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# 1 Prologue

“Humans are part of the world-body space  
in its dynamic structuration.”  
(Barad 2003: 829)

“The future is not google-able.”  
(Gibson 2003)

The word prologue has its roots in the Greek πρόλογος *prologos*. πρόλογος combines πρό *pro* meaning ‘before’ with λόγος *logos* meaning “word” or “reason.” This subsequent information is provided before words strive to create reason and argue for one truth or another. The prologue exists outside of this book as a polished piece and yet it is the heart of it, as it invites the reader behind the curtain before the show. It shows wounds and inequalities. It removes illusions and articulates some of the pragmatic yet seemingly banal conditions under which this research had to work.

Between 2000 and 2018, components of this study have been stored in or on: nine countries, two storage units in the United States and Germany and a green Buick traveling north to Canada, two shipping containers (the first traveling from the US to Iceland and the second traveling back from Iceland to the US), twenty-eight recording tapes, seventy-two floppy disks in three colors, eight external hard drives, nine USB sticks, my mother’s under bed drawer, two filing cabinets (one of whose key broke off), one iPad, one Wal-Mart Tracfone, fourteen paper notebooks, an expensive Moleskin book (the kind Picasso would have used), eight drawing pads, seventeen basements (one which flooded twice), two attics, four MacBook Air laptops, five PC netbooks, and three institutional desktop PC computers that displayed six alphabets on their keyboards over all, accordingly to the six majority languages of the countries where the computers had been purchased. Each chapter of this study went missing or was lost once or twice at some point, was drafted in at least two languages, one in my brain and one on my fingertips. Currently in the US, my PhD paper copy library contains 204 books in English, German, French, Danish and Italian. The overall weight of these books is 168 pounds, which is more than one and a half times my body weight. All of these books have touched bookshelves that sat next to my desk in different countries. 143 of them came with me across the ocean, making it close to impossible to take many clothes during my travels. This list of storage locations is a selection. The list points to the material life of a PhD dissertation, which in Barad’s words is part of the world-body space of creation and thus a crucial part of what cultivates scholarly inquiry. The list provided above also points to the fact that while English

literature was available to me throughout this research, given my locations and furthermore the emerging field of my studies, publications in German were limited at the time of writing. Moreover, my institutional access to German publications was and is restricted even today. While residing in an English-speaking academic environment fostered the global nature of this study and schooled my English skills as a scholar, living in the western world and writing in a language that empowered colonialization hurt and limited this study. Furthermore, while I added to the German literature in the field with, for instance, with my 2005 publication titled *Verdeckte Spielräume biomedizinischer Forschung*, my international professional engagements in Europe, such as being a bioethics expert voice for the European Commission, had to be performed<sup>1</sup> in English, which is the majority language used in Europe to discuss the development of legal frameworks as they regard biomedical practice.

This study in various ways has become the skin I am wearing, the voice I am speaking, and the space that's always taken up when I need it. It is part of the reason for people to trust that I am an academic. I am a thinker and maker, discoursing – in the sense of walking – between languages, countries, institutions, homes, disciplines, people, voices, media, and fears; not always by free will. This study has literally ingrained itself in my body through the movement of my fingers on keyboards, the hesitant in-breath I take before speaking about this study, the hundreds of kilometers I carried the oftentimes too heavy material components of this study (including a metal sculpture), through airports, up and down mountains to writing retreats, to and from cars and trains, between lives I've lived ever since I started to have first a "PhD-companion" and later on, a book companion. Since September, 2000, when I spoke little English – insufficient to my thinking and to conversing – I've not spent a single day without this study in one way or another. When submitting the study this book is based upon as a PhD, I was still uncertain what a PhD was. This is also the case as not only what signifies a PhD study in process and appearance differs between countries, but also at German universities there are crucial differences. Having carried components of this study through discussions and reviews in colleges and universities in Germany, England, Cyprus, Iceland, Canada, Belgium, France, and the US, the only overlapping information I could identify was that a PhD dissertation introduces something that is new to the (scholarly) world. Introducing something new is a complex responsibility.

1 In both, German and English, the term performative has been used and framed differently in different disciplinary approaches. The use of the word perform(ed) and/or performance 'of' within this study takes its lead from discussions in art as they relate to acknowledging the performative force of any act. Thus, when using the word in relation to medical performances, I am also referring to the affects of the medical performances upon the experiences of humans, thus foregrounding the impact of the medical interventions.

The duration and journey the PhD that this book is based on took is unusual. During the last fifteen years, this study was exposed to collegial feedback from various disciplines. In parallel, aesthetic education (*Ästhetische Bildung*) and thus practice-led research strengthened and solidified its position in pedagogy and education. Stephanie Springgay, who is an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto at the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, and Rita L. Irwin, who is the head of Curriculum Studies at the University of British Columbia in Canada, emphasize that “Aesthetic inquiry is an ongoing active process that lingers in the sensual spaces of experience, simultaneously creating and disrupting meaning, being and becoming. Residing in-between and in the midst of these acts is not only an aesthetic experience, but more importantly, is an aesthetic inquiry of experience” (Springgay and Irwin 2004: 82). Thus with aesthetic education and aesthetic inquiry having strengthened their academic recognition in pedagogy and in related disciplines such as social work and educational sciences, scholarly contributions made (and this includes PhD studies) also may change the form of engagement required. This is so as scholarly engagement in the field of aesthetic inquiry includes the “aesthetic inquiry of experience,” especially sensory and embodied experience for readers of scholarly works as well (ibid).

Both the scholarly feedback that this study received over a long period in time, during which crucial developments in Reproductive and Genetic Technologies (RGTs) took place and the strengthened position of aesthetic education within pedagogy act as resources for the development of scholarly explorations this study can introduce. How these are introduced is a crucial component to the last chapter of this study, the conclusion, as it includes practical tools to engage various populations in an investigation of Leib<sup>2</sup> through embodied encounters and thus joins the canon of scholarly activities that strengthen the academic standing of aesthetic education in pedagogy. In doing so, this book offers components to engage with knowledge production processes that are beyond reading and thus thrive to investigate diverse ways of including populations who cannot access the possibility of expressing themselves through language.

## 1.1 Introduction

Nina Lykke’s edited volume, *Writing Academic Texts Differently. Intersectional Feminist Methodologies and the Playful Art of Writing*, published in 2014, brings together an interdisciplinary group of researchers and writers that speak to acknowledging the place(s) from which one writes, to processes of

2 *Leib* is a German term, the meanings of which will be introduced throughout this book.

making language one's own and to getting to "know a theory in an embodied way," to name just a few topics discussed in the book (Davis 2014: 178). Already in 1995, Elizabeth Grosz had pointed out that, "Bodies are thus essential to accounts of power and critiques of knowledge" (Grosz 1995: 32). Subsequently the embodied engagement and the researcher's body, factoring in its "cultivation," including for example *how* – with an accent, with grammatical differences etc. – a (research) language is vocalized are crucial matters to power loaded processes of knowledge production. Crucial to grasping the trajectory this study took (regarding the embodied researching and writing subject), is that I have been living in Germany, England, on Cyprus, in Iceland and in the US while researching. Thus, I have and had to continuously move between (academic) environments in which I did or did not speak the majority language at all or not as a native tongue, and environments in which some of my "disciplinary homes" did or did not exist, or had different disciplinary traditions and histories attached to them. During the time of my research and the writing of this study, I furthermore experienced forced mobility in the sense that choosing when to leave a geographical setting and thus an academic setting, and crossing a border and in consequence being separated from the (research) culture within it, was not always my choice but partly based on inhabiting various roles that added complexities to how I could conduct research. Such roles included being categorized as visiting non-immigrant alien without access to professional engagements etc. Thus my "personal condition" as a researcher, as Siri Nergaard puts it in a lecture in 2016, is "to inhabit the translational space from which to continuously contribute and add to the relationship between transformation,<sup>3</sup> interpretation and borders," with borders applying not only to geographical borders, but to borders between disciplines, languages, cultural modes of experiencing, listening, analyzing, valuing and so on (Nergaard 2016: lecture). Such adding and contributing from within the translational space is a component of what I introduce as new to the world. The act of adding newness happens in the following forms: playing with the meanings a word has, or using it, unaware that I use it in a non-traditional manner. Yet, my unawareness puts readers into the space where the traditional meaning of a word is questioned, re-weighted or expanded upon. The confrontation with an expanded or misinterpreted meaning of a word might guide readers to rethink the word and its use, including the political, cultural and social histories engrained in its utilization.

All areas of inquiries into researching and writing, as listed and reflected upon in Lykke's edited volume cited above, informed the methodological composition of this study as much as reading Michel Foucault did in the early years of this study, in that it allowed awareness of the researching subject as "the product of particular regimes of truth" (Foucault 1977). The subject

3 For Nergaard, this term includes the transformation of oneself in various cultural settings.

thus operates within historical, cultural, institutional, ideological, social and political mechanisms, which enforce particular discourses serving as “true” and powerful in certain times, locations and situations. Having to relocate often during this study consistently shook my work (as I had changed location, languages, modes of understanding, access to literature) and left me having to explain it to myself and to others over and over again. Eva Hoffman, although being in a very different situation, describes such experiences better than I could, stating that, “The reference points inside my head are beginning to do a flickering dance” (Hoffman 1989: 132). She continues describing displaced conditions of existence and of existing within a familiar language as, “[...] to remain outside reality itself [...] I have to shift in the innermost ways, I have to translate myself” (Hoffman 1989: 211). I came to understand that the only place to write this study from is the place that Nergaard calls the “in-between” or the translational space (Nergaard 2016). This space is the “contact zone” where boundaries are blurred and differences start to interact (Pratt 1991: 34). I would add that interactions are taking place in ways that are sometimes hard to grasp, as contact zones are filled with what I call “undisciplined interactions.” I understand the space that Nergaard calls “space in-between,” or what Mary Louise Pratt, in 1991, called the “contact zone,” and what I take a lead from to investigate “being in limbo” (in the closing pages of this book) to be greatly fertile. Pratt, defining “contact zones,” writes, “I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991: 34). I add that such spaces are unclaimed. Amid what Pratt calls “clashes,” processes of investigating conflict are neither here nor there and neither past nor future: they are pure chance; they are “being in limbo.” As an outlook, at the end of this book, I will suggest that “being in limbo,” as both, as relational and transitional *state* or *place* of uncertainty, can be habituated and ephemerally owned. I propose it as site for joined world-making. Until then I will be using Nergaard’s term “in-between.”

The only space to read this study from, is the space “in-between,” not only because it either exposes the reader to read a language that is not her, his or their first language or it exposes the native speaker of English to read a non-native speaker’s writing in English. In both cases, meaning establishes itself as language moves between actors.

One of the specific interventions that this study can thus provide is to make transparent that literally every chapter of this study was written in a different geographical, academic, linguistic, cultural and social setting over the duration of more than fifteen years, during which tremendous changes regarding interdisciplinary and postdisciplinary inquiries took place. During this time, I often caught myself rewriting and revising chapters over and over again, being unable to exit processes that Hoffman calls “to translate myself” (Hoffman 1989:



211). Submitting this study thus can be read as a professional experiment in interrupting processes of self-translation and instead creating “still images” of moving thoughts and bodies, as they are captured in words at a specific time in my scholarly life. Moreover, as transforming a PhD study into a book within the German framework does not allow for many changes, the content of this book inevitably hobbles behind newer thoughts and concepts I would rather investigate here, yet cannot.

Personal experiences shared here, such as they relate to forced mobility or writing in a foreign language, contributed greatly to my learning experience and to developing my own scholarly voice in the field, and they therefore are granted a space in this introduction.

### *1.1.1 Research Leading to this Study*

During the studies for my diploma in pedagogy at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University and for my women’s studies certificate from the Cornelia Goethe Institute in Frankfurt am Main, Germany between 2001 and 2002, I followed my research interest in issues related to reproduction and women’s sexuality, which had led to a master’s thesis in social work in 1998. In Frankfurt am Main it became clear to me that women’s reproduction in Western Europe is on the level of political discourses, ethical approaches, economic connections and strategies inseparable from the fast developing field of Reproductive and Genetic Technologies (RGTs) and biomedical research and practice, as far as both are impacting factors on how we conceptualize and experience being human and being humans with and near each other and within generational relationships and imaginations.

During 2002 and 2003, as part of my master’s thesis in pedagogy, I conducted twenty-six semi-structured interviews with women in Germany and the United Kingdom, fourteen of which were used to analyze and discuss the current impact of normative views about mothers in Germany and the UK. The interviews in the UK were made possible with the financial support of the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD), which allowed me to spend one semester as a visiting researcher at the Women’s Studies Department at Lancaster University, which is now the Centre for Gender and Women’s Studies. With Germany and the UK being the main sites of my research, I understood the interview material to provide insights into various theories developed and experiences had by my interviewees within these two socio-geographical settings. Thus, the focus of the study was not to compare the sites of my research as potential contradictory cultural settings, but to understand more about possibilities to work through various accounts by women about motherhood/mothering and RGTs. These possibilities were broadened not only by the bilingualism of the material and the wide ranging personal and professional