**Working title:**  *NOT AT HOME*

**General Introduction to the Script**

The discourse of/on love has been inscribed into the Modernity since its very beginning. More recently, in the last decades, Love has become a topic in the midst of *cultural industry*: from Hollywood, Bollywood and soap operas to music, novels and art exhibitions. There is no medium whether artistic or popular, where the topic of love has not been addressed. Love as universal theme is being exploited. Raped. Utilized. For constructing myths, or simply for enhancing careers. Artists reveal their private lives as intimate content for their art shows. This does not mean that we should completely abandon the topic of Love, quite on the contrary this cultural saturation and mystification demand from us to radically rethink the coordinates of Love and its effects. Surely, this also signals certain danger. It opens up a series of questions: how not to run the risk to seek for an idealized model that would counter the mainstream representation of love? In other words, how to go against the mainstream model of romantic myth (Platon), and how to avoid rendering Love as a commodity or love that would be simply equated with sex (porn), and at the same time how to avoid too much transparency? Doesn’t love have to do with intimacy? Doesn't love dissolve and disappear if it is dissected in front of our eyes, if it is examined too systematically?

Instead of continuing to write a theoretical treatise as an expected form of critical writing section, we decided to sketch a framework for a script (short film or feature film), in which we wish to trace the complexity of a love-relationship, how it is being reshaped and interwoven within the atmospheres of a new environment and interaction with the 'other'. It's a story of two immigrants and what holds them together. We decided to start with them arriving to a new city as this kind of situation challenges the habitual relationship between two people. They are cut off their safety net and both both require to adapt to a new environment and re-orient themselves culturally, economically and socially. It poses a great challenge as it reveals a discrepancy in style and pace of "integration". Many recent films in Europe reveal or thematize love between two protagonists, usually one Christian (European) and other Muslim (non-European), where we witness the retranslation of Huntingtonian clash of civilizations. Grave *culturalisation* and religious codes become more important than anything else. Usually, the story of ‘integration-love’ ends tragically (Shohada). On the other hand widespread contemporary criticism on established immigrant families portray the domestic violence or oppression as the only social tie within the immigrant family. It is not the portrayal of love or other human emotions but only religious codes (Theo van Gogh). As opposed to this mainstream representation we focus on the interplay of many aspects, tensions, which show how immigrant love is being reshaped by social conflicts, but also has a potential of reshaping the social relations, which it enters... It addresses how existing social and economical conflicts enter a love relationship and try to instrumentatlize and exploit a couple for their own advantage.

**Script - work in progress**

**1. Scene**/First day - *Airplane landing*: we see a young couple, in the mid of their 30s. Their hands are interwoven and they kiss with affection, as his gaze turns (camera focus) into the flatness of the Dutch polders transiting to the texture of Amsterdam’s suburbia. This gaze announces brightly a fresh new start. New country. New city.

2. *Schipol-Airport*: camera focuses on them struggling with their baggage, as they clumsily carry two carts piled with luggage. They are lost between signs and shining lights of Schipol-city, they can't find the way out. Very soon they are approached by a middle-aged Dutch couple, which in an almost perfect English, helps them out with finding an exit and searching for the transport. After seating, she tells him upliftingly- "What a warm welcome... now off to the flat that we got from your new company!”

3. A shot of new neighbourhood, a mixed population and a zoom into the *inside of their cosy home*: in a relaxed manner they open a bottle of wine, celebrating the arrival and warm up the food from his mother. They discuss - a tender caress from him is returned by her passionate kiss, which ends the scene.

4. Second day – *in the registration office*: as they were advised by his enterprise they should register upon arrival, so they walk to the registration office. After waiting one hour in the line they finally reach the window, through which they see a woman. She is speaking in Dutch. They explain that they do not speak any Dutch, they have just arrived and then the woman responds - in English - that she is not allowed to speak in any other language but Dutch, which is required by law. They can carry on speaking in English, but she can only reply in Dutch! (this scene as an encounter with linguistic Other, strictness of law and obedience of people). Further misunderstandings till the moment he discloses that he will work for an established Dutch enterprise. From then onwards the conversation becomes much more relaxed and they deal with the procedure swiftly (at moments even in English).

5. (Conflict 1) Scene *on the party*: He is successfully 'integrated' into the new working environment, whereas on the other side she is still looking for an employment. On the new year's party, he is praised by his colleagues how good he is improving the business relations with countries abroad, especially the ones where his native language is spoken. At some point one of his colleagues addresses her:

"And in what kind of business do you work?"

She replies "At the moment, I am without job, but..."

The work colleague intervenes even before she completes the scentence: "Ah, yes, I understand, I watched a documentary once, women in your country are well educated, but it's not common for them to work, right? And you don't have to! With such a hard working man!" (patting him on the shoulder).

She, surprised and speechless at these patronizing words, expected her partner to intervene - but he doesn't seem to have noticed any offense. At that point another person appears - the boss - and the topic is changed.

6. *After-party*: on the way home she asks her partner:

"Why haven't you said something? I am trying to get a job, it's hard enough, and then this guy even projects these stereotypes on me!"

He, a bit coldly, replies: "Maybe you should reconsider... I mean, what's so wrong about staying home? Have you noticed how many young women here prefer to stay home? The market doesn't offer enough work for everyone these days anyhow..."

*The initial friendship-love tie is 'damaged', solidarity between them is cracking, ego-drives gain importance on both sides. Tensions emerge but they try to reconcile.* She can't get rid of the upleasant feeling of having been treaten in an unfair way. And she lacks the feeling of support she usually gets from him. She looks at him. He says: 'There is nothing I want as much as wanting to be with you . If you just wouldn't be so nagging (ironically)'. She laughs. He continues 'Come on, let's not pay attention to what others say, we've never done that...' Arriving home they make love.

7. She is *invited to an interview* (office). It's a short-term project with a cultural association that works with immigrants, mostly dealing with public space, organizing events and art projects that facilitate ‘integration programs’. The association is interested in her as she represents a female educated immigrant and knows the language of the people they are aiming to address in some of their projects (The municipality supports integration projects, the funding for her job was granted to the association).

At the end of the interview the boss says "We are proud to have you on board - our priority is to empower women, especially those that come from oppressive countries!"

She leaves the new working place wondering how the last remark was meant, because where she comes from women are quite powerful and represented everywhere equally. But the confusion is quickly replaced by a feeling of happiness to get a job opportunity after months of tiring search and occasional work as a waitress in the local restaurant.

8. Effects of the economic crisis – a bad day for him in the company. His manager announces grave budget cuts and no further expansion of economic trade with abroad. He is made redundant. They thank him for the cooperation and will let him know once things look better. His short-time contract had just expired and legally he cannot pursue any further action to protect his position. Working hard for this enterprise and without any big sympathy in the eyes of his colleagues he leaves the office, shattered. Everyone is scared to lose their job; and they know the first ones to go are the immigrants.

When the door closes behind him, someone says in Dutch: "Well, at least we can speak in Dutch again!"

9. She arrives home and finds him contemplating in the living room.

"How come you are home already?"

He replies, annoyed, "How come you are not home earlier!? Where have you been?"

"Honey, it was a first full day at my work, you know, I was accepted for a cultural project for a few months, isn't that great, huh?"

He says: "We can stay one more month in the flat. They sacked me. We can start to pack our suitcases."

(silence)

"No way. We said we'll give it a serious try here. Now I found something here, it's my turn! You should start looking for something new!"

She comes over to caress him, but he turns away.

10. Simultaneously we see two montaged/edited scenes. In the first scene (bar, daylight) – camera zooms in the local pub with other men, most of them immigrant and unemployed. We see them drinking and smoking. We hear a small conversation:

"I'm seriously fed up, they treat me like a potential terrorist here. I haven't done anything wrong. It's just frustrating, sometimes I feel like imploding..."

“The job center tells me that we can't get job even in the construction industry, where am I supposed to go…”

In the second scene - we see her on a dinner (*nice restaurant*) with her Dutch boss:

 "Unfortunately, there are quite many challenges with the immigrant population in the Netherlands. Well, our project really aims making a big difference and especially women *like you* are indispensable for our team. The government invests a lot of money to solve the immigrant's issue. Well, we are a rich country, obviously many people want to stay here, we have to integrate them, make them like our culture... More projects like this are in the line, you know..."

Alienation between the couple grows, we see some small fights over household work (“You are oppressing me”) and the tension builds up…

11. Conflict II – at their home (conflict has intruded their relationship fully). After some dark days, he started thinking and breaking through the crisis. He is determined to find a new job or apply for social help, acknowledge he needs help (crisis of masculinity) We see him preparing dinner. She comes home, very tired and says ironically:

"And? How many drinks did you already have today? Guess you haven't been looking through the job offers today either, have you...?!"

"I'm sober. Just wanted to tell you that I will try to apply for social help because there are no jobs out there, at least none where I would be desired..."

"I told you that they have been cutting the budget - there is almost no social help anymore, it is not that easily to get, where the hell do you think you're living? You should find a proper job, the one that you had before... and also, you should not stay in company with other low-lifes around the corner…!"

That suffices for him to explode. "Nice tone you have there! Already sounds as patronizing as my former colleagues! Thanks for this support" He grabs his jacket and leaves the house.

12. Some days later *at home* - she arrives with the idea that he could get involved in the art-community project from her organization. This project deals with the immigrant situation and entitled “Accepting and empowering the Other”. They will organize a set of activities in their neighborhood, so he could help her with involving immigrants and taking part, there is no payment for it, but at least some social activity. He agrees unwillingly to participate in the project and gets involved. He hopes that he might find a job there, she hopes that she can help him.

13. Scene with artists in the *temporary gallery, former shop*: we see artists conducting short interviews with immigrants about their background, trying to see where integration does not work and why... They seem to concentrate on cultural issues.

*example of dialogue*

One-month project involves two major workshops: in the first part, it empowers people to combat stress (talk about their problems) and release the pressure (yoga etc.), whereas in the second part, immigrants learn some arty skills and work on the ‘installation of friendship' with artists. Each of immigrants should write on a small paper about their biggest fear and desire in the Netherlands.

(This scene shows the exhibition and commodification of social conflict – culturalisation. How well can they get integrated through yoga…?)

14. End of the project - artists and organization disappear from the local scene and immigrants go back to their own lives, back to bars and grey courtyards. She is left behind as well. Budget cuts actually influenced already this integration project. There was no real difference, just cosy friendly talk and socializing. No lobbying, no representation, no political struggle. Serious measures they couldn't afford and didn't aim for. Because that would need real long-term commitment.

15. Encounter with an immigrant who had participated, he asks where the artists are, and whether there will be some change in their situation?

"Will you let us know about the project, what will happen next? Will their real problems be discussed in the municipality or somewhere? Will there be a change? Are they going to discuss how to make sure we're treated equally for job vacancies?"

She knows that they will publish a book and that there will be an exhibition in some gallery in the centre. She realizes the exploiting nature of the project and that she was part of it. She is left behind, as the only one from the team - she's the immigrant and she's supposed to stay with the immigrants.

She was exploited, being a female immigrant. He was objectified being a male immigrant. She considers her role in facilitating the communication with other immigrants - she feels guilty. Problematisation of the immigrant-integration topic as the way to survive for artists, to make something - acceptance of the other (love for other through yoga etc.) - policy goal, which is not really effective for society but for their CV only.

16. After this - they restart – you see them *at home* conceptualising the establishment of the immigrant organization: from immigrants to immigrants that would promote solidarity and work on the real integration – establishing a language school, creating new jobs, educating politically…

Through this process, their love is being reshaped. In a way, one has this big feeling of the risk, whenever starting something new, one has to risk a lot – this being an experience of today inventing new jobs, starting new life, starting new love…

17. It ends with them sitting *in the office*, camera zooming in on both leaps as they say:

"We will stay here. In the Netherlands. Not only for some months. Not being separated. But together."

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