the woman traveler to reflect on the way her body is implicated in the places and spaces she visits. This also means that the female subject can use her (material/embodied) voice to sabotage or reframe the authoritative position of images, whether these images are self-produced (as in the case of our documentary) or whether they are produced by someone else. The critical revisiting of visual representation can create multiplicities of perspective within one travel narrative. Finally, "speaking with" and expressing relationality is another way to invite multiplicity into narration. *Tue recht* and *News From Home* both display a seemingly paradox dynamic: in both cases the filmmakers draw on their mothers' lives in order to embark on their own autobiographical journeys. "Speaking with" thus displays a relationality that is marked by distance and dependency: in our film, I can speak because I have already listened to Maria. Or, as Nancy says: "This is why there is no ultimate language, but instead languages, words, voices, an originally singular sharing of voices without which there would be no voice." (85).

Chapter Three: Collaboration, Friendship, and Sisterhood

In the last two chapters, I have focused on filmic strategies that can help to reframe the woman traveler and bring into being new and different understandings of self and others. In Chapter One, I discussed the struggle related to showing the female body and presented a number of cinematographic strategies that thematize the other with the self. These strategies include: presenting a less complete image through haptic visuality (vid. *Tango Traum*), using embodied cinematography to reveal the social and physical presence of another (vid. *Verriegelte Zeit*), and relating the self to others who return the gaze through the camera (vid. *Reise*). In Chapter Two, I demonstrated how subjectivity always emerges in relation to someone or something else that is outside of the self, and how a "speaking with" (Nancy 20) manifests itself in different ways through voice and narration. I have thus shown how the ideas of relational selves and intersubjectivity manifest themselves in filmic accounts through cinematography and narration and I have started to demonstrate how our own film is marked by a reciprocal dependency between Maria and me. While the friendship that informed our collaboration has always been implied in these previous chapters, I now take a deeper look at the role of friendship in identity formation and as a factor in challenging the established order.

As a social bond that was set apart from other kinship bonds, but considered equally important, philosophers over time, like Aristotle, Cicero, and Montaigne, have been eager to ascribe many positive effects to friendship. Aristotle, for example, suggested that friendship is necessary to know the self (Biss 125), and Montaigne believed that friendship functions as a place to "search your soul and discover the scope of your mind" (Österberg 118). One major underlying assumption for these philosophers, however, is that friendship was not suitable for women. Indeed, up to the 18th century, friendship was largely assumed to be possible only

between men (Österberg 120). Feminist historian Barbara Cain points out that this is not only because 'true' friendship was considered distinctively masculine, but also because virtue was viewed as indispensable for friendship and virtuous qualities were attributed only to men (*Friendship* xii). Cain then highlights how by the 19th and 20th centuries, the idea of friendship as being exclusively male had undergone an almost complete reversal. By the 19th century women had entered into the discussion about friendship as novelists and essayists and started to describe how friendships between women diminish the isolation of women in the domestic sphere.[58] With the women's suffrage movement, in the beginning of the 20th century, friendship between women then also became more public.[59] Personal networks of friends provided support systems and created the spaces in which women were able to organize and share their experiences (Österberg 11). Consequently, friendship and collaboration between women emerged as something that women *depended on*, and used to publicly draw attention to the lack of their voices in political decision-making.

The genealogy of friendship between women, its origins in the private, domestic realm and its shift to a political and public-facing movement, draws attention to the ways in which friendship between men and friendship between women might differ, but also raises questions with regard to the *places* in which friendship between women originates, is practiced and presented. Space and spatiality have played an important role in previous chapters as well. This

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[58] Cain describes how this happened thanks to a variety of women from many different walks of life and at different points in time: religious communities in the medieval and Renaissance periods, individual authors and aristocratic women in the 15th and 16th century, and philosophers and novelists in the 19th century (*Friendship* xii).

[59] Throughout this chapter I will use the term "friendship between women" and avoid the term "female friendship." While this may lead to some clunky language, it is the same reason why I tried to talk about "women filmmakers" instead of "female filmmakers." "Friendship between women" then includes all friendships between those subjects who identify as women (regardless of their biological sex, gender, sexual orientation) while "female friendship" carries a connotation that implies heterosexual normativity and character traits that are considered "female" and is less inclusive of queer and LGBT filmmakers precisely because it evokes these binary gender role stereotypes.

becomes perhaps most obviously apparent in Chapter One, as the body itself is spatial, but also in Chapter Two, due to its focus on the relationship between the self and others at different times and in different cultural contexts. Susan Stanford Friedman argues that the spatial turn in feminist studies set up more fluid and flexible ways of thinking about identity and thereby encouraged a perception of identity processes that are ongoing and non-stable.[60] For the context of this cross-cultural project, the thinking about identity as fluid and the link between space and identity emerges as extremely important in order to explore the friendship between Maria and me, as "relational, situational, and interactive" (S. Friedman 20).

To begin with, I focus on the physical and cultural places in which friendship takes hold. Next, I look at how friendship evolves into communities of collaboration and how it connects to autobiography, self-development, and the location of female subjectivity. I have previously demonstrated how cinematography and voice-over narration afford access to self-development, and I now look into how friendship fulfills a similar function, especially in relation to others. Finally, I explore how these qualities and characteristics of friendship link to ongoing debates about sisterhood and the ways in which friendship between women displays disruptive socio-political potential in furthering a feminist agenda. As in previous chapters, I extend my investigation into the role of collaboration and friendship to other filmic examples by drawing on the works of German feminist filmmakers, and end with an-in depth discussion of our film.

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[60] S. Friedman describes how the second wave of feminism was marked by time metaphors like "awakening/revelation," while the third wave of feminism is, for example, more likely to talk about "location" or "migration."

Spaces of Friendship

Few people nowadays consider their friends as anything but a private matter. Commonly thought of as the "family we choose for ourselves," friendship is viewed as something that belongs to our private lives in a similar way as our family, romantic relationships and sexuality do. Eva Österberg, a historian of friendship, however, shows that friendship was not always considered something located in the private realm. In fact, she demonstrates how from the classical and medieval period all the way to the early modern period of state formation, friendship was deeply intertwined with the public sphere (Österberg 16). In medieval times, for example, friendship served to "mould social and political alliances that were essential to the fabric of society," and it was only with the advent of state-building in Europe that friendship was transformed into a phenomenon mostly viewed as private and personal (Österberg 12). From a feminist perspective, the intertwinement of friendship with the public sphere, of course, also explains why so many discussions of friendship focus exclusively on men, who were traditionally more involved in the public sphere (Cain *Friendship* xiv). In *Friendship and Politics,* John von Heyking and Richard Avramenko put a slightly different spin on the idea of the location of (post)modern friendship in the private sphere. They argue that nowadays our private realm has actually taken on characteristics of the public realm as it is increasingly marked by contractual, utilitarian and goal-oriented interactions:

> […], the liberal principle that society is grounded in a contract reaches into other areas of life to the point that we regard all our relationships in similar terms. We come to our private relationships, our loves and friendships, with the same desire to get a good bargain as we do when we purchase a car or a computer. We network, we schmooze, and we realize the "autonomous self," the ideal to which much of contemporary liberalism seeks. (von Heyking and Avramenko 3)

While those two perspectives seem to differ in terms of the location of modern and contemporary friendship as a mainly private matter (Österberg) or a private matter that has been assimilated to the workings of public/professional realm (Heyking and Avramenko), both use the notion of private and public space to position friendship as something that inhabits those two spheres.[61] Crisscrossing the imagined line between the private and the public realm, friendship emerges as something that points out the liminality of those spheres. In fact, any closer look into the public or private realm will show how the private realm is of course influenced by politics and how the public realm is challenged by what happens in the private realm. As I continue to use the terms "public" and "private," I mainly use them as heuristic devices to understand friendship as something operating within the assumptions we have about these concepts, and in order to explore friendship as a trespasser that challenges these assumptions. Especially for women (travelers) who have traditionally been most strongly affected by the division of the private/domestic sphere and the public sphere, the ability of friendship to overstep these realms suggests a potential for disrupting the spatial and social control on identity to which women are often subjected. Finally, this notion of friendship as a trespasser also promises intriguing insights for cross-cultural encounters between subjects from different countries, as I will highlight by drawing on my friendship with Maria, and the spaces where our friendship developed.

Before embarking on our journey from Egypt to Germany together, Maria and I had only met each other twice. We first got to know each other in 2011 during a three-week documentary filmmaking workshop in Cuba, and a year later we saw each other again for a one-week reunion

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[61] Since both were published around the same time (Österberg in 2010 and Heyking and Avramenko in 2008), their different takes on friendship being embedded in the public sphere might also have to do with their own location. While Österberg writes mainly within the European context, Heyking and Avramenko focus more on the US context.

with the participants of the workshop in Brazil. Two years after Brazil, in 2014, another workshop was planned to take place in Egypt, which gave rise to the idea for Maria and I to travel together from the reunion site in Egypt to my home in Germany and to document this experience. The beginning of our friendship thus lies in Cuba and is embedded in a larger group of friends that was formed based on our mutual interest in documentary filmmaking. The international film school (*La Escuela de Cine y TV)* in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba--the physical setting in which we spent a lot of time together--is located in a small village about an hour from Havana. Its unique location on an island, away from the capital and largely isolated from foreign media, allows for intense interaction and creates temporarily completely self-sufficient communities (in the sense of human interaction). With almost no internet and no outside distractions, we were literally locked down in the school (there is a big fence which surrounds the school; everyone who leaves or arrives has to pass through the entry gate and register) and forced to interact with each other. In retrospect, it is striking to me how much the physical place in which our relationship started facilitated collaboration and intense engagement with each other.

As a place that was outside of our homes and beyond what was known to us, Cuba also provided an environment in which neither one of us felt at home. In a sense, Cuba, and more specifically the film school we attended, placed us in a physical and cultural context that was vastly different from our ordinary environments. Intermittently, it freed both of us from familiar cultural signs and opened a space of cultural ambivalence that influenced the development of our friendship. Since meaning in this new space had to be constantly re-negotiated for both of us, our interactions were less dominated by the frameworks of our cultural origins than they would have been at home. For example, in this third culture context, I quickly became aware that my German

desire to avoid uncertainties in conversations and to making plans was unachievable, partly due to the language barrier (my Spanish was not very good at that time and the mix of different types of Spanish coming together at the film school [Cuban Spanish, Argentinian Spanish, Peninsular Spanish, and so on] made communication challenging for me) and partly due to circumstances specific to the place we were in (e.g. the fact that meetings and events often do not start on time in Cuba). As a result, my existing knowledge system was rendered more unstable and incomplete than in an environment in which I feel more comfortable. Cuba thus caused ambivalence *within,* and *between,* Maria and me, and created a social space which allowed a grounding of our friendship largely outside any particular cultural prescriptions.[62]

Beyond the physical and social conditions in Cuba, the organization of the workshop also furthered the development of our relationship. During our workshop, we worked in small teams to produce a short film; Maria and I worked together with two other participants from other cultures (one from Chile and one from Colombia) on a project about a cinema in the small town of Quivicán, which was run exclusively by women. The thematic proximity to our film is striking. The short film, *Cine Encanto* (2011), which we completed in Cuba, features interviews with five women who used to run the local cinema, which is now closed. These women talk about how they did not just work together, but how their working together was more comparable to a relationship that sisters have (*Cine Encanto* 0:04:05). Evoking the themes of sisterhood, collaboration and friendship, *Cine Encanto* shares similarities with *Wanderlust* not just on a content level, but also in the way it was made and the way it links spaces and friendship between women. For example, the cinema in Quivicán served as a physical and social space for these

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[62] Our second meeting in Brazil in 2012 can be seen in a similar light. It was the first time we traveled together and provided another third-culture context.

women to collaborate, and the finished film serves as a filmic space that pays tribute to their friendship and their mutual support for each other.[63] The foundation for the friendship between Maria and me was thus not only embedded within a transnational working space, but it is was also embedded in a group predominantly made up of women, who chose to tell a story about women collaborating to run a cinema. Of course, Maria and I, had no idea about all of this at that time, but *Cine Encanto* marked the beginning of our relationship, the discovery of our mutual interest in documentary and gender issues, and the starting point of our journey.

Friendship as a Community of Choice

The existing literature on friendship suggests that up until the 18th century most philosophers' concerns with friendship were focused on "the moral connotations" of friendship (Cain, *Friendship* xi), which meant that they focused largely on the ways in which friendship aspired to do good for a higher end and to create harmonious and ethical societies. This changed in the 19th century, when more "[...] attention was focused on the extent to which friendships between men might *challenge* rather than support social norms by including erotic or sexual relationships [...]." (Cain, *Friendship* xii, my emphasis). Particularly for Christianity, the fear that the friendship between two men could become a more important relationship than the one with God posed a struggle and shifted thinking with regard to classical ideas of friendship (Österberg 35).[64]

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[63] When the film was finished at the end of the workshop, we showed it at the film school and invited the five protagonists to come and see it. Seeing themselves and remembering their friendship turned out to be a very emotional event for the five women who had not been in touch much since the movie theatre closed down.

[64] Every exploration of friendship eventually raises the question of how to deal with other relationships or facets of relationships. In my exploration of friendship I focus on non-romantic relationships while acknowledging that sometimes the lines are blurry. Friendships often exists alongside marital or other sexual relationships, and while erotic elements may be present in some friendships they are usually not the most important aspect (Cain, *Friendship*

As pointed out earlier, the pre-modern perception of friendship as something public-facing and aimed at doing good for a higher end largely excluded women and rendered friendship as something primarily relevant for men in their ethical-existential and social-political development. For women, it can be argued that friendship carried more of a disruptive potential from the beginning. Drawing on Jane Austin's novel *Emma* (1815), for example, Cain illustrates how friendship between women not only reduced their isolation in the private sphere, but also emerged as a potential disrupter to compulsory heterosexuality with women imagining friendship as an alternative to marriage (Cain 217-221).[65] A few decades later, the groundbreaking force of friendship between women becomes strikingly perceivable in the first and second waves of feminism that drew on friendship and solidarity in their movements for political and economic inclusion.

While friendship is not an easy relationship to define, Marilyn Friedman argues that voluntariness emerges as an important ingredient to it. In *What are Friends for? Feminist Perspectives on Personal Relationships and Moral Theory* (1992), Friedman explores the potential of friendship between women to create communities that allow subjects to challenge and question existing traditions. She highlights friendship between women as a community of choice and contrasts it to other identity-granting communities women are born into (e.g. the family, neighborhood or nation-state). Instead of being based on what is socially assigned or prescribed, Friedman shows how friendship is characterized by a certain degree of voluntariness (M. Friedman 245). This voluntariness "contributes to the potential of friendship to provide

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xiv).

[65] In the wake of discussions about an increasing number of unmarried women in Britain in 1865, writer and women's suffrage activist Francis Power Cobb suggests, for example, that women would not have to be alone, but could live their lives in the company of other women.

support for persons with unconventional values" (5).[66] In other words, friendship fulfills the

important function of creating alternative communities of belonging that help to sustain enclaves

of unconventional living, which might spark influential forces for social change. While

friendship alone is not yet a public action, it is where Friedman sees the breeding grounds for

feminist aspiration. Friendship as a community of choice provides support for subjects, despite,

or precisely because, they embody values that are deviant from dominant culture's beliefs and

expectations and thus provide the grounds from which resistance can emerge:

> Friendship among women has been the cement [...] of numerous communities of women
> throughout history who defied the local conventions for their gender and live lives of
> creative disorder. In all these cases, women moved out of their given or found
> communities into new attachments with other women by their own choice […] (M.
> Friedman 248-249).

"Sisterhood is powerful." This slogan became popular during the second wave of

feminism and makes reference to the progress that happened with regard to women's rights

largely because groups of women organized under common causes and supported one another.

The term "sisterhood," broadly speaking, thus describes a community of women linked by a

common interest and is usually associated with public action and women's rights movements.[67]

At the same time, the term and its often implied idea of an all-encompassing, global sisterhood

has been rightfully critiqued and challenged by many who have seen the term as being misused

to universalize the issues of white women. More specifically, sisterhood has been criticized for

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[66] In her description of people "with unconventional values," Friedman evokes the notion of outcasts with "unusual" lifestyles that are pushed into the periphery of a dominant culture and often neglected by family members and other communities (M. Friedman 248).

[67] Given how tightly connected the idea of sisterhood is to feminist agendas and how much women's struggle for equality was and is dependent on relationships between friends, it seems almost impossible to untangle the relationships between friendship, sisterhood and activism. This, however, is not to suggest that political alliance between women automatically means friendship between women (and it also does not mean that political alliance necessarily needs to be in favor of, or in line with a feminist agenda).

labeling *all* women as unified by their shared oppression under the structures of patriarchy, without accounting for the ways in which white, Western women are often part of that oppression (see for example works by Chandra Talape Mohanty or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak for elaborations on this topic).[68] The work done in postcolonial studies, the debates in intersectional feminism, and the ongoing, critical engagement with the term sisterhood have pointed out that despite the good intentions associated with the idea of a global sisterhood, there is a pressing need to examine the possible complicities between feminist and imperial gestures when talking about women coming together to further a "common" interest.[69]

Coming to this cross-cultural project from the position of a white, German woman, studying at a university in the US Midwest, these discussions also remind me to scrutinize my own complicities. This is not to set up a duality between Maria and me, where Maria would assume a specific role, but it means to acknowledge the many ways in which my cultural, geographical and social location influence my work and our relationship.[70] The immediate question that arises then is: how a type of sisterhood that is not based on positioning whiteness and Westernness as the standard of womanhood can be conceptualized, talked about and

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[68] Robin Morgan's "Sisterhood is Global" (1984), provides an example of this problem. Here Morgan suggests that women in all cultures and countries are equally oppressed, which results in mutual attitudes among women and the "[…] *common condition* which, despite variations in degree, is experienced by all human beings who are born female" (Morgan qtd. in Mohanty 73). While acknowledging the value of Morgan's anthology which documents women's resistances in a number of places around the world, Mohanty, for example, has pointed out why it is problematic to present women as a unified group in which everyone is similarly oppressed by patriarchy (Mohanty 72). Mohanty highlights how such a vision not only implicates all men equally involved in patriarchy, regardless of race, class, and so on, but also obfuscates the ways in which white women profit from and participate in patriarchy (Mohanty 74-75).

[69] The term "sisterhood" has been adopted in different ways, and by different groups of women. Among groups of lesbian women the term is, for example, used to affirm their sexual orientation, or to call attention to the homophobia of mainstream society (Zimmerman 702).

[70] An example of this is my very own writing and speaking of "waves" as it illustrates how my education and formation as a scholar has been influenced by the places I lived and worked in. Alka Kurian argues that when we organize the history of feminism as mainly based on events and personalities in Europe and North America, we create a situation where […] "the 'grand narrative' of feminism becomes the story of western endeavor, and relegates the experience of non-western women to the margins of feminist discourse" (Kurian qtd. in Narain 240).

practiced by Maria and me in our film, and in my writing about it? Mohanty suggests that instead of thinking of the unity of women as *given,* it should be "[…] something that has to be worked for, struggled toward – *in history*" (Mohanty 77, emphasis in original). This is echoed in what another postcolonial, feminist scholar Sarah Ahmed refers to as a "(*re)encountering what is already encountered*" (178, emphasis in original).[71] Ahmed suggests that in order to really encounter other women, we must move beyond the difference presented and *towards the work with the difference* (179). Denise deCaires Narain describes this work *towards the difference* as a series of "intimate, provisional negotiations" that can come up with "transnational feminism(s) rather than definite prescriptions" (244). In an attempt to figure out what these struggles can look like on a practical (filmmaking) level, I turn to *Wanderlust* and my experience working with Maria in *putting our own distance to work.*

In the last section of this chapter I will elaborate in detail on how we engaged in "intimate, provisional negotiations" (Narain 244) and how we *practiced* our friendship. For now, I refer to the experience of crossing borders together, since it presents a good example of how I have come to understand Ahmed's call for *(re)encountering what is already encountered.* Before embarking on our trip, Maria expressed great fear of crossing political borders and I could not really understand or relate to this fear. Given that we were both traveling with a European passport (with a German passport and she with an Italian passport), I ascribed her fear of crossing borders to her inexperience in traveling. I had already jumped to a conclusion based on

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[71] When I first wrote this chapter I unconsciously assumed Ahmed's italicized writing style. After also putting the variations of *(re)encountering what is already encountered* (from secondary literature or my own adoption of it) in italics I realized that the italics also serve to highlight the idea behind this proposal, namely to call attention to something, which is unconsciously consumed and might otherwise be overlooked. I therefore decided to italicize these words every time I make reference to Ahmed's proposal of *(re)encountering what is already encountered.* In the epilogue I will return to her work and apply it to the non-encounter between tourism and migration.

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what I thought I knew about her. In other words, I had already encountered her. Traveling

alongside Maria for over two months, however, I *re-encountered* her and the many ways I

previously did not see her (and therefore could not acknowledge her). I *(re)encountered,* for

example, the fact that Maria hardly speaks English caused a lot of suspicion at border crossings.

This reminds us that English is the dominant language of tourism and travel, and not being able

to speak it often excluded Maria from being perceived as a tourist. I *(re)encountered* the fact that

her "Latin" appearance often triggered different treatment at borders than my "Caucasian"

appearance, and that in some cases her Italian passport was considered problematic, while my

German passport was not (even when official entry regulations should be the same for all EU

citizens).[72] Obviously, my traveling alongside cannot be equated to her lived reality, but the

shared embodied experience alongside each other on our journey often made the *distance*

between us perceivable in the first place and indicated what had to be *(re)encountered,* thus

rendering being with-and-alongside an important part of the labor that goes into the "struggle

toward" (Mohanty 77).

At the intersection of our personal, lived experience and larger social and political

structures, our friendship emerged as something that helped us to reflect on how we navigate the

world as women, as friends, and as individuals, but also on how our experiences differ because

of the distinct intersections in which our bodies, origins and backgrounds position us. Our

friendship became an empowering space that enabled us to scrutinize the way we were subjected

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[72] I put "Latin" and "Caucasian" in quotation marks in order to draw attention to the problematic and ambivalent meaning of these labels. What I am trying to convey with these terms is that Maria's appearance is what one would typically refer to as "Latin" (darker skin tone, dark hair and eyes), while my appearance would typically be considered "Caucasian" (with a lighter skin tone and blonde hair). The border crossing between Turkey and Bulgaria was the moment when I most intensely experienced the different ways in which we lived through the same situation. While I was allowed to pass immediately, Maria was questioned about what she had been doing in Egypt and whether she could present another Italian document to prove she was really who she claimed to be. In the epilogue I will return to this border-crossing and offer an in-depth analysis of the scene in our film.

to each other, but also to certain roles or limits due to our gender. Following M. Friedman, I would argue that friendship between women can provide the support, backbone, and alternative community necessary to question some of the varying cultural beliefs put on them, and even serve to challenge and resist them. In our case, an apparent example of this is the way our plan to travel from Egypt to Germany was perceived and sometimes judged by our families and friends. When we announced the idea to travel by land from Egypt to Germany, there were a number of people close to us who disapproved of our journey or wanted to dissuade us.[73] In the end, Maria and I did embark on our journey and the resulting documentation of this journey can be understood as our public action fueled by our friendship. Before I explore that idea in greater depth, I first turn to some examples of friendship in German feminist films and explore the ways in which friendship as a community displays disruptive potential.

Friendship in German Feminist Filmmaking

In the following, I set out to explore the role of friendship between women in works by German feminist filmmakers in the second half of the 20th century. I am particularly interested in the disruptive potential these friendships display with regard to their female protagonists, their coming-to-consciousness, and the places in which their friendship is enacted and practiced.

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[73] An important reason why our family members were unhappy about our plan had to do with the fear of something happening to us. This fear, however, is linked to the perception that as women travelers we were assumed to be more vulnerable than male travelers. The subject why women are perceived to be more vulnerable, the relation to actual dangers, and the lack of examples of women travelers as a result and cause of this assumption, would require at least another dissertation. Any answer, however, would need to consider the historical fact that for a long time power and patriarchy could not afford women the same possibility of exploration in the form of travel, as it afforded to men. This is because within patriarchal structures women are often appreciated as agents of social conservancy and not of social change (Veselka "Female Road Narratives"). In other words, the way women travelers are perceived today has a great deal to do with the patriarchal power structures that still permeate most of our identity-granting communities today.

Exploring the way (autobiographical) filmmakers imagine collaboration and friendship between women as something that moves out of the private realm into a more public realm, often presents a critique of women's position in contemporary society in subtle but powerful ways. By highlighting the ways in which a public notion of friendship serves a feminist agenda, I hope to also show the connection between friendship and sisterhood.

(Re)claiming Spaces

Following the focus on spaces in the previous section, the first aspect I want to point out is how friendship can help women to (re)claim spaces. *Die allseitig reduzierte Persönlichkeit: Redupers* [*The All-Round Reduced Personality: Outtakes*] (1978) by Helke Sander provides an example to illustrate this. In Sander's autobiographical film, the filmmaker herself plays the main character Edda Chiemnyjewski, a freelance photographer who lives in West Berlin.[74] Throughout the course of the film Sander demonstrates how Edda tries to manage her multiple roles as mother, creative artist, lover and friend, and how she finds support and strength in a women's photography group.[75] The way Edda and the other women join forces to (re)claim spaces can be understood as a disruptive act on at least two levels.

First, these women (re)claim public spaces together and challenge male dominance in them. Together, they occupy living rooms inside their homes, but also art galleries and the streets of a divided Berlin, which Sander's film features prominently with a long opening shot of the

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[74] Similar to the character, Edda, in her film, Sander became politically active and involved in the women's movement in Berlin.

[75] The women's photography group is the primary site of friendship. While Edda also has a boyfriend, he hardly appears in the film and besides the relationship between Edda and her daughter, the friendship between the women clearly takes the center stage of personal relationships in the film.

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Wall at the beginning of the film. While Edda often embarks on solo assignments, she is mostly seen walking through the city with the other women in search of motifs for their art project. Showing the diverse spaces and places where friendship between women is practiced not only depicts their lived experiences in the city in a spatial way, but also asserts them with authority in the city and challenges the dominance of male presence in public space. Moreover, the (re)claiming of public places is promoted by the women's art project itself, which portrays the city. By photographing public spaces in West Berlin these women occupy the city not only by means of their physical presence, but also in a perceptible way by inscribing it with meaning through their photography.

Second, Edda and her friends are (re)claiming professional spaces as women photographers. Photography, like cinematography, is a profession with a long legacy of male domination. As a consequence, men largely monopolize and control these professional spaces, illustrated for example by the male decision-maker Edda talks to about their art project. Another example is Edda's encounter with a male photographer at the women's collective art exhibition, which provides an illustration of male domination of spaces beyond the professional realm. First the man wants to give Edda professional advice in a patronizing way, and then when Edda goes out on a date with him, he tries to dominate her personal/intimate space by kissing her against her will, to which she responds by pushing him away and throwing up. This scene underscores not only how the struggle for (re)claiming spaces permeates almost every aspect of life for women, but also enables possibilities of critique within a feminist framework of the personal as political.[76]

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[76] Another example illustrating how entangled the women's private and public/professional lives are is the scene when the women of the photography group are preparing to take pictures for their art project at the Berlin Wall and one of the photographers has to head out and pick up her child. This provokes another photographer to complain

Something similar happens in Margarethe von Trotta's *Die Bleierne Zeit* [Marianne and Juliane] (1981). The 106-minute fiction film is loosely based on the real-life story of Christiane and Gudrun Ensslin. Marianne represents Gudrun, who commits herself to the terrorist group, the Red Army Faction, and Juliane represents Christiane, who works as a journalist to bring into being the feminist magazine *Emma*. The main plot of the story deals with the relationship and friendship between the two sisters and the way they both try to enact change in different ways. Juliane's work alongside other women for the magazine *Emma* reveals similarities to *Redupers* as it challenges the dominance of men in controlling and shaping public opinion. Starting a magazine and publishing articles was not something which was generally considered women's terrain, and the depiction of these women in such positions challenges that. Juliane's organization and attendance of the protest march for the abolition of the anti-abortion statute in German law (§218) provides another example of women who come together, fight for a common cause and (re)claim public spaces and public speaking.

In a similar vein, von Trotta's *Heller Wahn* [*Sheer Madness*] (1983) also presents female acts of defiance in (re)claiming spaces. The film deals with a friendship between two women, which leads one of the protagonists to rebel against her marriage and her isolation in her home. In the beginning of *Heller Wahn* the friendship between Olga, a successful and outgoing professor, and Ruth, a timid outsider who lives withdrawn from most of public life, is mainly expressed at home or in private. Ruth was traumatized by the suicide of her brother many years earlier and as a result has largely avoided public spaces and interaction with people. In contrast,

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about how those sorts of disturbances upset the working rhythm (Berg-Ganschow). The woman complains that her friend cannot leave her kid with her ex-husband so that they can work without disruptions, thus making perceivable how the things that happen at the women's homes are also influencing their public lives. Friendship emerges as something that could potentially be threatened by other entanglements such as motherhood, but as a trespasser it also reveals the messy overlap and intertwinement of the two spheres in everyday chaos.

Franz, her husband, is the embodiment of a public figure. As a peace expert he often appears on TV or the radio and it becomes clear that he is only seemingly bothered by Ruth's emotionally vulnerable state which keeps her at home. As Ruth becomes friends with Olga, however, her life slowly starts to change and she begins to open up. As their friendship progresses, Ruth's withdrawal into the private sphere finds its ultimate reversal when the two women travel to Egypt together and Ruth even goes back to teaching (a profession she used to carry out before her brother's death) and plans an art exhibition to present the paintings she has secretly been working on. Her physical and artistic motion "out into the world" can be read as an act of transgression enabled by friendship. In many ways Olga was the source of encouragement for Ruth and the one who restored her sense of self. Ruth's breach into the public, however, is met with a strong reaction from Franz, who manipulates his wife into believing that Olga only became friends with her because he asked her to, thus revealing how he cannot handle Ruth's new found self-confidence, because his ego is dependent on keeping her down. The friendship between Olga and Ruth thus challenges male power and dominance of public spaces at the very least by revealing how Ruth's husband feels threatened by her stepping out.

Friendship as a Place of Resistance

Friendship as something that trespasses the division of private and public, and enables women to (re)claim spaces, then also emerges as a place of resistance where oppressive structures are recognized, analyzed, and countered. By means of forming alternative communities, thus M. Friedman, women can come to recognize the "[…] illegitimate moral claims that communities make on their members" (237). In *Redupers*, for example, the image of women working together indicates a place of resistance where the women recognize structural

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problems that go beyond their own lives.[77] When Edda and her friends get together to look at their works, they recognize that they have all focused on how the Wall mirrors Berlin's social and political situation, instead of creating photographs that would be more representative of "women's issues" (Katzman).[78] Suspecting that the arts council will retract the funding if they persist on working with their photographs of the Wall, Edda and her friends come to a conclusion that is characterized by solidarity and asserting their personal and artistic integrity, as they reject the art council's funding. Instead of giving in to an institutional authority, they exercise their artistic autonomy and realize how sexism and capitalism interlace and saturate every aspect of their lives.[79] Without romanticizing their commitment to each other, the women's togetherness and solidarity emerges as a space to recognize systematic oppression and to form resistance by unification.

In a different but nonetheless related way, *Verriegelte Zeit* also presents friendship as something that emerges as a place where oppressive structures are countered by self-assertion. Schönemann's autobiographical documentary about her own imprisonment in the former GDR dedicates a significant amount of screen time to her friendship with Punkt, a woman with whom Schönemann shared a prison cell for a duration of eight weeks. In three different sequences

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[77] The photography collective knows that they have been given the art project because the art council figured they would not have to pay as much money to a group of women photographers, compared to a group of male photographers or a mixed group of photographers.

[78] Katzman argues that the arts council has the hope that their support for a women's project will demonstrate their publicly their support of feminism, which leads them to apply a reductive feminism that expects the women's photography collective to come up with "Sunday-supplement style, humanistic shots of working women in Berlin" (Katzman)

[79] As Katzman argues, the collaborative thus comes to a deeper, "more complex vision of feminism." She explains: "The arts council cannot see that feminism is a perspective that has as much legitimacy when it penetrates the ideological and political ramifications of the Berlin Wall as when it deals with 'women's problems' of rape and abortion." The arts council regards only certain topics to be women's issues, while Edda and her friends see how all aspects in their lives are infused with the dynamics of sexism and capitalism. Katzman thus continues how "[...] the arts council's circumscribing of certain social problems (day care, rape, and abortion) as women's issues becomes a form of social domestication, a way of naturalizing these problems and thereby diverting attention from them."

Schönemann and Punkt sit in what appears to be their old prison cell and reflect on their time together and how their friendship essentially helped them to survive. They talk about how they felt during those weeks in prison, the powerlessness they experienced because they were incarcerated, the pressure of giving in to authorities and what it took to remain mentally sane (*Verriegelte Zeit* 0:35:34). Throughout these conversations it becomes clear how important the friendship between the two women was and how the shared experience in prison created a strong bond of solidarity.[80] Friendship also provided both Schönemann and Punkt with the necessary endurance to withstand the manipulative strategies employed by the prison staff: both women were offered to be set free if they would denounce their husbands and withdraw their applications for an exit visa (Schönmann recounts how her father came to visit her in prison and tried to pressure her into withdrawing her application so she could take care of her children) (*Verriegelte Zeit* 0:46:21). *Verriegelte Zeit* thus provides an example of friendship as a space of opposition and resilience that stands against the powerlessness they felt and helped them stay strong and not give in.[81]

Talking about how friendship can serve as a space of resistance in times of oppression, *Die Bleierne Zeit* can be seen as providing another example of this. The friendship between the two sisters, Juliane and Marianne, establishes a link between two parts of society that are considered separate by many. While their relationship is constantly put under pressure by the

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[80] Throughout their conversations it becomes clear how the ability to talk to someone else who is sympathetic and is experiencing a very similar situation created a strong bond between the two women. They also become aware of the many similarities between them.

[81] Prison grants its detainees no privacy, they are under constant surveillance and always exposed to orders. At the same time, prisoners are deprived of any involvement in the public sphere (they often loose their right to vote, cannot engage in most discussions or shape public spaces). Friendship emerged as something that allowed these two women to protect their privacy, in the sense of their inner sense of self against the authoritative power structures and intimidation they experienced in prison.

disparate views between the two women, they remain connected. Their friendship prevents the complete isolation of Marianne, as Juliane visits her frequently in prison and even tries to reestablish the connection between Marianne and their mother. As a bridge, the friendship--both a literal and a metaphorical sisterhood--between the two women connects those who live a relatively normal life and those who are condemned by the public realm. In many ways, the friendship between Marianne and Juliane can be understood as symbolizing the refusal of many young, leftist people to comply with or accept authoritarian structures implemented by the German government at that time.

Imagining Alternative (Work) Futures

The way friendship works as a place of resistance in these films resonates with M. Friedman's idea of alternative communities which help women to defy existing conventions. At the same time, these films make an argument for friendship as not just a place for resisting the status quo, but also for reorganizing and reimagining possible futures. In *Redupers,* for example, the women in the photography collective analyze and critique each other's photographs and discuss what they should do with regard to the art council's expectations. Their collaborative work not only challenges the idea of art as the solitary work of one genius, but also imagines a possible world in which collective work is based on a "common artistic and political vision rather than under the aegis of patriarchal capitalism" (Katzman).[82] The political importance of

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[82] As a comparison to Edda's work in the women's collective, her job does not seem to make her very happy, or fulfill her. The scenes which show Edda going on a solo assignment are usually marked by a voice-over which informs the audience about how much she is making and about the costs and effort associated with each assignment, pointing out how this type of work is carried out under what Katzman describes as the "aegis of patriarchal capitalism" (Katzman).

the depiction of women working together in Sander's film thus serves the purpose of challenging

what is currently done and pointing to alternative (working) cultures where work is not

alienating, nor based on competition or exploitation of others.

Winter Adé, Misselwitz' autobiographical documentary, which portrays women in

different situations and life stages throughout the GDR, echoes this sentiment of meaningful and

non-alienating work, through her own voice-over in which she mentions a "[…] Beharren auf

sinnvolle Arbeit"[83] (*Winter Adé* 1:49:57) as one of the cornerstones of her life. Additionally, her

film is also involved in the struggle of (re)imagining alternatives to the established order. *Winter

Adé* can be considered a public action of bringing together diverse voices of women and calling

for an end of the marginalization of these women's stories under socialism (Creech 424). Taken

individually, the relation these women have, for example, towards their work does not

necessarily instill the desire for alternative (work) cultures.[84] Taken collectively, however, an

idea emerges that suggests a movement away from a season of "cold, death, emptiness, and

silence" (Creech 424). The "winter" is the state in which Misselwitz interprets women's voices

and narratives as existing, and so Janis Joplin's "Summertime" which starts playing at the end of

the film as the camera shows first the rails of a train track and then the open water, suggests a

departure into a better future, one in which summer will come.[85] The film itself then does the

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[83] "[…] Insisting on meaningful work" (translation mine).

[84] Taken individually, they merely indicate that some have a more alienated relationship to their work (e.g., Christine the factory worker who is banging pipes to keep soot from settling inside them eight times an hour), while others were able to engaged in work they have taken on largely out of their own will (e.g., the woman in the end who runs an orphanage).

[85] Creech argues that while the perspective from the ship towards the horizon suggests an optimistic outlook, the sequence remains evasive. She writes: "Yet it is not quite clear that the lyrics to 'Summertime' suggest the season of women's true emancipation in the GDR, in which their voices will be heard, their personal narratives acknowledged, and they will embark on a new journey towards freedom. While the ending of the tracks and the introduction of water, of uncharted seas suggest that this journey exists beyond the frame of East German women's current narratives, the image is not one of summer. Instead, the black and white of the film blurs the sky into a monotone grey, leaving the viewer to seek the warmth of summer elsewhere. While the film does not overtly suggest that a

work of imagining a better future by connecting the different instances of friendship and

encounters between women into a public view. The alliance of many voices becomes the space

in which a better future for women can be imagined.

While referring to *Winter Adé* as a film that portrays friendship between women might

seem a bit far-fetched, Misselwitz' encounters and relationships can be argued to evoke the

notion of "sisterhood," in the sense that these women make up an (imagined) community linked

by their shared reality of living in the GDR. Similar to Schönemann's *Verriegelte Zeit,* the power

of friendship and sisterhood derives from the intimacy the shared experience between women

brings about. Compared to Schönemann and Misselwitz, von Trotta and Sander work with

different aesthetic approaches and within distinct narrative modalities. The most obvious

difference between them is that Schönemann and Misselwitz work within the genre of

documentary, and von Trotta and Sander work within the genre of fiction. While *Redupers*

blends techniques of both documentary and fiction, it is very scripted and stylized in its agenda

of problematizing women's status in society. Von Trotta uses the narrative discourse of

melodrama to trigger spectatorial engagement, but also to approach political events in Germany

at that time. Consequently friendship is represented and narrated differently in their works.

While von Trotta and Sander actively construct women's friendship in order to challenge

established ways of perceiving women and their relationships, Schönemann and Misselwitz draw

on intimacy and personal concern (Stainton 89).[86] The images in both Schönemann's and

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journey towards 'freedom' for these women exists outside of the frame of socialism, the ambiguity of the ship's course and destination is juxtaposed to the 'easy livin'' and 'jumpin' fish' of the song. As a result, the song takes on an ironic tone that underscores the grey ambiguity of the image. It becomes difficult to believe that any of these women will 'spread their wings and take to the sky.' In fact, the viewer is compelled to ask, 'Where to? To the expansive nothingness of the sea'?" (424).

[86] Given the different levels of opportunities for public discourse in East and West Germany, it is no coincidence that von Trotta and Sander were more explicit in their portrayal of friendship as a political force, while Schönemann's and Misselwitz' portrayal of friendship is more subtle.

Misselwitz' films reflect this intimacy through visual proximity, for example, by means of the close up shots of the women Misselwitz interviews in *Winter Adé* and the close framing of Schönemann and Punkt in their former prison cell, as well as the personal connection the filmmakers have to the women they interview. It is from this intimate connection that the potentialities of collaboration and support between women become perceivable and conjure the political power of "sisterhood."

Breeding Grounds with Differences

While indicating the disruptive potential of friendship, none of these German feminist films are obvious success stories. The women's collective in *Redupers*, for example, is not an overtly optimistic story of a collaboration of women who succeed on all levels. After all, they do not get funded by the art council to go through with their documentation project. Nonetheless, they support each other and continue working on their art. Without romanticizing friendship between women, Sander's film thus presents friendship as a powerful element to keep on fighting for equal opportunities. Another important aspect is that the women's friendship described in these films never becomes a refuge that allows a temporary break from oppressive structures, only to later reintegrate into an existing patriarchal order. Instead, all women remain resistant: Edda and her friends do not compromise their artistic integrity, Schönemann and Punkt do not give in to the manipulative tactics of the prison personnel, Ruth realizes that her move towards independence must exclude Franz (and the only possible exit she sees is to kill him), and Juliane keeps on fighting for her sister and for justice to be done despite all odds. What emerges from these representations of friendship between women is a notion of collaboration and sisterhood that is full of differences, problems and tensions, and (partly because of those

differences and tensions) provides a critical breeding ground for challenging the status quo, questioning normative roles and principles, challenging (male) domination of space, and imagining alternative communities (and visions of gainful employment). As communities of choice, friendship between women can empower and join different individuals in acute political and social awareness.

Friendship in *Wanderlust*

Moving from the examples of German feminist filmmaking to our film, I broaden my focus from the question of how friendship as an alternative community is *represented*, to how friendship as an alternative community is *practiced*. Given the many examples of imagined and envisioned friendship discussed in the previous section, I have been surprised to find very few examples of collaborative filmmaking practices in reality.[87] Exploring the disruptive potential of friendship for reframing the woman traveler and filmmaker, I look first into how Maria's and my friendship was practiced on our journey in relation to the many different social and cultural spaces we were confronted with, and second I explore how our friendship was practiced and

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[87] Friendship and collaboration between women filmmakers emerges mostly as a survival or coping strategy to deal with financial limitations. This means that women filmmakers tend to turn toward some sort of collaboration or working with friends because of economic pressure, or because it promises greater artistic freedom (Silberman "Film and Feminism in Germany"). Marc Silberman conducted several interviews with feminist German filmmakers in the 1970s which show how the limited access to money from film funding bodies and TV stations often forces women filmmakers to rely on teams recruited from friends and volunteers (Silberman "Interview with Ottinger"). Of course, there were also other reasons for women filmmakers to collaborate with each other, or with their participants, such as an improved group cohesion and greater solidarity (Silberman "Conversing Together").Brückner's first two films, *Tue recht* and *Ein ganz und gar verwahrlostes Mädchen,* as well as Misselwitz' *Winter Adé* or Schönemann's *Verriegelte Zeit* can be seen as involving some/a certain degree of collaborative spirit that includes the protagonists and characters in the process of filmmaking (in Brückner's case, the participation of her mother and of her close friend Rita Rischa; Misselwitz seeks the collaboration of diverse women throughout the GDR, and Schönemann solicits the help of her ex-prison cell roommate, Punkt). The creative decision making, however, remains largely with the respective film directors alone. Despite the imagining of female friendship in feminist German cinema during the second half of the 20th century, we do not see a clear emergence of a feminist non-hierarchical model of filmmaking.

represented in (making) the film.

Traveling the Distance

In the first part of this Chapter I talked about how our friendship was influenced by the

physical spaces in which it developed. I argued that Cuba and later Brazil presented a type of

third-culture space in which neither Maria nor I felt at home and which therefore had a

significant impact on the way our friendship evolved. This can also be said to be true for a large

part of our journey in 2014 (until we reached Austria and Germany, places that are of course

more familiar to me). This means that each place triggered something specific in us and between

us, because each place implicated us differently within it. In Egypt, for example, I was made

acutely aware of my whiteness, in Israel I became more concerned with my German history and

legacy, and the divided island of Cyprus evoked strong associations with the past division of my

home country, Germany. The way these places triggered something different within me, is likely

the case for Maria as well, and consequently also for our friendship. In each place our cultural

background positioned us as individuals differently regarding the place, but also regarding each

other. By implication, this means that the changing places created ever new settings and new

contexts to *work with(in) our differences and distances*.[88]

As I think about the way these physical places influenced our friendship, I am also

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[88] The *Museum of Broken Relationships* in Zagreb, Croatia provides a good example of the way in which we were implicated by a specific place we passed through together. Dedicated to honoring failed relationships, the museum exhibits personal objects from relationships that are over, sent in by individuals and usually accompanied by brief descriptions. In our film we retrospectively integrate our own story of a broken relationship into our film, illustrating how the museum positioned us in a place in which we were encouraged to disclose information between us and about our lives. Since we did not know about the existence of the museum beforehand (and had not actually brought our artifacts with us to leave them there), we decided to augment the collective exhibition of objects through our film by interweaving our own stories of broken relationships with those of other donors.

starting to consider how we influence these places. After all, the spaces we travel through and which are in the end featured in our film, are the homes of others, and by traveling through them with our cameras we put them on display and inevitably mark them. This is even more the case because throughout our journey we occupied what would typically be considered public spaces: streets, cafes, trams, busses, stations, borders, parks, beaches, streets, plazas, corners, museums, and so on. Even the places where we stayed the night were almost always shared (dorm beds in hostels or other people's homes) with little or no privacy, yet, one could say that our lives are rather private (in the sense that we are not public people of interest or fame). Still, the nature of our journey and of our project (a bi-autobiographial film) positioned us in physical and narrative places in which we were encouraged to disclose information between us and about our lives.[89]

Looking back, I notice how acts of self-disclosure form not only part of our bi-autobiographical endeavor, but also function in numerous ways as important building blocks for intimacy and thus for the development of our friendship. This intimacy in turn is something that empowers Maria and me to put forward our feelings and lived experiences to each other and to ourselves. If exposing the self to the other also makes the self more available to the self, then in a way, the common wisdom that we know ourselves to the extent we are known to others is reflected in the way that, in the process of revealing each other to each other, Maria and I both gain self-knowledge.[90] Every new place we passed through together thus triggered something, or

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[89] The *Museum of Broken Relationships* is also a place that challenges the public/private dichotomy by exhibiting objects and stories that are considered extremely private. As a private-public trespassing, the exhibition thus bears some similarities to our bi-autobiographical project.

[90] In the *Museum of Broken Relationships*, for example, we are both confronted with a specific situation from our individual past, and the joint visit encourages us to face those burdensome emotions each in our own way, but also together with a friend. The first image of that scene shows me filming at the entrance and then transitions to a number of photographs of the collection inside. The stills show trivial, everyday objects that are hung on walls, put on pedestals or protected behind glass walls: a vase with marbles, a summer dress, sculptured breasts, glass shards, dolls made of cloth, a painting, and a letter in a frame. Interspersed with these photographs appear images of Maria and me, each holding up our own object of a broken relationship accompanied by a short story of how we came to

moved us and our relationship in a new way by exposing a distance, struggle, (dis)agreement, or similarity (see for example the first part of this Chapter in which I explain how crossing borders together changed the way I thought about Maria's fear). The crossing of distances, in a literal and in a figurative sense, can thus be considered the fabric of our relationship. Every bus ride, every border crossing, every meal, every argument, and every gesture shaped our friendship, but also *practiced* it. As a dynamic and also tentative unity, our friendship was characterized by constant movement.

(Re)presenting Differences

When Maria and I arrived at my parents' house after our two-and-a-half month long journey from Egypt to Germany, we almost immediately sat down and spent an entire week looking at all of the footage we had recorded. Chapter One describes how cinematography can hold up a mirror for self-reflection and foster self-understanding in relation to others, and the joint documentation of our journey exemplifies this mirroring process in the sense that Maria's camera served as a mirror for me, while my camera served as a mirror for her. However, the sum of our two cameras also carries the footprint of our relationship. Watching the recorded footage thus felt like an intensive crash course in one's own attitudes, reactions and ways of being as a friend, and presented us with a filmic documentation of our evolving relationship.

In suggesting analogies between friendship, cinematography and mirroring as ways to gain self-knowledge, there are of course some important limitations to be considered. Unlike a mirror on a wall, which is stable and does not move, Maria moves around freely and according to

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this object and how it represents a broken relationship.

her own agenda. She can film me regardless of whether I want to be mirrored at a specific moment. Maria's camera does not merely provide a reflection of what happens to be situated in front of her. In contrast to a mirror, which is impartial in what it reflects back, Maria is not. As a friend, she herself "contains" information about the time or place or context and she has her own opinions which might interfere with the way she reflects my own self back to me. Friends (with cameras), unlike mirrors, are involved in interpreting the very moment they see and film. Reviewing the footage at the end of our journey, we thus realized that our recorded material not only holds up a mirror to look at ourselves, but also to look at our relationship.

The process of post-production (editing the images, music, and sound, as well as writing, and recording the voice-over) can be understood as another journey, not only in the sense that the joint work in post-production pointed out many more *differences that we needed to work with*, but it also took both of us on another physical journey. The crossing of cultures, borders, and languages in order to create a public account of our friendship brings me back to the question of how to practice and represent friendship in a cross-cultural encounter and stay alert to the possible complicities between feminist and imperial gestures. While the previous part in this section highlights the ways our cross-cultural friendship was practiced on the journey, I now want to turn to the way in which we worked with and within our differences in the post-production process.

When we arrived in Germany, we did not have a clear idea about when and how we would be able to edit our film, except that Maria expressed the desire that she wanted the film to have "something of Argentina" and suggested that we do the post-production in La Plata. I agreed, and before I went to La Plata in 2015, Maria came to the USA to live with me for one month and to start the editing process. A few months later, I traveled to Argentina and stayed

there for a total of six months, working alongside Maria on finishing our film. While there were practical reasons we considered when we decided to do the post-production in Argentina, editing in Maria's home country and writing our voice-over in her mother tongue can be understood as another way in which we *worked the distance between us* and this found its way into the representation of the work.[91] Moving to Argentina for several months involved a certain level of anxiety for me, and writing our voice-over in a language that was neither my mother tongue nor a language I felt comfortable writing in, presented me with some worries. In hindsight, the six months in Argentina and the writing of our voice-over in Spanish were decisive in our struggling towards each other, as for example, the uneasiness I experienced in struggling through the writing process in Spanish correlates with Maria's lived experiences as a non-English speaker on our journey. Our struggle towards reducing the difference and distance between us then becomes perceivable not just in *what* we say, but also in *which language* we say it. International settings often default to English, and academia and its discussions about intersectional feminism, for example, are no exception to this. While there are practical reasons for using English, this clearly creates imbalances in socio-political power.[92] Language thus emerges as a distance that also needed to be put to work in our journey of friendship. Or, as Ahmed points out: "The differences between us necessitate the dialogue, rather than disallow it – a dialogue must take place, precisely *because* we don't speak the same language" (180).

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[91] Some of the practical reasons were that Maria could not take a long leave from her work again, since she had just taken a gap year to film *Wanderlust* and then continue her travels in Europe; also, she had a good network in Argentina of editors and sound designers we could work with.

[92] I do not mean to claim that Spanish as a language does not carry similar risks to English in creating imbalances with regard to socio-political power, but the unacknowledged and often unreflected default choice of English cripples diversity in the discussions we are going to have because it excludes certain people/non-English speakers and puts scholars from non-English speaking countries at a disadvantage (see for example Mary Jane Curry and Theresa Lillis' *Academic Writing in a Global Context* for a deeper exploration of this topic). By insisting on English we expect others to do the work of translation.

In one of the last scenes of our film, Maria and I sit in a coffee house in Vienna and reflect on the impending end of our travels. My camera films Maria's camera on the table and how she drinks her coffee, when my voice-over sets in: "Fue extraño ver nuestras cámaras arriba de la mesa. Sabiendo que grabar cada momento, en poco tiempo, se iba a terminar."[93] (*Wanderlust* 1:30:24). Subsequently, Maria makes a reference regarding the coffee's size: "Y bien el tamaño. No fue *que poco rato dura la vida eterna* […]"[94] which is when I come in and complement her sentence, which I know is a the line in a song by Joaquín Sabina, a singer, songwriter, and poet from Spain she introduced me to: "[...] *por el túnel de tus piernas*" (*Wanderlust* 1:30:34).[95] Afterwards, I repeat the lyrics in my voice-over and reflect on our journey, which is slowly coming to an end: "*Que poco rato dura la vida eterna* – claro que estábamos hablando del café. Pero ahora el significado de esta línea me golpea con todo el poder de mi nostalgia" (*Wanderlust* 1:30:49).[96] We talk about how strange it will be to not be together anymore and film each other while the setting changes to a shot of us lying in the grass in a park in Vienna where my voice-over continues: "Reconozco en esta escena el crecimiento de nuestra amistad, ya no molestaban los silencios y hasta podría completar tus frases" (*Wanderlust* 1:31:10).[97] In what could be misunderstood as a final "happily ever after" that has overcome all distance and difference between us, this scene reflects how towards the end of our journey, we did encounter moments in which we felt completely at ease with each other. This, however, does

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[93] "It was strange to see our cameras on the table, knowing that in a few days filming every moment would be over" (translation mine).

[94] "And it's a good size. Not like *how briefly lasts eternal life*" (translation mine).

[95] "[…] *through the tunnel of your legs*" (translation mine).

[96] "*How briefly lasts eternal life* – Of course we were talking about the coffee, but now the meaning of this line hits me with all the force nostalgia brings with it" (translation mine).

[97] "I recognize in this scene the growing of our friendship. The silences between us were no longer bothersome, and I was even able to complete your sentences" (translation mine).

not mean that there is no more distance. Recognizing that friendship consists of similarity and dissimilarity and that everyone experiences things differently was essential to practicing our friendship during the journey, and our representation of it. Consequently, I hope this scene can be understood as underlining the idea that *working the distance* is an ongoing process, dynamic and volatile, but also rewarding and heavily influenced by the places and contexts we find ourselves in.

Following the image in the park, we wander through the *Wiener Prater* and arrive at a large, rotating earth globe that absorbs our attention (see figure 3.1). While images of us appear as we spin the globe, Maria's voice-over sets in:

> Tal vez, este viaje no comenzó con dos amigas viajando. Tal vez los miedos se llevaban muchos momentos. Tal vez, nunca vuelva a pasar por alguna frontera a pies a las tres de la mañana. Tal vez, hay muchas imágenes y muchas charlas que preferimos guardarlas solo para nosotras, pero volvería a intentar el mismo salto que me propusiste antes de salir. Porque si no fuera así, este viaje nunca hablaría de dos amigas viajando. (*Wanderlust* 1:31:43)[98]

Her beginning "*Maybe* this journey did not start out with two friends [...]" (*my emphasis*) can be understood as a reference to the idea of *(re)encountering what is already encountered*. Maria's "[m]aybe" is an acknowledgment of how we *thought* that we had encountered each other, but we actually still had to *reencounter* each other first, before we could call each other friends. The end of her voice-over clearly suggests that now that we have been through this experience together, now that we have *worked on the distance* and *struggled towards*, we can actually address each other as friends. Her recalling of "[…] walk[ing] across some of these borders" evokes the importance of shared lived experience in this process of *working the distance.*

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[98] "Maybe this journey did not start out with two friends traveling together. Maybe fear got the better of many moments. Maybe I will never again walk across some of these borders at three o'clock in the morning. Maybe there are some images and conversations that we prefer to keep to ourselves. But I would always take the same leap again. Because otherwise, this journey would not tell the story of two friends traveling together" (translation mine).

Figure 3.1 Maria in front of the rotating Earth Globe in Vienna (*Wanderlust* 1:31:42).

Her voice-over highlights that while Maria and I might have enough overlap in terms of professional and personal interests to imagine that we could have become friends in a different setting, we might have not been able to extend our disparate individual selves to each other, the way we did, if we had not have lived so many moments together. Again, this proclaiming of friendship is not to suggest a standstill, but rather a milestone. The hug between Maria and me at the end of the film, just before the titles appear, suggests the succeeding separation after our travels, while the information at the end of the titles informs the audience that we met each other over and over again, in different parts of the world, to finish the film. Encounter and re-encounter, separation and connection, one journey ends while another one begins - so that the *working with the distance* continues.

While Maria and I often found ourselves arguing about what elements of our joint experience to foreground or how to present a certain situation, we also often found ourselves having long discussions in which we were jointly trying to figure out what we were puzzled about, and what we did not understand about ourselves or the situations we lived through. The understanding of friendship as a community of choice and its disruptive potential of collaboratively working on self-development, (re)claiming places, and building resistance, points to some intriguing ways in which friendship is useful in general for women (travelers), and for the production of our bi-autobiographical filmic account.

Looking back on how our friendship influenced our bi-autobiographical film(-making), I would argue that it empowered us. While it also taught us about each other and about our differences, the collaboration between us made this project feasible in the first place. Neither one would have embarked on this journey by herself, let alone made a film about it. Neither one of us would have been able to make a film alone, with herself as the protagonist and as the camera-operator. While empowerment is perhaps the most obvious way in which friendship and collaboration can help women to (re)claim places and narratives, I think it is also one of the most important ones. For the woman traveler, it is often not only safer, but also less intimidating to take up public space in the company of other women (ongoing campaigns like Reclaim the Streets or Take Back the Night illustrate how women come together, demonstrating solidarity and joint power, in order to reclaim their place in public settings by spending the night in parks, having picnics on the street, and so on). The process of women (travelers) claiming physical and cultural places, especially in the context of travel or in cross-cultural collaborations, must, however, also involve self-reflection. Friends can help us untangle our self-perception and look

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into the mirror with more integrity. Friendship then emerges as something that is indeed powerful and a way to (re)claim not only physical spaces, but also narrative spaces in a more aware and conscious way. In our case, for example, the process of getting our story "out there" was not only a struggle in terms of finding the courage to embark on the journey and obtaining the time and resources to edit and write it, but also had to do with a coming-to-consciousness about the complex ways in which we are implicated in different places and cultures because of our gender, origins, languages, past experiences, appearances, privileges, and so on.

As pointed out in the introduction of this written treatment, the woman traveler is regularly marked by stereotyping and one-dimensional representation that tend to further a perception that objectifies and exoticizes her. For women to take representation into their own hands, however, they need to enlist the help of others. The medium of film, by its very nature, demands collaboration, and this is where friendship between women can make another crucial intervention. Collaboration between women can spark the type of conversations and tensions that can turn into breeding grounds from which resistance emerges. This does not mean that "sisterhood," friendship, or collaboration have to be dressed up as unshakable bonds between two or more people who effortlessly understand each other, have fun, and agree on (almost) everything. Instead, the *practiced* and *represented* friendship can and should demonstrate the distances between friends, as well as the moments of struggle. I like to think of *Wanderlust* as a public manifestation of our friendship, with the everyday stuff that saturates such a relationship. Turned into a public artifact, which will be used and interpreted by people in new and different ways, I would hope that our film can be read in the context of *struggling towards* a type of transnational sisterhood and as an attempt to work the distance between us in film and filmmaking. This is another example of something neither one of us would have been able to do

by herself. One of the greatest potentials of friendship, then, is that it enables things we would and could not do alone. Friendship facilitates types of experiences, on the level of the body *and* the mind, that would not be possible otherwise.

Epilogue: Different Mobilities

In September 2015, a few days after I arrived in Argentina, we found out that *Wanderlust* was accepted at the Work in Progress section at the *International Film Festival Mar del Plata* taking place at the end of October 2015. A little over a year had passed since we finished our journey from Egypt to Germany and the so-called "European migration crisis" was at a disastrous point. While the route across the Mediterranean Sea, or overland through Southeast Europe, was already established as a significant site of migration and flight, the beginning of 2015 marked a new chapter in terms of hundreds of thousands of people embarking on this dangerous journey in hope of reaching the European Union (EU).[99] When we presented *Wanderlust* in Mar del Plata, one of the jury members asked us how we see our film in context of the unfolding events in Europe. While her question did not exactly catch us by surprise, as Maria and I had had several discussions about whether and how to address this in our film, it did catch us unprepared, in the sense that we did not have a satisfying answer to her question.

In many ways, this jury member pointed to the immense privileges due to which it was possible to make our film. These privileges are inevitably reflected in our film, consciously and unconsciously, explicitly and implicitly, and they clash with migrants' stories of death and hardship mainly known from the mass media. Our inability to provide a satisfying answer to the question then partly lies in the fact that there are no words, or theorizing, that can bridge the chasm that exists between our experience and that of millions of people trying to cross the same geographical distance with the "wrong" passport. At the same time, however, it is impossible and

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[99] In a press release from July 2015, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) points out that the first few months of 2015 had seen an 83 per cent increase in refugees and migrants who crossed the Mediterranean Sea compared to 2014, and this number was expected to rise even more during the summer months (UNHCR).

unethical to ignore the physical proximity of sharing the same places, the same waters, and the same air.

While the initial motivation that drove Maria and me to embark on this journey was to step out of conventional travel narrations of women travelers, it becomes increasingly clear to me at this point in the writing process that any attempt geared towards alternative representations of women travelers also means a critical engagement with representations of tourism. In other words, an attempt to reframe the woman traveler also has to acknowledge and scrutinize her embeddedness and complicities with global power hierarchies. Capitalism, like patriarchy, is based on societies being divided into classes. Both depend on the disproportionate access to resources and mobility in order to generate profit and privilege. Conversely, this means that attention paid to the female body in transit can and should not be separated from the dynamics that grant some people access to unrestricted mobility, and others not.[100]

In Chapter Three, I brought up Ahmed's call for "*(re)encountering what is already encountered*" (179, emphasis in the original) to explore the collaboration and cross-cultural encounter between Maria and me. Ahmed writes: "If transnational feminism involves crossing national borders, then we need to consider how it may do so in a way that does not simply reaffirm border-crossings that are already taking place in global capitalism" (178). Translating this to the context of encounters between tourism and migration provokes important questions

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[100] For the sake of clarity I will talk about human mobility within the broad, often fuzzy, and highly constructed categories of tourism and migration. While there are many other forms of human mobility, I believe a focus on those two serves the purpose of this epilogue in drawing attention to the necessity of not foreclosing narrations about one type of human mobility to another type of human mobility. Cresswell argues that in order to really understand different types of human mobilities in an increasingly mobile world, we need to look at individual forms of mobility in relation to other forms of mobility: "Mobilities need to be understood in relation to each other" (9). Holert and Terkessidis do this, for example, by exploring the spatial places and social roles of 'illegal' migrants in relation to tourists and describe how spaces and mobility categories are charged with positive or negative connotations depending on the immigration politics of a given nation.

for us as travelers: how can we (re)encounter not only each other, but also others, and other others? Is it even possible to (re)encounter others in the realm of tourism, to sidestep touristic experience and to conceptualize border-crossings in new, and different ways? While I do not claim to hold any answers to these questions, posing them assists me in exploring the ways in which an opening up of touristic experience and discourse, might help to imagine and provoke new types of discursive border-crossings between tourism and migration.

Sidestepping Touristic Experiences?

One way in which Maria and I tried to sidestep touristic experience was by deferring from what we thought was expected of us as tourists. This includes the duration of our travel, our travel close to the ground (without airplanes), staying with locals (for example through Couchsurfing), and the (predominant) avoidance of tourist tours.[101] While I do not want to disregard that this attempt to bypass (some) elements of the tourism industry did provoke certain encounters and experiences not usually associated with tourism, it is interesting to see how such a way of traveling (slow travel, staying with locals, and so on) is in many ways just another type of tourism that is also being commodified and that is embedded in global structures, accessible only to the relatively wealthy and privileged.[102] In other words, while going "off the beaten path"

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[101] An example of this along with the obstacles we encountered in trying to avoid the touristic path becomes perceivable in the moment when we tried to cross over to Cyprus and the only official option to do so was to fly, which would have cost us a mere 29 EUR.

[102] In tourism studies, the practice of visiting a place for the sake of pleasure, interest or recreation is often defined either technically or conceptually. The technical definitions attempt to serve the purpose of measuring trips and collecting tourism related data (e.g., counting how many tourists go on a holiday in a specific time period or for how many days they are going on a journey), while conceptual definitions concentrate on motivation and seek to distinguish tourism from other forms of human mobilities based on what desire or need prompts a journey. The variety in both motivation and date points to the array of touristic activities and the sheer impossibility to escape it (Theobald 11).

is often dressed up as a counter motion to a type of tourism that is associated with big resorts and

continental breakfasts, it is, by and large, still reaffirming the border crossings we already

know.[103] Tourism constitutes one the world's largest industries and in many ways echoes the

dynamics of imperialism, even on the level of going "off the beaten path." It is usually based on

inequalities, class differences, wealth gaps, and like imperialism, includes the occupancy of

exotic lands. Considering this, I began to wonder whether it was perhaps impossible to take

myself out of the touristic context.[104] Maybe we simply have to accept that we can never *not* be

tourists.[105] While in some ways, this may sound like a polemic simplification of the many

complex ways in which very different forms of tourism and capitalism, global travel and power

structures intertwine, tourism's similarity to imperialism points back with urgency to the

question posed earlier: How can we imagine, provoke, and assert different border crossings

within the touristic context?[106] In the following, I want to explore this question by drawing on

our own struggles around the representation of touristic experiences in *Wanderlust*. In an attempt

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[103] In this context it is interesting to see how backpacking also endows young people with "global capital." Jana Binder explains in her work, *Globality. Eine Ethnographie über Backpacker* (2005), how young people nowadays use backpacking and volunteering abroad to distinguish themselves among their peers and to improve their standing in the job market. Binder argues how extended travels prove that young adults can inscribe themselves into processes of globalization. Hence, traveling is the way young people today achieve an important cultural (and economic) capital, which she refers to as globality (Binder 250).

[104] Debbie Lisle echoes this in her writing about travel and tourism in Cyprus, as she argues that no degree of distance or politeness can be used to occlude "historically constituted power relations" (qtd. in Bowman 172).

[105] We might also turn this question around and ask under which circumstances a migrant might be able to step out of the migratory experience. The fact, for example, that a white, Western migrant living and working in a different country is usually considered an expat, while most other individuals of different ethnicities will be considered migrants, shows that the question of "status" is not only determined by social class, country of origin, and legal status, but also by questions of appearance and ethnicity.

[106] As an economic and cultural phenomenon, tourism also has a number of positive effects for a destination and its local population, but the critical turn in tourism studies reveals how knowledge production in the field is often dominated by "[...] empirical and industry-driven business research" (Ateljevic et al. 42). The advent of critical inquiry into tourism practices, representation and knowledge production started to put issues of inequality on the agenda and triggered more critical and self-reflexive ways of thinking about tourism. For an overview and critique of the critical turn's shortcomings in tourism studies see Raoul V. Bianchi's "The 'Critical Turn' in Tourism Studies: A Radical Critique."

to conceive of ideas and narratives that do not simply reaffirm the border-crossings that are taking place already, I set out to explore the ways in which we can reframe touristic discourse.

Re-Framing Touristic Discourse

In *Wanderlust*, the attempt to move away from aestheticizing and exoticizing places (something I would argue is typically done in tourism) turned out to be more difficult than imagined. Confronted with fascinating landscapes and sights almost on a daily basis, Maria and I were, especially at the beginning, subject to the urge to document and capture the beauty of these places. Consequently, we ended up with a lot of what we later labeled "touristic footage." Since we often did not know what to do with this footage, we added a cynical or ironic dimension to it. An example of this is the scene which depicts our visit to the Dead Sea. The scene starts off with some close up shots of the salt, the shore, and the velvet-like water with a mountainous landscape in the background (*Wanderlust* 0:15:03). While this introduction evokes similarity with the beautiful images typically associated with tourism, this notion is confronted after just a few seconds by an image of two women wearing sun hats, jumping up and down in the water and a wide shot of vast amounts of blue and red colored sunshades that populate the landscape. Tourists are taking selfies and greasing themselves with the mud of the Dead Sea, while we are among them and immersed in the whole procedure. The cinematography in this scene uses the haptic feel of close ups to evoke the genuine pleasant, embodied experience, but also uses optical images to lay bare how the touristic experience is based on illusions and beautification.[107]

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[107] In an earlier version of our film the scene had a voice-over (which made it even more cynical) because it talked about how the place looks so beautiful in images, but when you get there it's all vending machines, pop music, and so on.

Another example is our visit to the rock and cave formations in Cappadocia. This scene is introduced by the repetitive noise of a machine telling tourists who insert a valid ticket into the turnstile to "please pass," thus drawing attention to the commercialization and commodification of landscapes (*Wanderlust* 0:54:29). While irony or cynicism now strike me as rather unsatisfying strategies to reframe touristic discourse, it was an attempt to reevaluate our own touristic gaze directed at these places and cultures. The way we depicted ourselves in our film provides another glimpse at how we tried to sidestep typical touristic narratives: not as travelers, who live one breath-taking moment after another, but as two women who face a number of mundane and unexciting tasks which are part of the journey, like getting your backpacks ready, preparing food, spending long hours on busses and trains, and so on. Throughout our film we thus tried to juxtapose the scenes and sites that are very much at home in touristic discourses with situations that usually do not form part of touristic experiences and/or their representation.

There is one incident in our film that lends itself particularly well to talking about the question of how touristic discourse can acknowledge and integrate the confrontation with other realities of human mobility, and point toward a different kind of representational border-crossing. It is the scene in our film where we cross the border between Turkey and Bulgaria and a young man from the Ivory Coast, who was traveling on the same bus as we were, was not allowed to cross. The scene begins with our departure from Istanbul at night and our arrival a few hours later, near the border with Bulgaria where we were told to wait for a second bus in the entry hall of a train station. Bulgaria is not part of the Schengen area yet (it is in the process of joining), but it has been a EU member country since 2007.[108] Its geographical location at the

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[108] The difference between EU member state and Schengen members is that the latter refers to the geographical zone which allows for the unrestricted movement of people. Countries can be a member of the EU without being a member of the Schengen area (e.g., Bulgaria) or they can be a member of the Schengen area without being part of

periphery but within the EU territorial borders, turned the crossing from Turkey to Bulgaria into an intricate undertaking: our identities were checked three times and the process took several hours.

We arrived at the train station at about two o'clock in the morning, and after an hour of waiting a man entered, asked for our passports and within a few moments, he spotted the young man from the Ivory Coast (the only person of color in the room) and proclaimed, while looking at him, "You problem [*sic*]" (*Wanderlust* 1:05:19). Another passenger from Bulgaria, as well as Maria and I, approached the young man in order to help him figure out where exactly the apparent "problem" was. As the young man from the Ivory Coast spoke neither Bulgarian nor English, the Bulgarian passenger talked to the man who proclaimed that there was a problem (and who also turned out to be the driver of the new bus), while I translated what he said to Spanish and then Maria translated to French.[109] It turned out that, in fact, his papers seemed to be in order and he was allowed to board the Bulgarian bus.

At the Turkish border-crossing a border guard came on the bus to check our passports for the second time and took the young man with him into an office. After a while he came back and when he entered the bus everyone applauded. When we arrived at the Bulgarian border, a few hundred meters and only several minutes later, however, the solidarity he had been met with upon his return on the bus quickly faded. Everybody had to get off the bus and form a line outside, for another passport check. The protocol to cooperate with the authorities at the border and the lingering fear of how questioning their authority might result in an arrest, interrogation or

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the EU (e.g., Switzerland).

[109] Looking back to Chapter Three and the idea how the work with different languages reflected the *struggle towards* each other, the work of translation in this cultural encounter can be understood as reflecting the distance that has to be put to work in this situation.

punishment, coerced everybody to line up and comply with what the border guards expected of them, whether it was to cease filming (see *Wanderlust* 1:07:54) or to answer distressing questions about one's travel itinerary.

When it was Maria's and my turn, they asked Maria a number of questions about what she was doing in Egypt and then told us to step aside and wait. The young man from the Ivory Coast was also told to wait as more and more border guards gathered around him (the Bulgarian passenger stayed with the young man for a while to serve as an interpreter). We were told not to approach them and after Maria was questioned, we were ushered to the other side of the border and sent to the bus with the rest of the people who had already crossed the border. On the bus we waited a little longer until the Bulgarian "interpreter" also got back on the bus and then the bus driver drove off, leaving the young man from the Ivory Coast behind.

We do not know anything about him or what happened to him, and we never will. His story remains untold and his encounter with us did not change anything for him. For us, however, it was a push towards confrontation with other realities.[110] This incident clearly provides an example of how Maria and I were brushing up against the way people are segregated and divided as adequate or appropriate border-crossers and "problems." During post-production it was thus never a question whether we were going to include it into our film, but rather *how* to include it. On our path to make it part of our travel narrative, we then also embarked on a journey of (re)interpreting and (re)telling the events of that night, developing the scene

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[110] Re-visiting that night and reflecting on the situation draws attention to how borders shape not only landscapes, but also the subjectivity of those who set out to cross them. While crossing this particular border in the middle of the night might generate a tension for most individuals, the degree of anxiety each individual feels is based not only on the place where one is born, but also on how one's body relates to categories of race, gender, and so on. In this particular case this becomes perceivable through the racist comment of the Bulgarian bus driver, who without even having the slightest idea where the young man came from, already defined him as a "problem" simply based on his skin color/appearance.

throughout different temporal levels.

The first temporal level is the one of lived experience. For our representation of this scene this includes all the moments captured on camera, like our own anxiety, as well as the unpredictability of the situation we were confronted with. From a visual perspective it is striking how this scene is marked by jerky camera movements, dark, unclear, and blurry visuals that were filmed in movement and without much attention to detail. Often the camera is pointing to the floor or filming from waist level. The reason for this is that most of the filming in this scene was done secretly.[111] The difficulty of filming at borders, which I have already addressed in Chapter One (see the border-crossing between Egypt and Israel), points to the segregation of places we usually associate with either a touristic or a migratory experience. Images of tourism usually feature beautiful places to promote and encourage people to visit them, and they tend to not focus on the waiting lines at border-crossings. Images of migrants, by contrast, are often and strenuously recorded at borders, or rather in the process of crossing borders.[112] Migrants are typically represented as faceless masses (for example "a wave of migrants", a flood of "illegals" or "boats full of migrants"), either as victims on their way to the European Union, or violently breaking into Fortress Europe, to swamp the streets with criminal activity (Thiele 215). Following some of the ideas presented in Chapter One, a visuality that depicts tourists in places they also occupy, but are never shown in, might trigger a visual ambiguity that opens up the tourism discourse to other places and forms of experiences.

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[111] While I was only made aware of an explicit prohibition to film when we had to get off the bus at the second stop, there was a sense already in the waiting room that filming could upset the already fragile atmosphere even more and cause problems.

[112] Many broadcast reports shape a vivid image of hundreds of immigrants lunging the border fences and make it seem plausible that Europe is under attack by the poorest of the poor, the implied demarcation of 'Us vs. Them' or 'legal vs. illegal' is, at least partly, accomplished through representation.

The second level of recounting our experience are the interviews between Maria and me, the day after our arrival in Sofia. In order to create this scene, we used these interviews to intercut images of that night with Maria's recounting of the situation and the moment in which I express bewilderment about how border-crossings are experienced so differently for all of us. While I am explicitly referring to the way Maria and I lived this border-crossing, I am implicitly also referring to the young man who was left behind:

> Cómo puede ser que es tan diferente la experiencia que tenemos todos? Solamente porque tenemos diferentes nombres y porque nacimos en diferentes países. La experiencia de cruzar esta frontera para nosotras dos, aunque estar . . . aunque estando viajando juntas fue muy diferente. Y son esos momentos en que me . . . realizó conscientemente las diferencias que nos . . . que nos hacen sentir las fronteras por nuestras [*sic*] papeles de pasaportes que podemos perder tan fácilmente. (*Wanderlust* 1:08:26)[113]

While I was of course aware that there are terrible inequalities in terms of who is allowed to cross borders and under what conditions, stating the obvious and pointing out what happened that night, was all we were capable of doing in that moment. A lot of the interviews we conducted with ourselves during our journey are similar in that sense. They display a relatively shallow level of reflection, interspersed with describing what we had done and experienced during the previous days. However, describing and stating the obvious is not all travel narratives might potentially do in a situation like this. The question emerges: can incorporating perspectives and voices of those who are never heard help to re-imagine touristic discourse? Part of the problem of integrating those perspectives, however, is the lack of access to means of representation. There is a fundamental imbalance when it comes to the question of who has the resources to represent the self and/or others, and this cannot be bridged by simply calling for

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[113] "How can this experience be so different for all of us? Just because we have different names and were born in different countries. The experience of crossing this border, even for the two of us … even though we are traveling together, was very different. And it is in those moments … that I realize the different feelings borders can trigger in us, … just because we have different passport papers, which we could lose so easily" (translation mine).

different types of touristic images. I have wondered, what if anything we could have done differently in that situation. A number of times, I wish I had asked the young man to share his story with us in order to integrate his "voice" into our film. At the same time, this idea raises numerous questions: would the act of integrating an interview with him be considered an act of "giving voice" or of "exploiting his voice?" Under which circumstances could the three of us have entered into a reciprocal relationship, where telling his story would not run the danger of us (mis)appropriating his story? Would his story in our film have any other impact besides creating a self-satisfied sense of "having done something"? These questions only begin to address the potential of fraud, and the level of complexities enclosed in the idea of telling someone's story from a position of privilege.

On a third level, we find the recounting from the temporality of the voice-over. The scene ends with the border disappearing into the night, filmed from the rear window of the bus which continues its journey into Bulgaria. This is followed by a couple of shots showing the last leg of our journey that night as we arrive by train in Sofia. Once we reach the city, my voice-over sets in and mentions how Maria and I talked much about what happened the night of the border-crossing and how we feel bad about not having done more. With a temporal distance of over a year, we return to this incident while editing and writing our voice-over and express a sense of guilt and regret for the way we did not oppose the Bulgarian bus driver more forcefully when he called the young man a "problem," for not having stopped the bus, for not having been more persistent in trying to figure out why he was not able to cross the border, and maybe also for the fact that we were able to cross, while he was not. As an afterthought this expression of guilt and regret lingers over our stay in Sofia and finds its assertion in the final sentence of my voice-over that "Sofia […] siempre va a ser el lugar en cual sentimos el peso del viaje" (*Wanderlust*

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1:11:09).[114] At the point of voice recording, Maria and I both recalled the sensation of being emotionally and physically exhausted from the passage and used the term "weight" to express our vague feeling of being mournful.

Today, on the fourth level of recounting this situation, I also understand it as a mournfulness or distress that has to do with the fact that our experiences between Turkey and Bulgaria that night are connected in troubling and complicated ways. The intertwining of his limited mobility, Maria's endangered/questioned mobility, and my certain/undoubted mobility is connected by more than just the shared infrastructure. In "Tourists and Vagabonds. Heroes and Victims of Postmodernity," Zygmunt Bauman talks about tourists and vagabonds as the "[…] major, principal division of the postmodern society" (5). Vagabonds can be understood in this context as migrants or asylum seekers who are limited in their mobility and freedom of choice, while tourists can be what and wherever they want to be. While there are important differences between vagabonds and tourists (with the biggest one Bauman describes being their freedom of choice), the vagabond is also the alter ego of the tourist. Being an alter ego means "[…] to serve as a public exposition of the innermost private, as an inner demon to be publicly exorcised, an effigy in which all that which cannot be suppressed may be burnt" (Bauman 15).

While Bauman's exploration of postmodern divisions and the vagabond's "functionality" in making the tourist's life bearable, provide little help in terms of reframing touristic discourse, his thinking about alter egos might prompt us to think about how one figure is implicated in the other (15). In most discourses both tourists and migrants are always already fitting in their respective place on a scale of different forms of human mobility. Conceived as an alter ego,

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[114] "Sofia […] will always be the place in which we felt the weight of travel" (translation mine).

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however, Bauman helps us to recognize that they are part of the same thing, but in a different way. Thinking about an alter ego might provoke uneasiness, primarily because it begins to place the foreign inside the self, the familiar, and not outside the self, in another I hardly know. Any attempt to challenge the different representations of border-crossings also means a change in the subjects we see crossing the border. Making perceivable the migratory existence in the touristic existence might provoke an understanding of the touristic self in relation to larger, political failings and such non-encounters with their alter egos.[115]

The filmic strategies discussed in this dissertation can help to challenge these respective places of the foreign and the familiar, the self and the other or the tourist and the migrant. Cinematographic strategies, such as embodied cinematography, the camera as body, or haptic visuality encourage a negotiation not only with one's self, but also with other selves and surroundings. Multiple voices and perspectives that speak from one's lived experience make it harder to fall into a type of narrative that proclaims just one truth or reverts to abstract generalizations. The openness encouraged through these filmic strategies and the disposition to *re-encounter what is already encountered* can create an ambiguity that does not dominate, but instead opens the door to explore multiple meanings.

Acknowledging that our film only starts to test out possible ways of reframing touristic discourse, I would hope that others take up and continue this work of opening up discourses on human mobilities that can help to imagine and enable new and different border-crossings. By affording a side glance at other realities and laying bare the privileged perspective from which our touristic look is executed, I hope that our film does not foreclose acknowledging these other

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[115] Holert and Terkessidis, for example, refer to meetings between tourists and migrants as non-encounters when migrants and tourists cross paths, but without ever touching (64-65).

lives, other stories, selves and mobilities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Opening Sequence

Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito (2017): Opening Sequence (attached)

The film's opening sequence illustrates the core issues addressed in the body of the dissertation: camera, narration, and collaboration (opening_sequence_wanderlust.mov).

A stable link to the scene can be found here: https://vimeo.com/282627791/3c2cfdd3a5

APPENDIX B: Border Crossing between Egypt and Israel

Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito (2017): Border Crossing between Egypt and Israel

This scene focuses on a border crossing between Egypt and Israel and addresses the problematics

of embodied, gendered travel (border_crossing_wanderlust.mov).

A stable link to the scene can be found here: https://vimeo.com/282628072/20ec28d2d8

APPENDIX C: Complete Film

Wanderlust, cuerpos en tránsito (2017): Complete Film

Information on how to access the complete film is available at wanderlustlapelicula.com.
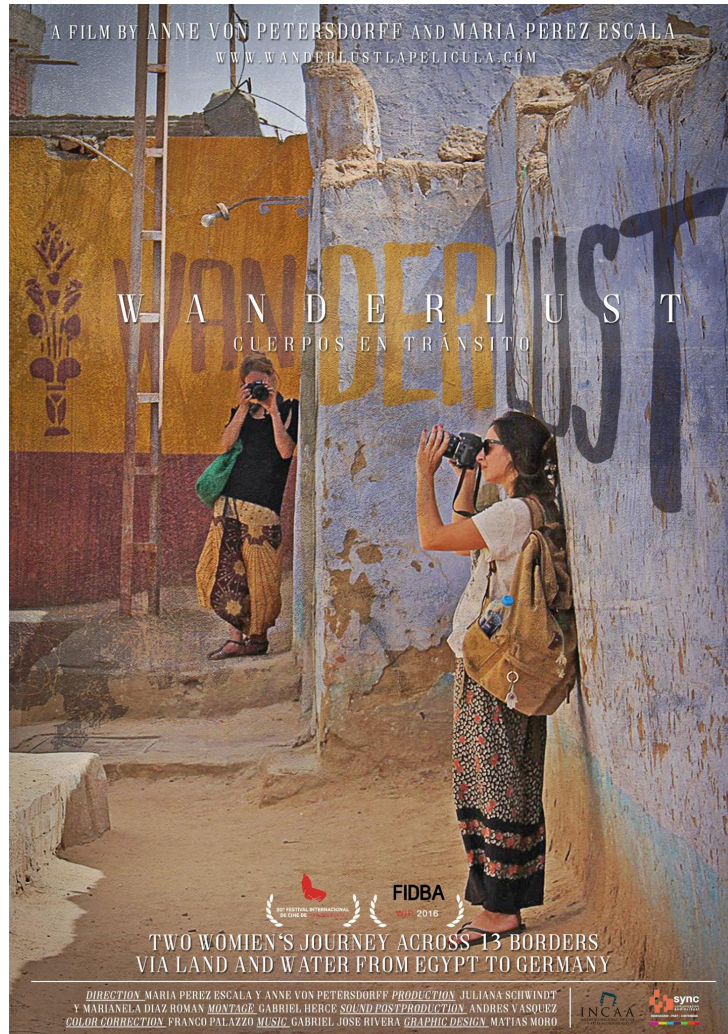
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