

## Film Spaces, Memory Traces: The Family House in Recha Jungmann's *Etwas tut weh* (1979)

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*In 2016 Recha Jungmann's film *Etwas tut weh* (Something Hurts, 1976) was rediscovered and restored. Jungmann, alongside with Ula Stöckl, was one of the few women graduates of the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, where Edgar Reitz and Alexander Kluge taught. In *Etwas tut weh* she revisits her family's former estate which is now a ruin, abandoned and vandalized. This article explores how memory work and camera work unite to create spaces in which her family finds a (new) aesthetic home, and in which the film as a form of remembrance creates solidarity with the audience in the cinema -- a space that can give a home to films and spectators alike.*

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In an old house there is always listening,  
and more is heard than spoken.  
And what is spoken remains in the room,  
waiting for the future to hear it.  
And whatever happens began in the past,  
and presses hard on the future.

— T.S. Eliot, *The Family Reunion*

### The House as Family Archive

As a part of the *ReMake* festival, Recha Jungmann's film *Etwas tut weh* (*Something Hurts*, 1979) was restored, digitized, and re-released in 2018.<sup>1</sup> The film searches for family history in the former family estate, now a dilapidated house. The filmmaker's childhood home, now a ruin, in the small village of Welkers (in a sparsely populated area, the Rhön region) is considered a *Schandfleck* (literally "shame stain") by the villagers.

Spaces that families inhabit fall under the rubric of "home," a special place (usually) privileged by feelings of belonging and familiarity. In the shared

topography of the house, gender specific territorial assignments arise: the father's easy chair, the mother's kitchen, the children's room. Family is always associated with spaces, which can become memory spaces. For Bachelard, "memories of the outside will never have the same tonality as those of home" (28). The house is "our first universe . . . a real cosmos in every sense of the word" (26). It communicates well-being, comfort, and protection. The closed space helps preserve the value of memories as pictures: "By recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost" (28). What then, when the house itself is lost?

*Etwas tut weh* is a poetic memory journey and a memory work, one that begins with the filmmaker's visit to her childhood village and ends with the abandonment of her former home. After the film ends, the pain subsides; "something" can indeed be left behind. The viewer watches the filmmaker who at the start entered the village, leaving it at the end: with her back to the camera, she casts a backward glance at the place where her parents' house once stood intact. Over the course of the film, three female figures,<sup>2</sup> a young girl, a teenager, and the filmmaker herself investigate the now abandoned house that has fallen into disrepair. The girls are easily recognizable as representations of the respective life stages of the filmmaker, although with these figures Jungmann also creates a level of distancing and staging that serves to "alienate" the family. Long shots and searching investigatory movements comprise the film, which explores the spaces of the past and their decay, binding this together with a destroyed family history.

### **Family, the Family Film, and (Alternative) Cinema**

"Most of us," writes Annette Kuhn in *Family Secrets*, "imagine the family as a place of safety, closeness, intimacy; a place where we can comfortably belong and be accepted just as we are" (1). We all have a family—nobody escapes this fact—but the ideal family, this space of safety, closeness, and belonging, can only be found at the cinema, in the projections of Hollywood or Bollywood. Place always produces its counter-place: "home" (*Heim*) begets the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*);

belonging outcasts. All of this in turn finds its place in cinema, which like the family can be a place of closeness, intimacy, and belonging. In cinema, family secrets are not simply revealed but—in solidarity—shared. The cinema, according to Kuhn, “is particularly able of enacting not only the very activity of remembering, but also ways of remembering that are commonly shared; it is therefore peculiarly capable of bringing together personal experience and larger systems and processes of cultural memory” (Kuhn, “Memory Texts and Memory Work” 303). There are affinities and connections between the house, the family (the family house), and the cinema as dwelling and home.<sup>3</sup>

Although the cinema has taken up the theme of family since its beginnings, first-wave feminists neglected film as a medium of expression for their concerns.<sup>4</sup> This changed decisively with the second wave of the 1960s and 70s, not just in the United States, but also in Germany and Europe. In West Germany, the founding of film schools in Berlin and Munich produced a social climate in which women, especially in the context of the New German Cinema, increasingly helmed their own projects. It is in this particular context that we must consider Recha Jungmann. *Etwas tut weh* is unique in the context of 1970s filmmaking, not least because it fails to offer an unblinking documentary about family relationships in a working-class milieu and a socially underprivileged context as do, for example, Helga Reidemeister’s *Der gekaufte Traum* (The Bought Dream, 1977) and her *Von wegen Schicksal* (Is this Fate?, 1979). But neither does it work in the experimental fashion of Elfi Mikesch’s *Ich denke oft an Hawaii* (I Often Think of Hawaii, 1978),<sup>5</sup> or as a conventional feature film such as Helma Sanders Brahm’s *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* (Germany, Pale Mother, 1980). Rather, Jungmann’s film develops its own idiosyncratic hybrid form as documentary, autobiographical reflection, and contemplative temporality. Initially, films made by women aimed at exposing societal grievances regarding female socialization. The life-context of the family belonged to this area as it usually inhibited women’s opportunities for advancement and development. The notions of house and home often reflect both women’s arena of power and their oppression. As spaces, then, they play a special role in the critical cinema of women filmmakers.

Within its tradition of conservative female roles and family ideology, Hollywood reacted swiftly to commercialize the feminist rebellion of the 1970s with so-called “women’s films” such as Robert Benton’s *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979). The political-economic situation of women was summarily converted to melodramatic arcs in shattered family structures. Women’s departures, these stories argued, endangered the unity of the nuclear family. However, these melodramas find a counter force in radical feminist film aesthetics that aim at the destruction of blindly held conventions. In the films of Laura Mulvey, Agnès Varda, and Chantal Akerman, the inclusion of the female gaze and a female perspective join together in the search for alternative film forms. In feminist feature and documentary film, the focus is not on the invocation of a romantic ideal—as it is in both the comedies and the melodramas of Hollywood—but rather on the analysis of family as an institution that produces its members’ emotional stability and resilience at the cost of women’s opportunities. In their analysis of the ideological, state-supporting function of the family, Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse not only found repressive relationships and the reproduction of authoritarian structures, but also, in the family, antagonistic potential against the desired social fabric and its reproductive contexts. To them the family is valid as a place “where suffering could be given free expression and the injured individual found retreat within which he could put up some resistance” (Horkheimer 114).

This supportive aspect finds refuge in maternal functions without corresponding recognition. The Frankfurt School’s *Studies on Authority and Family* did not specifically reflect upon questions of gender. But these become prominent in the 1970s. In the film work of women, the “sociological” analysis had an internal connection with filmic concerns. For example, new temporal and filmic spaces were created that reflected female experiences within familial relationships. Additionally, these spaces could also be perceived as spatial, not merely in the sense of location—for instance the *mise-en-scène* of cinematographically “unattractive” places of female activity such as the kitchen—but also in an approach to places, which is sometimes described as a form of tactical orientation and haptic visuality. That is, they try to aesthetically transcend (and add to) the



questioning of binaries of inside and outside, private and public, feminine and masculine.

One of the better-known examples is Laura Mulvey's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), in which social critique allies with a radical understanding of form: The camera moves in an incessant, slow 360-degree pan from the eye level of a baby experiencing all of the house's domestic activities from the arms of its mother. A more recent example, Ursula Meier's *Home* (2008), radicalizes the confinement of an indoor milieu. It situates the family house next to an out-of-use highway, a sort of un-place that is also a heterotopia. As the highway comes back into use and the curious idyll of the family is ruined, they wall themselves in, retreating into an increasingly embryonic space which, of course, in the end threatens to suffocate them. In Barbara Loden's impressive film *Wanda* (1970), the interior of the kitchen serves as an interface between alienation and home, between the expression of togetherness (in the sense of belonging) simply by property and exclusion by the mere lack of ownership: The inappropriateness of Wanda, the female protagonist, is communicated from the beginning through the fact that she does not fit in the trusted, familiar room of the kitchen, which itself does not offer anything homely but is nevertheless legitimized by the family constellation. She stands, or even literally lies, counter to it.

Departures from the strictly codified filmic space are rare in classic narrative cinema, whereas avant-garde and experimental films have always been interested in understanding illusory spatial perception as the dominant model which needs to be questioned and challenged. Experimental filmmakers often work on modifying and negotiating space as a process between conventions of realism (the so-called impression of reality), spatial reception, and audience activity. Michelle Citron with her film *Daughter Rite* (1980) comes to mind as one filmmaker who like many other feminist experimental filmmakers interrogated and manipulated "familiar" home movies, filmic autobiography, and "documentary" by putting these "genres" together in order to question certainties about the representation of family relationships as well as established filmic forms.<sup>6</sup>

When one revisits the films of the 1970s and 80s, Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* (Germany, Pale Mother, 1980), Jutta Brückner's *Hungerjahre – in einem reichen Land* (Years of Hunger: In a Year of Plenty, 1980), and Jungmann's *Etwas tut weh* are often reviewed or discussed together. While Brückner incorporates the public sphere of political debate through the inclusion of archival material from the 1950s, which she contrasts with the interior and domestic spaces of family life, Jungmann focuses on a single location and one private family story that, once made public, becomes a part of both German history and the history of film. "Topographically most exacting," writes Wolfram Schütte in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* review of the film, "[is how] Recha Jungmann proceeds. At the center of her film, which strikes a risky balance between documentary, interview research and poetic abstraction, sits the author's childhood home. Ghostly self-encounters, silently crisscrossing next to found objects, presented as shards of an excavation site the author also calls witnesses that complete the mosaic of this research into the distant homeland and the crumbling family left to die with their stories."<sup>7</sup> A few months later, in a short critique of newly released films in Frankfurt, Gertrud Koch proclaims: "In the cold of German history, feelings can only be experienced as pain and hurt, – and thus is Recha Jungmann's independent film form, which cuts across the genre divisions of documentary and poetic narrative film, an exact tracing and implementation of both first experiences and the last traces of memory" (n.p.).

### ***Etwas tut weh***

After years overseas, a woman—the filmmaker herself—returns to the village of her childhood. She had spent the previous years in the United States and Canada, having followed her husband, Lothar Spree, there. Now she is confronted with the decay of her family home. In the well-known studies on authority and family of the Frankfurt School, Marcuse analyzes the relationship between family and property. Ideological, moral, and social "features of the family" are fulfilled "in the specific relationship between *family and property*. The family not only has its 'external reality' in property, but also the existence of its 'substantial personality'" (106).

This relationship appears to find resonance in the film. The house and its detritus are not treated as mere “pure private property,” rather they form a connection with the significance that private property can have for the function of the individual in the community. In the “blight” of the dilapidated house the family cannot realize itself in its previously idealized form; the crumbling property opens up a rupture that had always been there, and to which the village community made a substantial contribution.



*Figure 1. Jungmann*



Figure 2. Jungmann

The particularity of this house for processes of remembering and imagining as well as reconstructing history is its status as ruin. What does the decay, the lack of protection, the ruptured space mean for its function as family archive and memory space? What relationship develops between the materiality of the building and the imaginary places that processes of exploration, reconstruction, and reminiscence construct?

“Mind you,” writes Bachelard in *Poetics of Space*, “it is thanks to the house that a great number our memories are ‘housed,’ and when the house takes on a somewhat complicated shape . . . then our memories receive more and more characteristic retreats” (8). It is important, he writes, “not to tear apart the solidarity of memory and imagination” (6) contained within the pictures of the house. This finds a correspondence in the different levels of the film: the poetic depictions, fictional staging, documentary gestures, and concrete interviews. Bachelard calls the systematic study of the spatiality of our inner lives a “topoanalysis” (30). One might say that *Etwas tut weh* undertakes such a study, while asking: What does it mean for the process of remembering the life of the family, when the space is not only unoccupied, but has also fallen into such disrepair that it’s become a ruin? The childhood home, according to Bachelard, is “more than an embodiment of

home, it is also an embodiment of dreams” (15). This statement presupposing harmony and protection is, of course, idealistic. What if the dream is shaped by loss and uncertainty? What if the house as imagery does not fulfill its protective function as “a body of images that gives mankind proofs or illusions of stability,” and that “gutted,” no longer represents (family) order, but rather disintegrates and rots (17)? Without the protective function, secrets come into the light, and the film takes advantage of this. As such, a correspondence appears between the ruin and an impaired family history. Behind crumbling facades, constellations can appear that transcend the family and tether themselves to a national history. The porous walls of the building enable the articulation of uncertainties and secrets that cannot find protection by being hidden in the house, but rather channel their way out into the open through the medium of the filmmaker’s memory work and search for clues. In this work, the building becomes her ally.



Figure 3. Jungmann

### ***Heimatfilm* (Homeland Film) - Homeland Images**

Jungmann’s return to her childhood village raises not only the question of historical use and the implications of the concept of *Heimat* (homeland), but also begs the question which role this space plays in the relationship between this particular family and the filmmaker? What do we mean when we say *Heimat*? What does it

mean for the filmmaker, for her search for identity, the act of childhood remembrance, the construction of a family history, the condition of exclusion or belonging? In a groundbreaking 1997 publication, Gisela Ecker addresses the correlation of *Heimat* and gender, this quintessentially German word and conceptions of femininity. She describes the omission of the gendered aspect as “the misery of suppressed difference,” with which certain associations of *Heimat* with femininity, particularly maternity, are not addressed (7).

Significantly, *Heimat* is an ideologically and emotionally loaded concept in postwar West German history, where it signifies a reservoir of imagery, a restorative attempt and expression of “Geschichtsvergessenheit” as part of the denial to work through history. This denial becomes manifest in the genre of the so-called “Heimatfilm.” Within the context of New German Cinema this restorative tendency of the genre takes a specific (critical and redemptive) turn in the national epic *Heimat* by Edgar Reitz in 1981 and 1984. It is interesting to note that Reitz was Jungmann’s professor at the Ulm School of Design (*Hochschule für Gestaltung*), where she studied for two years. Already there one can notice a candid understanding of the concept of “family,” one that accompanies a certain rebellion (as it were) against the old authorities.

During her studies, Jungmann was critical of the dominant demeanor of Kluge and Reitz and felt especially attached to a group of young men, including Michel Leiner and Lothar Spree (who later became her husband). She loved the atmosphere, “the grounds, the communal life, . . . the architecture and the materials, wood, glass, light gray concrete, . . . the light” (Jungmann 137). Jungmann thus indicates a perceptual-aesthetic relationship to buildings and material worlds that leaves its traces in the sensual-haptic handling of the material qualities of the house, and of objects, in *Etwas tut weh*. At art school, Jungmann treasured the team spirit, the method of work where one “created a living thing with very little means” (134). In her study, Madeleine Bernstorff describes the historical context of female filmmakers’ work at that time: “At first it was easier for young women to be accepted into the film department at the Ulm School of Design than it was to get into the DFFB (the German Film and Television Academy in Berlin),



possibly because the leaders of the school adhered (more) consciously to the Bauhaus tradition. With the filmmakers Ula Stöckl, Marion Zeemann, Claudia von Alemann, Recha Jungmann, and Jeanine Meerapfel appeared—in part even before the beginning of the New Women’s Movement—female filmmakers who chose their own reality as young women as the point of departure for their films” (n.p.).

*Heimat ist, wo das Herz weh tut*, or in English, “Home is where the heart hurts,” but this film is called *Etwas tut weh* or *Something Hurts*.<sup>8</sup> Jungmann leaves the pain in the unknown, localizing it neither in the loss of *Heimatgefühl* (sense of home), nor in the concrete geographical space, the village in the Rhön mountains. To the villagers, the house is a “Schandfleck” (literally: shame stain) in an unflinching continuation of National Socialist language. In the film, the house is a place and a space Jungmann approaches with love, respect, and grief. The house, consisting of nothing but rubble and therefore considered a ‘shame’ by the villagers, is given a new home in the film. The camera’s probing search and discovery of discarded and lost things in the process of filming adds to, and modifies, family history. Naturally, this is not only an archeological undertaking, but also a rescue attempt: hold tight, protect, and secure. Film serves as a medium of investigation, approximation, and preservation. The experience will be immersive, this much is clear from the first frames of the film. A young girl is picking primroses. The camera is almost at the level of the blades of grass, we hear ambient noises and see the white-stockinged girl crawling through thickets and bushes. The figure of the child, at once a physical reality and also inevitably always a cultural construct, produces and reproduces as filmic evocation an adult craving for innocence that can be described as nostalgic. In her nymph-like silence, there reside ideas and the desire for a speechless state of physicality. In composing a union and fusion with nature, Jungmann finds in this symbiotic connection a foil to the agents of socialization of the familial. The joy that the little girl experiences in nature also belongs to the adult filmmaker and her project. Jungmann expresses it in relation to the silence of the child, which facilitates projection. The film creates a sensual immersion that is coupled with nature and childhood, while precariously

avoiding clichés through the creation of disturbances in both soundtrack and image.



Figure 4. *Jungmann*

### Memory Spaces – Family History

When we remember family—and who does not?—we always remember the spaces in which family life took place. Without spaces, there is no memory. These spaces can be the rooms of a house, an apartment, the street, the neighborhood, or the village; no matter which, they present the landscapes of childhood and coming of age. Film as *Raumkunst*, or the “art of space,” enables memory and experience of spaces in a manner of representation that can express moods beyond documentary (re)construction, containing truths of perception as well as mythical projections (Rohmer 515). Space memory and the places of childhood offer, then, a particularly internal connection. Following Horkheimer, family leads not only to schisms, secrets, and oppressions, but also to the “dream of a better human condition for mankind” (114).



This concept materializes in the picture of the child's longing. It contains "ideas and forces [which] are not dependent on the existence of the family and, in fact, are even in danger of shriveling up in such a milieu, but which, nevertheless, in the bourgeois system of life rarely have any place but the family where they can survive at all" (Horkheimer 114-115). The film has a premonition and a longing for it. The places it goes to are examined carefully, gently taken up, thoughtfully appreciated. According to Michel de Certeau, places form palimpsests, in which subjectivity articulates itself as something that has always been tied to the absence that structures it and enables its being (109). This absence is localized by de Certeau in the process of differentiation, a process necessary for becoming a subject, for the conditions of becoming an adult, including separation from the mother. In a broadening of Freud's *fort-da* (gone-there) game, the child's original differentiation from the mother's body allows and necessitates the spatial praxis of *here* and *there*: "It is through that experience that the possibility of space and of a localization . . . of the subject is inaugurated" (de Certeau 109). For de Certeau, what can be remembered and is worth remembering is "that which can be dreamed about a place" (109). As a result: "To practice space is thus to repeat the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, *to be other and to move toward the other*" (110). In the filmic exploration of the spaces of her remembered and imagined family, of the figure of the child, Jungmann creates her own "other" (*anderes*), and with it the possibility of exploring space "differently" (*anders*).

A house, the childhood home, stands in the center of the film. The house as home not only provides structure, shelter, and an interior place for things that turn into "memory objects," but also an affective space that can produce feelings of both belonging and alienation (Kuntz). As a place of history and memory, the family house becomes an archive. Jungmann's house—half-decayed—is exposed not only to the eyes, but to every intruder. It is a house full of objects that are robbed of their functionality, quasi-renatured. Beyond their significance as symbols for the ruin of a family, they display haptic qualities: As material entities, they become materialized memory. Waste becomes a storage space, and the camera captures

the objects in fluid movements, turning physical grasping (*ergreifen*) into conceptual grasping (*begreifen*).



Figure 5. Jungmann



Figure 6. Jungmann

In Jungmann's film, the exploration of the space is delegated to two female figures who have been identified in the criticism of the film as embodiments of the developmental stages of the filmmaker herself. Aside from their identifying processes, these figures also carry out a distancing function. Furthermore, they generate a fictive succession of generations that is destroyed and interrupted in the actual family history. Still there is a fluid connectivity between the female figures in the film, in a network of curious glimpses and montages that bring them into an interrelation. This interweaving of glimpses allows for a staging of space that does not follow clear demarcations, but rather generates closeness and a haptic visuality that opposes a hierarchical ordering of the spatial field. In her book *The Skin of the Film*, Laura Marks describes how this haptic visuality privileges materiality as opposed to cognitive representation and undermines hierarchical subject-object relationships. In place of a cognitive ordering, a physical memory arises instead. (110).

*Etwas tut weh* is a slow, gentle film that gropes and searches and asks questions as it remembers. In voice-overs, the filmmaker introduces herself as a thoughtful ponderer. With the figures of the girl and the teenager, she creates a construct that opens up another communicative space over a fictional succession

of generations. The figure of the child is less a symbol or a delegated personification of the projections of the filmmaker herself at an earlier developmental stage; rather it evokes a physical, pre-verbal state, an idealized form of appropriation and world conquest. The child is the form in which childhood experiences in the family find shelter in the body. The teenager, on the other hand, enables curiosity and distance, avoids pathos and sentimentality, enables departure and a fresh start.

This re-enactment functions as a heuristic concept to understand the materiality and sensuality of historical objects in a double sense. This understanding of objects plays out on the haptic level—the hand-gripping gestures of the girls—as well as on the level of the camera movements, where a new aesthetic space is created. A space that on the one hand breaks with the mythical space of the family and on the other elevates its history to a new space of understanding, of approach: “Aesthetic space,” writes Cassirer, “is a genuine life-space, which is formed out of the powers of pure emotion and imagination, unlike theoretical space which is formed out of the power of pure thought.” The objects in this space receive a new life: “As the content of artistic representation, the object shifts to a new distance, to a remoteness from the I; only in this does it gain its own independent existence and create a new form of objectivity” (13). This objectivity, when taken at its word, is an objecthood that provokes confrontation (*Gegenüberstellung*). The objects stand opposed to the probing glance and maintain their independence.

### **Family Spaces – Family Photos**

As in almost any kind of memory work, photos play a role amongst the object world of *Etwas tut weh*. In her essay *On Photography*, Susan Sontag finds that family photos are closely related to the loss of traditional family function, when she writes: “As that claustrophobic unit, the nuclear family, was being carved out of a much larger family aggregate, photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperiled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life” (9). In the film, photographs form a counterpart to the objects of daily life that have



been ferreted out and dug up, that have been moved and taken in hand (fashion magazines, postcards, pieces of clothing, letters, delivery notes, and toys). However, they stand as isolated moments in space as they are questioned and summoned by the filmmaker's voice, showing that in the end, as Kracauer has put it, "what appears in the photograph is not the person but the sum of what can be subtracted from him or her" (57).



*Figure 7. Jungmann*

Family photos also create a space that, in an idea of togetherness, points beyond the concrete house and home. In their strongly coded form, they themselves produce "homeliness." In her investigation of the connections between the domestic sphere and family photos, Gillian Rose argues that it is family photos that transform a house into a "home" (Sontag, qtd. in Rose 7), projecting that load of signifying family connectedness upon it. The relationship between photography as a staging of an intact static family and the state of the house as a decayed ruin is

interesting in the context of the film. The photos, alongside their construction of family bond and family togetherness, leave room for speculation, and testify to absence and loss. Thanks to the filmmaker's voice-over they also become documents of a destroyed, ruined family history. However, in the film's rendering, the concrete rooms of the house create a place for the preservation of family history despite all the destruction. This creation of space largely owes to the manner in which the filmmaker and the camera handle these spaces. The atmosphere thus created opposes the mummified time of the photos with life in the present tense.



*Figure 8. Jungmann*





Figure 9. Jungmann

The inserted family photos find an animated counterpart in the movements of the youths in the present, and the house becomes an experimental space for a kind of re-staging, a reorganization. The film is free of homesickness and nostalgia, but it is melancholic. Aleida Assmann writes in a chapter entitled “The Memory of Places” that Goethe in his theory of symbols established not so much objects as such, but two places: “‘the square on which I live,’ and ‘my grandfather’s house, courtyard and garden’” (283). Both places embody memories that he shares as an individual but that far transcend his own life. Here, the individual memory gives way to that of the family, and the context of an individual life is inextricably bound to that of people who were once within that context but are now no longer there” (283).

### Family History on the Move

The concept of family as absence structures *Etwas tut weh* and its spaces, all of which represent both transitions and thresholds that offer an open porosity that stands in contradiction to petrified history. The headstones of the village cemetery offer monuments to this history to which the filmmaker has no relationship. The film brings family history into flux, not only by animating petrified things, but also through movement in and of itself. It is not for nothing that the viewer often sees the filmmaker herself on the move through the empty streets of the village, a tentative gait, a decisive strutting: it is a survey, a process, that continually produces new perspectives and points of view. It has the effect of a liberation, when she leaves the village at the end, walks up a hill and surveys the valley with her gaze. Incidentally, this sequence offers a setting that gives the female movement a space that male figures usually hold when looking out across a wide open landscape. In *Etwas tut weh*, family history becomes performative, not as the completion of a collection of facts, but rather as a procedural memory work that leaves much open; history as the incomplete.<sup>9</sup>

The film finds a broken family history in a house that as a ruin becomes a sort of counter-place. Here the fragments find a home not only in the aesthetic spaces that the film creates, but also in the cinema, in which this memory work is seen and shared together.

*Translated by Rebecca Schumann and Annette Brauerhoch.*

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<sup>1</sup> *ReMake*. Frankfurter Frauen Film Tage, November 2018. The festival, which focused on the history of women's film, announced in its inaugural edition: "Remake will always dedicate a part of its program to a filmmaker whose work is at risk of being forgotten and disappearing. For this, new copies are made and a tour of municipal cinemas is organized." <http://www.remake-festival.de/remake/ueber-das-festival/>. Accessed 14 September 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Three figures are reminiscent of Maya Deren's self-fragmentation in *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1946), also a film in which memory, dream, and poetry intertwine in the space of a house.



<sup>3</sup> Heide Schlüpmann re-examines the metaphorical “femininity” of inner spaces, such as the cinema (particularly as employed by protagonists of the so-called apparatus theory such as Jean-Louis Baudry) by introducing a re-consideration of the term “private” and the relevance of cinema as a private space: “The space of the cinema is obviously more closely related to the private than to the public sphere. But does this mean it is *merely* private?” (n.p.).

<sup>4</sup> Growing research on early cinema, however, modifies this understanding and discovers subtle and ironic commentaries on patriarchy in the films of Alice Guy Blaché and Lois Weber, for instance.

<sup>5</sup> Reidemeister writes of her film *Von wegen Schicksal* (This is Destiny?, 1979): “We are making a film in which the violent relationships in the family, in which the longed-for ability to love and its disguise in helplessness, brutality and loneliness is not concealed by the German family taboo.” (n.p.)

<sup>6</sup> A more recent example is the German film *Das unmögliche Bild* (The Impossible Picture, 2016) by Sandra Wollner.

<sup>7</sup> All translations are by the translator of this article unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>8</sup> The ironic title of a satirical book by Reinhard P. Gruber, qtd. in (Ecker 11).

<sup>9</sup> At the beginning of the film, the filmmaker speaks in voice-over: “And I began to be interested in the history of my family, tried to compile personal memories and information, but the picture didn’t become clearer, but rather more multifarious, leaving even more things unsolved.”

## Filmography

Benton, Robert. *Kramer vs. Kramer* (US 1979).

Brückner, Jutta. *Hungerjahre – in einem reichen Land* (*Years of Hunger: In a Year of Plenty*, DE 1980).

Deren, Maya. *Meshes of the Afternoon* (US 1946).

Citron, Michelle. *Daughter Rite* (US 1980)

Jungmann, Recha. *Etwas tut weh* (*Something Hurts*, DE 1979).

Loden, Barbara. *Wanda* (US 1970).

Meier, Ursula. *Home* (CH 2008).

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