



# Doing Age and Doing Desire in and Through Film. Queer Perspectives on Gender, Aging, and Desire

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In recent years a growing number of films on and with elderly people have been produced. Love and desire are central features of some of these films although more often heterosexual than homosexual. In our paper we would like to address the intersections of doing age and doing desire in five films that have recently been produced. By analysing the films we will develop a taxonomy of the various forms of desire displayed. Yet, we will also show how these films do not just represent desire in old age but how they materialize in and through the desire they produce in us, the spectators. In our analysis we look especially at filmic strategies, which cope with, reify, produce and counter images of desire in old age. We consider these filmic strategies as performative, which means that film can contain a utopian as well as subversive potential. We are especially interested in the potential of film to create something other than expected, something that leads us beyond representation of the known, something new that emerges with the specific aesthetics of film. In order to trace this potential we draw upon the concept of the surrogate body in the cinema which helps us resituate the notion of embodiment in the actual cinematic experience. In this somatic space of meaning, which our body has become for the film, desire moves in the diegetical and the non-diegetical levels of the film. In the films we will analyse, a specific corporeal-somatic experience becomes possible that lies beyond a simple and normalized heterosexuality in old age. The images create, as we want to suggest an aging trouble by queering our anticipations and stereotypical expectations—they also materialize as desire in the bodies of the spectators.

**Keywords:** aging, embodiment, film, desire, gender

## FILM AS PERFORMATIVE AGENCY AND THINKING PATTERN

In *Skyfall* (UK/USA 2012, Sam Mendes) Judy Dench, nearly 80 years old, is staged as Bond's boss 'M': of many years, but also as an aging and at the same time highly attractive woman. Her beauty and sublimity is developed through the filmic mise-en-scène and unfolded as the film reaches new aesthetic possibilities through the motive of the beautifully aged lady. The camera moves slowly and in a counter-cut to the chase toward Judi Dench. While the sequence reaches its peak, Dench's face becomes larger and larger until the shot ends in a close-up. Dench gives the command to shoot. Metallic rhythms are woven into the sounds, which remind us of a moving train. The shots of the chase are light brown—the shots of Dench, however, have gray-silver nuances and are kept in a cold blue light. The chase is shot in a rapid speed and the movements of the figures and things go in different directions—the camera movement toward Dench is slow and steady. With

the horizontal movement of the camera toward a vertical focus, the cross-hair of the chase is the standing figure Dench: the quiet and steady center of the sequence. In *Skyfall*, the presentation of Judi Dench shows not just an elderly lady who is highly attractive but who also has power over (younger) men. Here, power is not associated with masculinity and youth but with femininity and mature age. This can be considered a filmic utopia, which reverses the power-relations between the genders and the ages. Interestingly, this kind of beauty seems to be reserved for mature women; it is based on bodily markers of age such as wrinkles, gray hair, and frailty. With genuinely filmic means such as make-up, costume, lighting, color, and distance of framing, the elderly lady develops her very own cinematographic appeal.

Film can be very specific in its cinematographic strategies and it has an intense influence on our experience of the world. The German film philosopher Hagener speaks even of a reversal of the “classical hierarchy between film and world” (Hagener, 2011, p. 58), which presumes that film is merely a representation of the world. He supposes that in “the current age of media-immanence” (ibid.) it is impossible to think of a pre-medial outside of the film. Rather, Hagener states:

film no longer (represents) reality, but becomes world in the sense that there is no space anymore from which it is possible to imagine a pre-medial universe. Film—successful or not, in cinema or television, in the gallery or on a mobile phone—always offers us at least two things: a second life which we can inhabit temporarily but also another life for ourselves. Whenever, a film is successful, it lets us, for a moment, participate in another life, yet it also has the power to change us permanently (Hagener, 2011, p. 58)<sup>1</sup>.

If we always already live in images and the images always already live in us, as Hagener states, then there can be no age(ing) without film and no film without age(ing). Film determines the writing and the design of one’s life. Moreover, film is specific in its expressions about life and aging, and thereby it becomes a mode of performative agency and a pattern of thinking. Film influences therefore our “being-in-the-world” in a very specific way. It also affects our handling of world. It also influences the scripting and designing of our lives; it affects our dreams and stimulates our wishes; it incites our desires. It sometimes also creates our desires. Our desires are a fundamental part of how we design and script our lives, the drive us and they direct us. Desire is an intensity that drives us, our fantasies, our cultural productions and therefore also film.

Desire in and for elderly people is in Western society a rather tabooed. Images are rare, in mainstream culture they are scarce. Yet, elderly people do desire, they desire each other, they desire younger people, they desire live and love and intimacy. In this

<sup>1</sup>German Original: “nicht länger Realität, sondern wird zur Welt in dem Sinne, in dem sich kein Ort mehr finden lässt, von dem aus ein praemediales Universum vorstellbar ist. Der Film—ob gelungen oder nicht, ob im Kino oder Fernsehen, in der Galerie oder auf dem Mobiltelefon—bietet uns immer wenigstens zwei Dinge: ein zweites Leben, das wir zeitweise bewohnen können, aber auch ein anderes Leben für uns selbst. Wenn ein Film gelungen ist, verschafft er uns für einen Moment Teilhabe an einem anderen Leben, aber er hat auch die Kraft, uns dauerhaft zu verändern.”

paper, we would like to introduce a number of films that feature desire between elderly people. Yet, this desire, as we will show, is not simply to be understood as a filmic representation of sexuality in old age. In our understanding film is able to generate something beyond representation and in this very ability of film we find a queering of stereotypical expectations of sexuality in old age. Film is able to not just represent but also to materialize desire and embodiment—also of course—of elderly people.

In the following paragraphs we will analyse how filmic strategies can performatively produce materialities and sensualities of aging. We will address a number of questions such as: How is desire in old age staged? How is gender produced and how does it intersect with and/or precondition the representations of the elderly? Which filmic strategies can be identified when it comes to the representation of elderly bodies? Are there possibilities to show desire in old age as an independent filmic staging without reproducing stereotypes? How can film subvert stereotypical images of sexuality and formulate possibilities of desire for this desire in the spectators? Is it possible to detect a queering of desire in old age through film? Can film subvert stereotypical, hetero-/normative representations and materialize as desire for other possibilities? Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to give insight into filmic representations of old age in the context of desire and embodiment in contemporary European film. Hereby we want to focus on the potential of film to subvert stereotypical images of old age and its possibilities to give way to the materialization of different and differing designs of aging and desire.

But first we would like to return to non-stereotypical portrayal of female old age in film. Judi Dench’s staging as ›M‹ in *Skyfall* (2012, Sam Mendes) as highly attractive and beautiful woman who has power over younger men can be approached with two central concepts in aging studies and gender studies: doing gender/doing age and the gender/aging trouble. These concepts emphasize that age and gender is not something one is but something one does. They can be complemented by a *doing desire* which is posited beyond a naturalization of age and gender<sup>2</sup>. Parallel to and intersecting with *doing gender* and *doing age* desire in elderly people is produced by and in filmic representations. We want to go even further—as we regard theories of materialization as the necessary consequence of theories of performativity—and argue that the desire that is represented in film moves through us—the spectators—and materializes as our own. We will introduce filmic images of desire in old age that describe a “somatic space of meaning.” In this space, a differing desire—as is our hypothesis—materializes. This happens through images which are a potentiality, possibilities, they do not become actualized, yet, they sensitively and affectively inscribe themselves in the spectators. These pictures could show something but they don’t. They simultaneously subvert traditional and normative images of sexuality. They produce a desire in the (bodies)

<sup>2</sup>*Doing desire* has been introduced by Tolman (1994) in the context of changing sexuality of adolescent women. Our own use of *doing desire* is derived from the concept of *doing gender* by Candace (West and Zimmerman, 1987) as well as the concept of *doing age* by Lövgren (2013).

of the spectators for this desire. How this desire is produced aesthetically is the focus of this paper and will be analyzed first, in *Wolke 9* (2008, Andreas Dresen) by which we will show how central film aesthetics is as regards desire. We will move on to develop a typology of desire which is built upon four categories which we will call: images of deprivation, images of imagination, images of retrospection and images of incompleteness. The films we will use as examples to illustrate these four categories of images of desire are *Vergiss mein nicht* (2012, David Sieveking), *Amour* (2012, Michael Haneke), *Et si on vivait tous ensemble?* (F/D 2012, Stéphane Robelin), and *Irina Palm* (2007, Sam Garbarski)<sup>3</sup>.

## DOING GENDER, DOING AGE, AND DOING DESIRE

Recently, a number of different concepts of aging have been introduced. We find neoliberal concepts of successful aging, meaning that society demands of every individual to be productive, even of the aged, successful therefore meaning to not become frail, dependent, asexual and sedentary. There are also attempts to frame aging as being “affirmative” as regards an embodied and materialized way of “becoming” different (Sandberg, 2013). We find those approaches most fruitful for our analysis of film. Film can be affective, intense and affirming—it can let us become different. As we have shown above, film can produce agency and is performative.

As much as you will always find a doing gender in a gendered world you will always find a doing age in an age structured world. Just as much, is age something that means different things in different ages, cultures and contexts (Lövgren, 2013, p. 37). When it comes to film a variety of aspects of the construction of bodies and identities are equally relevant. These are, just to name a few: race, class, sexuality, nation, ethnicity, and religion. All these categories become relevant when talking about gender and age(ing) in film. In film and through film, categories of identity are disordered and re-ordered. Film does not just represent and quote these categories, film carries those categories as experience and materialization into the world. Therefore, film also is complicit in doing whiteness, doing bourgeoisie, doing working-class, doing heterosexuality, and so on.

In the following analysis we want to particularly emphasize one of these doings: this is the doing desire in old age. Even though heteronormativity as such is not challenged in the films we analyse, which is to say that the desire that happens is organized in heterosexual terms, we do feel that queering aspects can be found in the very particular doing desire which these films undertake. Our hypothesis is that in these particular films a corporeal-somatic experience becomes possible that lies beyond a simple and normalized heterosexuality in old age. In the films, we find subversive movements, which undermine and question stereotypical images of both old age and sexuality. This happens through filmic movements, which describe and generate not a facticity but a possibility. What is of main interest for us, is the

filmic movement of a doing desire which produces “potentialities of old age” through specific images of doing desire.

In contemporary film, we rarely find aged characters who are old and frail, sick or dying (Michael Haneke’s *Amour* is a prominent exception here). Rather, it is their youthfulness, their activity, their desire for life, which dominate the filmic representation. We find alternative co-habitation such as living groups or residencies for aged artists; as well as new love affairs, common cooking with friends, etc. The cinematographic diversity of aged people thereby foils specific forms of behavior or modes of appearance, which are normally ascribed to older people. Ivo Ritzer describes this specific form of doing age in *The Expendables* (USA 2010, Sylvester Stallone)—albeit only in relation to men (Ritzer, 2012, p. 319). The differences which produce doing gender also structure doing age—as we have already described in our introduction on Judi Dench in *Skyfall*. Ritzer, describing the design of the future for the aged male body in *The Expendables*, argues that there is a tendency to display forms of age(ing) that show the body as productive and useful (ibid.). By referring to Foucault’s bio-power, describing the controlling processes of bodies in modern societies, Ritzer concludes that the age(ing) body has to be concealed and influenced by “compensatory body techniques.” Old age is made invisible. Instead, as Ritzer argues, competencies associated with youth(fulness) such as mobility, spontaneity, expressivity pass into later phases of life (ibid.). This “making useful” of aging male bodies can be identified as a specific mode of doing age. Especially when it comes to desire, however, the notion of the youthful body prevails as desirable. We want to ask which images of age(ing) are produced, resisted and counteracted especially when it comes to the unfolding of desire in film.

## AGING TROUBLE

Miriam Haller uses the concept of gender trouble proposed by Butler (1990) to criticize the notion of age(ing) as a natural and solely biological fact (Haller, 2005). The categories, which determine the notion of age can produce disturbance and disruption, yet also the rebellion and the trouble, which Butler describes in *Gender Trouble* (Haller, 2005). With this theoretical background, the concept of performativity also becomes interesting in regard to age(ing)—especially because it enables us to conceive of categories as dynamic and flexible. As much as gender categories can subversively be undermined, categories of age can be used performatively to show us how, on the one hand age is construed and on the other, how it could always be differently. Film is here especially interesting, since it performs subversion and pronounces possibilities rather than facts and facticity. Especially, when it comes to the display of desire in and between elderly people, aging trouble seems to become virulent. In mainstream cultural productions, the aged body and sexuality are rarely portrayed together. The norms and normalizations that come with representations of sexuality prohibit playful images of sexuality in the elderly. We find that the perception of the representations of desire in old age as taboo resembles the heteronormative perception of queer desire. We therefore consider it apt to speak of representations of desire in the elderly as somehow queering the norm—not as queer, but as

<sup>3</sup>In our analysis we do not distinguish between documentary and fiction since what is important for our analysis is the film aesthetic strategies that show and produce desire. These film aesthetic strategies are composed of mise-en-scène, sound, cinematography.

an active queering of normative perceptions of intimacy, love, sex, bodies, and desire. Film contains, just as queer theory the possibility of the invention of different worlds (O’Sullivan, 2005) through the continuous production of new ways of seeing, of knowing, of connecting, of feeling connected and of life as such (Sikora, 2016, p. 64). Film is able to extend our consciousness and to build affinities with other bodies (MacDougall, 2006, p. 17). When film shows desire, this is even intensified, since desire is a troubling motion—it is on the move, between bodies, in bodies, and also between film and bodies.

## DESIRE AND FILM

We understand desire as a movement, which can only emerge in and through cultural discourses and practices. This means that in this understanding desire is not something that can be located in an individual person. Desire as a movement moreover, needs phantasy; it needs images and imagination saturated with desire (see also Berlant, 2012). Desire emerging through phantasy becomes wanting—a wanting that points to the future. In this futurity it becomes a potentiality, which can be fulfilled or not, which can be satisfied or not. In this, the paradoxical nature of desire becomes apparent: in its satisfaction desire vanishes—at least it will cease to exist in that very form it formerly desired its satisfaction. This means, that desire can only exist in the form of its non-satisfaction and in its non-fulfillment. Desire therefore, can only exist in the form of a potentiality, which points toward something prospective, something in the future. Moreover: desire has to be understood in a twofold way: first, as a desire which is evoked on the diegetic level of the film that is the desire which emerges between characters in the narrative and therefore as a desire which lives in the moving images. Secondly, as the desire which emerges between the audience and the film. This is the desire, which the film evokes in us—the desire which we want to see and experience, in and out of the film, with the film, and also when the film is over.

Probyn (1996) states that desire always moves in images because images always bring into play a specific socio-historical imaginary (Engel, 2011). In that understanding, images materialize in images and become visual material. Desire materializes in images. This could be framed a little differently when it comes to film. According to Voss (2011) spectators become surrogate bodies. As spectators, we lend our three-dimensional bodies to the two-dimensional screen, which is how we become a “constituent feature of the filmic architecture” (145). In this somatic space of meaning, which our body has become for the film, desire moves in the diegetical and the non-diegetical levels of the film.

Beginning with the stereotypical, presumably authentic staging of sexuality of an elderly couple in *Wolke 9* (2008, Andreas Dresen) and moving on to *Vergiss mein nicht* (2012, David Sieveking), *Amour* (2012, Michael Haneke), *Et si on vivait tous ensemble?* (F/D 2012, Stéphane Robelin), and *Irina Palm* (2007, Sam Garbarski)<sup>4</sup>—we will develop a typology of desire,

which is built upon four categories. We call these: images of deprivation, images of imagination, images of retrospection, and images of incompleteness.

## DESIRE AND AGE(ING) IN *WOLKE 9*

In a shot-reverse-shot sequence we witness the sexual intercourse of two people. She sits on him, he lies on the floor. We see both faces in close-up. (Küpper, 2010a,b) states that in *Wolke 9* sex in old age becomes “kinofähig”—suitable for cinema. Andreas Dresen, the director, states that in his film he wanted to display the beauty and truthfulness of naturally aged bodies by displaying them without artificial changes: “so wie sie sind”—as they “really” are. This however is a paradox: instead of appearing artificial, the aged skin is supposed to appear with wrinkles and age spots. This, however, produces the notion of a naturally aged body, which in this moment demarcates the borders between the supposedly natural and unnatural (ibid.). Dresen’s intention to show bodies “as they really are” overlooks the fact, that bodies are always staged; even a natural appearing body is staged—it is staged as natural. Doing age happens through filmic strategies, which become materialized in our experiences. Film *per se* as a medium always already shows bodies as non-natural. Bodies in film are always staged by costume, lighting, make-up, editing, framing, sound, etc. In film, all bodies are staged no matter if it is a documentary style as in *Wolke 9* or a Hollywood’s aesthetic as in *Skyfall*. Stone (2013) describes embodiment of imagination, which is experience that becomes body or embodied. Film is an all-inclusive experience—visually, aurally, and kinaesthetically. Our imagination is stimulated by the moving image and the moving sound—their materialization becomes embodied in us. More precisely: they create us anew constantly—as the young and as the aged, as women and as men, as black and white, as homo and hetero.

This fact of embodied films requires thinking about the normative aspects of film. In *Wolke 9* sexual intercourse is (failed) heterosexual coitus or female masturbation, which appears only as a substitute and not a pleasurable act. There are no alternatives to heterosexual sex. The film does show aging bodies which are covered in wrinkles and age spots in dazzling bright light, yet this happens in a very traditional filmic method of presentation: certain body parts are put in the center of the image and therefore also the attention, other body parts are shown in close up. Dresen’s film is not different to other filmic sex acts with the one difference that it is not young but aged bodies, which engage in sex.

Obviously, this filmic performance calls for comparison with the filmic performance of young bodies engaging in sexual encounters. We claim here, that *Wolke 9* cannot fulfill its claim to create its own cinematographic aesthetic. There are no new or different filmic strategies for elderly bodies as one can often read in reviews of the film—instead elderly bodies find themselves in the same positions, the same setting and in the same performances in which young bodies are presented

produce desire. These film aesthetic strategies are composed of mise-en-scène, sound, cinematography.

<sup>4</sup>In our analysis we do not distinguish between documentary and fiction since what is important for our analysis is the film aesthetic strategies that show and



in sexual encounters. Sexual activity is portrayed as (failed) heterosexual penetration and female orgasm happens through masturbation, which is narrated as an act of compensation and not as a lustful performance in and for itself. The facticity of the shown undermines the intention to bring together age and desire because the film relies on stereotypical presentations of (hetero-)sexuality. This is not to say that aged people have a different sexuality to young people in general—quite the opposite—there are as many sexualities as there are sexual encounters. In *Wolke 9*, as we see it, one only finds a (hetero)normative and sexist portrayal of sexuality. There are no alternatives, no possibilities. There is no potential to think desire in old age with and through the film.

The portrayal of age and desire in *Wolke 9* claims to be authentic. Yet, film as an aesthetic product that is composed, arranged and designed cannot claim to be authentic. Film can present an offer for identification beyond the filmic experience *per se*. However, the disidentification of aged people with Dresen's film seems to support our argument (see Hartung, 2011). Yet, we do find filmic strategies in other films, which draft desire in old age as a possibility and with this also an initiation of agency or rather options of agency which are beyond stereotypical features. Therefore we do not pose the question of whether there can be an authentic representation of old age in film. We want to ask how film can portray desire in old age as a possibility and not as a stereotypical act that claims to be authentic.

## EMBODIMENT AND IMAGINATION

Stone (2013) describes the embodiment of imagination and especially of *ageist* Stereotypes as an important aspect of age in relation to disability. The more we assume and imagine to be less mobile, sicker, more forgetful in old age, the more likely it is that we will become it. Stone asks in this context “How much of our bodily experience is materialized as a result of our imaginations?” (68). For Stone it is first and foremost our imagination of how we will age that will become embodied. She describes how the experiences we make in our live materialize in our bodies. Film is one of the most comprehensive experiences—it is visual, aural, kinaesthetic, and therefore prone to become embodied and to materialize in us. Yet in our understanding, they do not just materialize temporarily, as Voss (2011) conceptualizes it in her theory on the spectator as a surrogate body for the film, but permanently. Doing age, doing gender and doing desire happens through filmic aesthetics, which materialize in our experience. Our imagination is stimulated by moving pictures and sound—they become embodied and create us anew constantly with every new film.

## IMAGES OF DEPRIVATION

The documentary “*Forget me not*” (*Vergiss mein nicht*) by David Sieveking from 2012 tells the story of Gretel who has Alzheimer and her husband Malte who takes care of her. In a medium shot and high angle from above, Malte puts his hand on Gretel and caresses her. When the camera shoots both from the side and

moves closer, one can sense desire emerging between the two. Something else, something more could happen now, more than the film is willing to show. This is about more than intimacy: this is about the recollection and the forgetting of desire and at the same time about the possibility and potentiality of future desire. What is not of interest for us here, is the question if there is an authentic representation of desire in old age but how the film designs and creates old age and desire as a possibility and simultaneously how it performatively creates an interconnection between past, present, and future—in the sense of a doing desire and a doing age.

## IMAGES OF IMAGINATION

The complexion of past, present and future is also to be found in *Amour*, a film by Michael Haneke. The film tells the story of an older woman and the care she receives through her husband. Here, in the constellation of old age, illness, and dying, desire seems to be impossible.

But where is the desire now? Is it not existent or not relevant anymore? Is it banned into long lost memory? Or maybe, as we suppose, it can be found in the imaginary scene at the end of the film, when the old couple leaves the apartment and thereby leave behind the corpse of the old woman decorated with flowers. Where do they go? Maybe into a new life, where desire is possible again? Maybe into a past in which they were a desiring couple. Maybe theses imaginary pictures also point to a new past in which they will have lived desire differently? The film does not show or tell us. It does not actualize these images which we want to name images of imagination. The film rather evokes their possibility in an imaginary space, which withdraws itself from the linearity of temporality. Something very similar happens in the film *And If We All Lived Together?* the original title in French is: *Et si on vivait tous ensemble?* by Stéphane Robelin from 2011.

## IMAGES OF RECOLLECTION

In *Et si on vivait tous ensemble?* (F/D 2011, Robelin) desire is also produced in the mode of recollection, yet not in the vein of imaginary images but real images. The film is about five older people who live together in a shared house. One of the women, Jeanne, talks about her sexual experiences from the past. She talks about her phantasies and preferences - for the future. Desire is evoked here in multiple occasions. Yet, it will not be actualized, at least not for Jeanne. There are a couple of short sex scenes for example between Annie and her husband Jean. One is filmed on a couch in a long shot. Both characters are shot from behind and filmed only shadowy. Predominantly however, desire happens retrospectively in the memory or as a vision of the future—therefore there is no actual visualization of desire in the film. In a longer sequence between Jeanne and her former lover Claude desire however is unambiguously insinuated. Both, Jeanne and Claude sit face to face on the couch, while Jeanne's husband Albert sleeps next to them. Claude takes picture of Jeanne while she poses for him in rather unmistakable poses.

In these images which we term images of recollection; we experience how the desire between Jeanne and Claude has been or rather how it could have been 40 years ago. And we sense what would have happened in the present, in the past yet also in the future. That means that the desire, which is built here is not discharged, it remains in its movement in the film and carries us through the film. In the last scene of the film—after Jeanne’s funeral—everybody searches for her together with her confused husband Albert. They call out for her in the park while the final credits are run over the film. Last but not least in our typology of images we want to discuss images of incompleteness—they show desire in a quite similar fashion—although in the predominant mode of unfulfillment.

## IMAGES OF INCOMPLETION

The British film *Irina Palm* (B/D/LUX/UK/F 2007, Sam Garbarski) tells us the story of Maggie who is looking for a job in order to pay for a surgery her grandson requires. Maggie finds a job in a sexshop, which pays rather well—after some hesitation she takes it on since time is precious. She becomes the “best hand” in town. While sitting in a cabin, she jerks off men through a hole in the wall. While this film deconstructs the image of younger women satisfying older men, here we are dealing with a grandma who is desired by younger men. The film thereby undermines stereotypical ideas of the desirable young female object by creating images who we want to call images of incompleteness. These images are primarily incomplete since they only show one side of the desire—in this case male desire.

Admittedly Maggie also feels desire. She falls in love with her pimp Miki and Miki falls in love with her. At the end of the film the image fades into black and into the exterior of the story—exactly at that point when the two admit their desire for each other. This desire therefore also remains incomplete and does not become actualized. We will remain uncertain of the future the two will or will not have together. The images remain incomplete and the desire is only hinted at and, for us, end in a fading to black when the credits come.

## POTENTIALITY OF DESIRE AND QUEERING PERSPECTIVES

In these films we have analyzed, the filmic generation of desire in old age happens always only through its potentiality, and not through its factuality. We read this in the sense of a subversive doing age/doing desire. The images we discussed create, as we

want to suggest an aging trouble by queering our anticipations and stereotypical expectations. Mainly by leaving us alone with our desire. These films leave us alone on the first level of desire, the desire between the characters in the narrative and on the second level of desire, that is the desire between us, the spectators and the film. Beyond a stereotypical sexuality in old age, a filmic desire emerges that actualizes itself aesthetically as well as narratively in the very images of desire as deprivation, imaginary, recollection, and incompleteness.

As has become apparent in our analysis of films, a typology of desire and age can be formulated, in which we see a queering potential of heterosexual desire in old age. However, our typology leaves aside filmic concepts of explicitly non-heterosexual desire and encounters. It also leaves aside other doings, such as doing class or doing whiteness. We therefore plead for opening our typology toward the inclusion of interdependencies of more intersections. The cultural production of moving images in film points toward new futures, they are able to create new worlds for us to experience. We live with and through them; change can become with the perception of new and different images.

In the context of ageism, the systematic discrimination of people due to their age, other forms of discrimination are to be considered, especially in their overlapping and mutual amplification. Especially in films such as *Et si on vivait tous ensemble?* (F/D 2012, Robelin) we find a doing bourgeoisie that needs analysing in relation to desire. In *Gerontophilia* (CA, 2013 Bruce La Bruce), a film about the desire between an old black man and a young white man, the doing desire intersects with several other doings. The analysis of such intersections and their materializations seems highly promising to us as regards the understanding of our embodiment as social beings through film. By analysing the desire between the protagonists in *Gerontophilia*, Eckert (2017) shows how the camera enables queer images and possibilities through a specific aesthetics that could be described as a queering symmetry between bodies, gazes, contacts, visibilities. By using this queering symmetry as a mode of thinking, the film presents new possibilities of the relationships between aging, gendering, desiring, and embodying. As regards the analysis of filmic aesthetics that subvert conventional images and create new image of age, gender, and desire we see great potential in films that do not just portray white, bourgeois and heterosexual desire but move beyond these limiting notions.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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