THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

FILM IN GERMAN PUBLIC HEALTH 1918-1946: CORPOREALITY, CRISIS, UTOPIA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA AND MEDIA STUDIES

BY

TYLER ALEXANDER SCHROEDER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2020

FOR FELIX, BECAUSE HE IS A GOOD BOY.

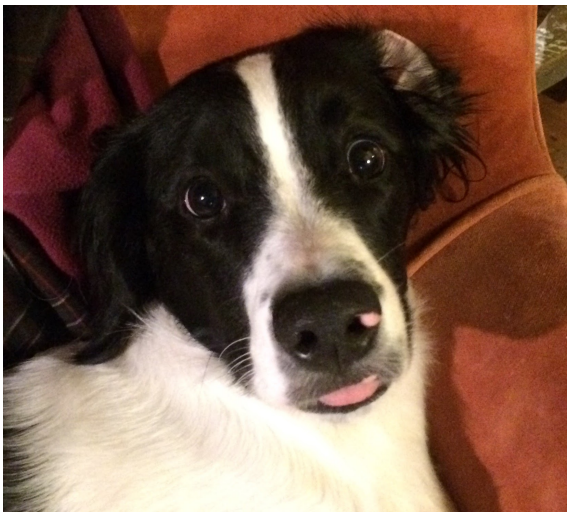

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My gratitude to the many people who made this dissertation possible is profound; unfortunately, so is my forgetfulness. I apologize in advance to those whom I inadvertently leave out of the following statements of thanks. Please do not think that your help and support was lost on me.

I finish this project with the support of a Mellon Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the University of Chicago's Division of the Humanities; the research in Germany for this project was made possible by grants and fellowships from the Department of Cinema and Media Studies, the Division of the Humanities, and the Arts, Science, and Culture Initiative at the University of Chicago, as well as by a short-term research grant from the DAAD. I owe a modicum of fiscal stability for the time after this project, and thus a modicum of mental peace and quiet in this project's final phase, to a Humanities Teaching Fellowship from Division of the Humanities at the University of Chicago.

To the members of my dissertation committee, D.N. Rodowick, Margareta Ingrid Christian, and Dan Morgan: it has been a privilege to work with you, and I thank you three for your careful feedback, unwavering support, and, most of all, for your patience. David and Dan have both been formative interlocutors and thoughtful readers for me and my work since I arrived at the University of Chicago, and have also been tireless advocates for me—most crucially, against my own self-doubt—as I've learned to inhabit academic culture. I can confidently say that without their shepherding I would not have managed to publish during graduate school, and would likely have formulated a much less ambitious, and less satisfying, dissertation project. They have been mentors in all aspects of my project of integrating academic life with the other occupations of a functional person—from reminding me to keep playing the

guitar to giving me lifesaving tips on how to be a parent. I began working with Ingrid more recently, around the same time (two years ago) as my son, Sam, was born—and like Sam's arrival, her presence reshaped and reinvigorated the way I pursued the project and my studies in general. Unlike Sam's arrival, I wish that it had happened several years earlier. Ingrid's thoughtful feedback and theoretical grounding in German Studies and art history bear significant responsibility for keeping this project vibrant through to the end.

Among the many other faculty members at Chicago who have left their mark on this project, I would like to forefront Tom Gunning, who was a member of my dissertation committee in its earlier years. The omnivorousness of interest that Tom brings to every conversation helped make me as passionately interested as I am in things as superficially dull as hygienic education. Through my entire time in graduate school, Tom has also had the frankness to help me recognize and begin dismantling my less productive habits of thought. Among present and former faculty at the University, I also owe my deep gratitude to Catherine Baumann, Nicholas Baer, Robert Bird, Margot Browning, Nadine Chan, Xinyu Dong, Allyson Nadia Field, Matt Hauske, Maeve Hooper, Patrick Jagoda, Florian Klinger, Jim Lastra, Julie Marie Lemon, David Levin, Richard Neer, Eric Santner, Salomé Aguilera Skvirsky, Jacqueline Stewart, Takuya Tsunoda, and Jennifer Wild. These people have read my work and listened to my thoughts (perhaps on this project, perhaps on another); have guided me on how to become a teacher and advisor; have given me professionalization assistance; and have otherwise contributed meaningfully to my becoming whatever it is that I've now evidently become. I would also like to thank a group of people at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library and Special Collections Resource Center (SCRC) for providing me patient advice on the prospects of seeking

a career in academic librarianship and archives, and for making possible a fascinating internship at the SCRC: Eileen Ielmini, Allyson Smally, Nancy Spiegel, and Sarah Wenzel.

Beyond the University of Chicago, I would like to thank a number of other faculty, historians, and archivists who have been formative for this project: Gudrun Fiedler, Sara Hall, Stephanie Jost, Anton Kaes, Anja Laukötter, Philipp Osten, Bettina Pfotenhauer, Marion Schneider, Philipp Stiasny, Tim Storch, Katie Trumpener, Michael Wedel, and Nicolai Zimmermann, who have all generously shared feedback, encouragement, and resources that left significant traces upon this project's final shape. Many of them spent hours speaking with me as I sought the contours of this dissertation. I am also deeply grateful for opportunities I have had to receive peer and faculty feedback on this project and ones related to it in the Mass Culture and Animal Studies workshops at the University of Chicago and the monthly Cinepoetics workshop at the Freie Universität in Berlin.

The colleagues, friends, and loved ones, and passing acquaintances are legion whose reading of draft materials, frank critiques, encouragement, and wide-ranging conversation is woven into this dissertation and into the fabric of my scholarly identity. Here is a non-encyclopedic attempt to list them: Chris Carloy, Will Carroll, Hannah Frank, Jake Fraser, Eldad Ginossar, Matt Hubbell, Bill Hutchison, Ian Bryce Jones, Tien-Tien Jong Zhang, Katerina Korola, Mikki Kressbach, Noa Merkin, Nicole Erin Morse, Andrew Pettinelli, Thomas Pringle, Jordan Schonig, Sarah Schroeder, Masha Shpolberg, Aurore Spiers, Amy Stebbins, Pao-Chen Tang, Traci Verleyen, Andrew Vielkind, Ella Wilhelm, Panpan Yang, and Ling Zhang. Thanks also to Susan Snapp for her tireless help in staying the course.

I am also indebted to several important people at my undergraduate alma mater, Hendrix College. I would not have found Film Studies without the mentorship of Kristi McKim. I would

not have gone to graduate school without the selfless help, generous writing and careful feedback of Dorian Stuber, Kristi McKim, and Wayne Oudekerk. I would not have come to the German language without Wayne Oudekerk and Marianne Tettlebaum. You have all enriched my life immeasurably.

The memory of Hannah Frank reminds me that rigorous scholarship is only worthwhile if it forms one of many ways in which one expresses one's playfulness, generosity, curiosity, and kindness. In neither the quality of my work nor of my person do I approach her, but where Hannah's been, there's hope. Thanks, too late.

A number of my extended family members in Germany lodged or visited me as I performed my research there, and their company made those trips all the more delightful and interesting. Thanks to Adelheid von Herz, Christiane Bernert, Gerrit and Paula Schröder, Inge and Lennert Maier and their children, Monika and Martin Frey and their children, and Jan and Franzi Schröder and their children. Svea-Patricia Kammer's little apartment in Berlin-Tempelhof served as my home base for much of my time in Germany, and the friendship we developed over tea and good meals there is one of the best things to come out of this project.

The most important people for the very last. I won't begin to try describing their contributions. Sarah Schroeder; Sam Schroeder; my parents, Peter and Maura Schroeder; my grandparents, Jan Walter and Maria Schroeder and Peggy and Joseph Baumann; my aunts and uncles; my parents-in-law, Randy and Denise Fesmire, and my sister-in-law, Mary Moser. I love you all.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that media practices and communicative technologies in modern hygienic education—and the media objects they are used to create—are assessed for their "hygienic value:" whether and how they function as useful practices for bringing about circumstances conducive to the corporeal thriving of human beings. How such thriving is defined, and how it is connected to information practices, varies based upon the political and institutional discourses in which the media object has been made, the dispositions of those individuals with deciding power over the form and fate of the object, and the particular public health issues that the object is made to address. This dissertation works primarily with the medium of film in the national context of Germany, roughly from the end of the First until the end of the Second World War. The first chapter offers a prehistory of modern hygienic media discourses in the German-speaking context, surveying parallels between information and other essential resources, like clean air and sunlight, in encyclopedic and instructional texts associated with the social hygiene movement and with paraprofessional folk medicine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The second chapter studies the written archives left by three lost films from the 1920s, each of which differently illuminates the relationship between centralized public health administration, the regional and economic heterogeneity of interwar Germany, a rapidly developing set of film practices, and the illnesses and forms of personal health associated with modernization. The third chapter studies how a 1936 film on dental hygiene—an oddity in a period when the public health discourse was being forcibly redirected to serve the eugenic goals of so-called "racial hygiene"—both fused personal hygiene with fascist aesthetics and antagonized the *Reich* Office for Educational Film by circumventing its distribution and

exhibition structures, eventually earning a *de facto* exhibition ban. The fourth chapter works with two of the first films to be made on German soil after the war—both made by Soviet occupying authorities in the ruins of Berlin in order to spread public health messages about combating diseases associated with primitive postwar living conditions—examining in particular how these films and their associated archival traces document the ways in which postwar imperatives of infrastructural rebuilding and salvage also applied to human bodies. Across these studies, successive governmental and professional bodies—of hygiene educators and policymakers in the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, and one post-World-War-II occupational administration—negotiated whether and how the relatively new and costly medium was to be implemented to serve the political and administrative goals those governments understood as addressing public health.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is dedicated, in general, to public health messaging. It deals with texts and images meant to shape public opinion in such a way as to encourage or induce members of a population to engage in certain actions in the spaces for which they have responsibility. The public is to understand these actions as yielding the eventual reward of improved or protected health, which may manifest itself on a personal level, a collective level, or both. Philipp Sarasin has noted that Western hygienic discourse since the 18th century places the human body, as a material thing, in a mediating capacity: it is something that a subject "has" and must learn to control.[1] In this vein, the present dissertation recognizes hygienic practices as sets of activities in which one becomes particularly aware of the interplay between one's body, the bodies of others, and other elements of the material environment that they share.

In particular, this dissertation concerns itself with the changes and possibilities introduced into practices of public health education by the implementation of film as an educational technology. It does so in the national and cultural context of Germany. That country offers, first, a national cinema with a robust tradition of early educational and documentary film. Second, it offers immediate proximity to the great political upheavals of the early 20th century in the Euro-American context (World War I, financial crises including the Great Depression, the National Socialist usurpation of power, World War II, and the post-war order polarized between state socialism and [neo-]liberalism). Third, the crimes against humanity that occurred in Germany under National Socialism mean that country offers a particularly powerful historical stage for

1. Philipp Sarasin, "The Body as Medium: Nineteenth-Century European Hygiene Discourse," trans. Brian Hanrahan, *Grey Room* 29 (2007): 51.

following the strategies by which the lives and bodies of human beings are afforded, and stripped of, value. I also came to this topic in an attempt to combine intellectual investments in the everyday and mundane practices of modern life and in the borderlands between science, medicine, art, and literature with my disciplinary homes of film studies and German culture and literature. As a result, I intend for my case studies to yield some conclusions about the intertwining of image technologies, health policy, and intimate personal and domestic practices that are unique to this German context, and some that can be generalized beyond it.

In order for hygienic activities to be conceivable and teachable in a broad fashion, they must be subject to practices of representation, recording, and modeling. If hygiene itself is a creative practice that an organism carries out in space in order to continue the work of producing and reproducing itself, then its pragmatic status is similar to that of an artwork, text, or other inscription. Hygiene becomes something like what Henri Lefebvre describes as the social production of space, insofar as it describes sets of ways of inhabiting and perceiving a bounded material environment: "The space of any...society might justifiably be described as a 'work.' The ordinary meaning of this term, as applied to an object emerging from the hands of an artist, may very well be extended to the result of a practice on the place of a whole society. As for a village—or a particular countryside—how could it not fall into this category?"[2] Hygiene is a manner of habitation and comportment, a set of practices for thinking about one's body or the bodies of others as existing within a shared material environment. It is also a set of practices for performing the labor involved in concerning oneself with the intimate affairs of the bodies in

2. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 412.

question. These parallels between the creative qualities of pedagogical poetics, aesthetic traditions, and corporeal habits form the guidelines along which this dissertation works.

Hygiene can also be a matter of making "works," more explicitly: the didactic labor of articulating and regulating norms and optimal practices by which the hygienic task ought to take place, as these tasks are mediated by material objects like posters, literature, museum exhibits, and films. Two types of objects thus come into view, two categories of material places where productive work is undertaken. Hygiene may take place at and around the productive site of the body, where actions and circumstances add up to good or poor health. It may also take place in and around a didactic text, image, or address, a public communicative instance that transmits knowledge pertaining to bodily hygienic practice from the expert to the public sphere (and also transmitting, of course, all the ideological and conventional overtones of the milieu). The body and the text are only provisionally bounded things; each is porous and embedded within a complex material environment, one that is indifferent to hygienic normativity and that promotes or detracts from the tasks of hygiene accordingly. They are both sites of production within contingent environments.

I also wish to emphasize the way in which the body—when one is thinking about bodies, when one's pragmatic goal of health is to be attained by hygienic practice in and around the body—organizes its environment around itself. This is perception in Lefebvre's understanding, and the root of the notion of spatial practice he proposes: "The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body, even though it so metamorphoses the body that it may forget it altogether...the genesis of a far-away order can be accounted for only on the basis of the order that is nearest to use—namely, the order of the body. Within the body itself, spatially considered, the successive

levels constituted by the senses...prefigure the layers of social space and their interconnections."[3] The environment that is created by a given society, Lefebvre claims, is experienced and navigated in a way that mimics the articulations of the human body. It can thus be thought of as a material register that constitutes bodies and envelops them: bodies contain, constitute, and contribute to environments whose scales range from the molecular to the cosmic.

The relative arbitrariness of my dissertation's practical boundaries is not something I intend to disavow. There is no more intrinsic connection between Western hygiene and the medium of film than between it and any other aesthetic or communicative practice. The hygienic precepts in play, on the one hand, and the impulse toward documentary and pedagogical adoption of new media, in the other, were not qualitatively different in Germany than they were in any other Western context; Germany is merely one of the places where these issues interacted in a way that left thick material traces. Finally, the archival materials that I draw upon for this dissertation have confirmed to me that film was—particularly due to the costs and efforts involved in filmmaking, distribution, and exhibition—a relatively marginal technology in the repertoire of German hygienic educators. Accordingly, I find little convincing basis upon which to claim that hygienic educational practices left extensive marks on Western filmmaking culture more broadly, nor that educational filmmaking radically changed the course of those heterogeneous 20th-century Western cultural practices that found themselves under the semantic umbrella of "hygiene." The most potent historical and aesthetic linkages, such as the proximity of the Weimar *Kulturfilm* milieu to the National Socialist work of Leni Riefenstahl (particularly

3. Lefebvre, 405.

an aesthetic pipeline of athletic bodies between 1925's *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* [dir. Nicholas Kauffmann and Wilhelm Prager] and Riefenstahl's 1930s productions) or to films promoting eugenics like *The Inheritance* (*Das Erbe,* 1935, dir. J. C. Hartmann) are already amply illuminated in the scholarship.

The scholarly value of this dissertation will therefore be made or broken on the relevance of the ephemeral. This is where the third term in the dissertation's subtitle comes into play. Utopia's etymology, of course, reminds us that it is no place at all, taking up as much space in material reality as one of the lost films in Chapter 2. But utopias—literary, political, or religious—tend to engender archives. They leave material traces in substances as diverse as scripture, published literary works, loose office paper, or, indeed, human bodies. The material archive of Thomas More's utopia is neatly packaged and labeled for what it articulated. The material archive of Eugen Steinach's dream of reversing human aging was partially written in ligated spermatic cords in the bodies of laboratory rats and human beings. The material archive of the totalitarian folk utopia envisioned by the National Socialists contains too many corpses to be contemplated.

Having fled Hitler to American exile, Ernst Bloch wrote in *The Principle of Hope* of the utopian desires, dreams of "the ultimate rebuilding of the body" and indeed "the abolition of death," that subtend and shape even the most rational practices directed at intervening in human health: "We may finally risk the proposition that precisely because the doctor, even at the individual sick-bed, has an almost crazy utopian plan latently in view, he ostensibly avoids it."[4] The ordinary practices of modern medicine, Bloch surmises, are focused upon controlling

4. Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 465.

damage and reversing the development of symptoms. Yet they carry within themselves, if only through negation, a radical desire to transcend the received structures of the human condition.[5] The effect of Bloch's use of "utopia" as a medical topos is to provide a common background against which the full spectrum of health interventions can be viewed and compared: from quack healing ("ignorant wishful thinking...the worst kind of utopianism") to the inherited Stoicism of the modern European medical mainstream ("[trust] in the natural course of things") to population politics (Bloch's critique of Malthus, and endorsement of social hygiene, in his discussion of "hygiene and environment").[6] In my project, Bloch's medical utopia guarantees the relationship between hygienic activities (especially ones which are as mundane as daily routines, as bureaucratic as film distribution, or as indirect as resource apportionment) and the negotiation of life and death. Put differently, it helps me to state that, in order for an object or process (say, filmmaking) to be assigned hygienic value, it must, through however long or short a series of relays, relate to such a radical existential question.

I thus argue that personal hygiene couples mundane activities undertaken in intimate space to the limits of human conception—to the binary of life and death, by way of sickness and health. Its parameters thus frame experiences of the utopian by ordinary people experiencing some minor degree of personal control over the finitude of their own existences. The political and scientific actors who promulgate, endorse, or foreclose upon those parameters—not only visionary physicians like Rudolf Virchow at the Berlin *Charité* in the mid-19th century, but also mid-level government bureaucrats like Dr. Curt Sander of the *Landesverein für Volkswohlfahrt* (Regional Association for Social Services) in Hanover in the 1920s or Dr. Kurt Gauger of the

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 463-64, 468-69.

Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (*Reich* Office for Teaching Films) in the late 1930s—accordingly appear in the archive as people who, at some level, understood themselves to be making it their daily, prosaic business to mediate between ordinary living and the fearsome binary of life and death. The connections to Arendt's "banality of evil" here are, in the context of Nazi "hygiene," immediate and literal—and, in general, illustrate the profound moral force that hygienic language can exert in yoking the incomprehensible significance of living and dying to profoundly (and profanely) comprehensible artifacts and places like toothbrushes, outhouses, and indeed cinema screens. This dissertation endeavors, first, to preserve and give some shape to ordinary peoples' oblique experiences of extraordinary value in the most profane of circumstances. Secondly, it aims to show the ways in which those experiences were transformed by the introduction of a new technology into the administration of bodies (i.e., of film into hygienic education)—even if this administrative coupling of the image-technological to intimate corporeality and domesticity left few pertinent traces in either the historical records of film or of medicine.

In so doing, my scholarship seeks to expand upon several fruitful tendencies in the present scholarship at the intersection of film and media studies and the history and philosophy of science and medicine, both historical and theoretical. For example, I hope to complement the extensive work of Anja Laukötter, Christian Bonah, Philipp Osten, and Ulf Schmidt on the subject of film and medicine in Germany by introducing new case studies that refer to the historical protagonists and institutions described in their work. In addition to furnishing meticulous historical accounts, these scholars have also thought rigorously about the place of affect and emotion in pedagogical media; in my chapters, I attempt to build outward from these

discussions both by invoking utopian paradigms and by opening out affective markers like disgust to be useful in 20th-century technological and architectonic spaces like the ruined postwar city.

Similarly, my work has been inspired by that of Scott Curtis, especially since he and I both work extensively with the cultural distinctions between individuals who understood themselves to be responsible for other individuals (in his terms, "experts") and the lay people who were the ostensible targets of pedagogy in the cinema. I hope to complement his study of the relationship between image technology and "expert vision" by bringing a new crop of experts into the equation—these ones less prominent historical figures than busy bureaucratic functionaries who did much of the textual labor of making hygienic visions communicable.

As my use of Lefebvre in organizing my working definition of hygiene makes clear, I also also indebted to the theoretical studies loosely grouped around the notion of "milieu," ranging from Jakob von Uexküll to Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Margareta Ingrid Christian, that think space in terms of lived environments. Hygiene, to me, is both an intimate practice taking place between organism and environment and a set of ways of writing about and depicting spaces of living that is scalable from the single organism up to the "people" or nation (the largest manifestation present in my study) or beyond. I hope to join the conversation between these thinkers by deriving from my constellation of body, bureaucracy, and film technology a new set of possible interfaces for refining relational, experiential theories of space and place.

Finally, the contours of my approach are native to the media-studies landscape after Friedrich Kittler. I have particularly taken to heart Kittler's way of looking at the archive of the world: that what happens to have been made manifest in writing or other archival media is significant, foremost, as what David Wellbery calls "inscription, in its contingent facticity and

exteriority."[7] It is also informed by Bernard Stiegler—especially by the guiding impetus of his *Technics and Time*, which reads utilitarian objects as historical and evolutionary texts with immediate bearing upon the nature and definition of the human.[8] Unsurprisingly, Heidegger also makes his presence known here—for the applicability of his ambivalent theories of technology, for how he combines technology and work with critiques of modern and premodern spaces and places, and for the reactionary anxieties that compromise both his intellectual legacy and the legacy of *Kulturfilm.*

With the exception of the first chapter, which works not with films, but with published texts on human health from the 19th and 20th centuries, the case studies to follow derive their contours from those of the archival material I have consulted. Some clarification is therefore necessary on the research methodology, decisions, and practices that shaped that archival work, as well as on the fit between those archival chapters and the first chapter.

I performed the exploratory and substantive research and viewing for this dissertation over a three-and-a-half year period from mid-2016 to early 2020. During this time, I travelled to Germany seven times, usually for a period of two to three weeks. The majority of this time was spent in Berlin, and most of the time there at the Bundesarchiv. I also traveled repeatedly to Dresden, where I immersed myself in the archival records, institutional culture, and film productions (from the 1920s through the history of the German Democratic Republic) of the

7. David Wellbery, "Foreword," in Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900,* trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), xii.

8. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1:175.

German Hygiene Museum with the enthusiastic guidance and encyclopedic knowledge of institutional historian Marion Schneider. The comparative paucity of Dresden-sourced archival material in this dissertation belies the importance of that city, and the time spent there, to the framing of this product and the seeding of my interest in modern German hygienic culture. The material I collected and conversations I had in Berlin and Dresden—with particular emphasis, once again, on Marion Schneider—guided me toward using the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung* (*Reich* Committee for Hygiene Education; hereafter referred to simply as "*Reichsausschuss*") as the bureaucratic spine of my Weimar chapter (and its post-1933 successor, the *Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst* [*Reich* Committee for Public Health Service], as a vital search term for gathering material for my Nazi chapter).[9] Seeking material on these two organizations beyond the ample depositions at the Bundesarchiv and the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, I began seeking out *Bundesland*- and city-level archives across Germany with holdings on hygienic education. I visited those sites that seemed most promising from afar, based upon online searchability and my contact with archivists, limited by what was feasible to incorporate into my research itineraries. I finally gathered material from state and city archives located in Potsdam, Munich, Weimar, Erfurt, Gotha, Hannover, Hamburg, and Stade. Regrettably, the vast majority of this regional material could not be incorporated into this project directly; however, it performed the important function of calibrating my sense of which films and projects were being discussed and advertised widely during the period, enabling a more judicious selection of case studies, and creating a more

9. For extensive context on how committees like these fit into the topology of the Weimar-era *Reichsgesundheitamt,* and on the organizational history of the latter, see Axel C. Hüntelmann, *Hygiene im Namen des Staates. Das Reichsgesundheitsamt 1876-1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008).

realistic picture of how important film was (and wasn't) to projects of hygienic education and how important hygiene was (and wasn't) in the landscape of educational film.

Looking through the archives for instances in which the records and interests of public health and film overlapped provided me with a relatively efficient path through the archives. By seeking out instances in which the comparatively rare and expensive medium of celluloid film was deployed in the interest of public health—and then swinging my scalpel in a wide arc in an attempt to acquire a fulsome picture of the various instances of writing, speaking, and other communicative work to which the films were connected—I hope to have found a somewhat logical way of reducing the issues with which I am concerned to a practical size for a book. Sifting through the materials I had collected, I selected films for closer study by comparing their prominence in those materials (in terms of frequency and diversity of reference and/or of the length and reflexive potential of those references) to their presence in the scholarship of which I was aware.

The first chapter lays out a vision of hygiene that takes the theoretical points I articulated in this introduction—modern hygiene as social spatial practice, or as a particular mode of interaction between organism and environment—and reframes them in the historical textual context of public health manuals, studies, and encyclopedias that had arisen since the Enlightenment. The social-hygienic school of thought following Max von Pettenkofer came to be of particular interest, because it depended upon thinking about hygienic problems in everyday terms and through everyday practices that were easily conceivable to laypeople. By the end of that chapter, I will have set up a sharpened and historicized version of hygiene that portrays it as conscientious work with shared resources. This framing allows me to figure hygienic and

educational information as a resource of the modern human ecosystem, much like light, water, or air, in the following chapters.

The process of selecting film case studies for the Weimar chapter was quite difficult. In order to discuss the films *Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande* (*Malchen, the Innocent Country Girl*, 1921, dir. Alexander Erdmann-Jesnitzer) and *Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer* (*Majanka the Fly and her Adventures*, 1926, Kraska-Film Berlin) at the kind of length their representation in the archive deserved, as well as to make note of the late-1920s curiosity of a proposed color film project, I have had to leave out a number of other worthy subjects. These include films like *Krebs* (*Cancer,* 1930, Verlag wissenschaftlicher Filme), the first film production of the German Hygiene Museum, *Lustige Hygiene* (*Merry Hygiene*, 1927-32, Excentric-Film Zorn & Tiller), a brilliant series of semi-animated shorts, and *Falsche Scham* (*False Shame*, 1925, dir. Rudolf Biebrach), one of the canonical sex-education films of the period and a rare instance of feature-length crossover success. All three of the latter objects, however, have received capable scholarly attention—ranging from a paragraph or two to an edited collection—although they certainly deserve more.

As that chapter will note in more detail, I chose the focus for my chapter on National Socialist film—which handles a single film—for two reasons. The first is to highlight one of the comparatively rare pieces on classic personal hygiene made in a period in which so-called "racial hygiene" took propagandistic precedence. The second is because that film, *Lebende Werkzeuge* (*Living Tools*, 1936, UFA) caused the central National Socialist organ for distributing instructional film, the *Reich* Office for Teaching Films (*Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm*), more irritation than any other as the toothpaste company that produced it constantly attempted to thwart that organization's hierarchy in order to have its advertising-heavy dental hygiene film

shown in schools and similar venues. Having come across a memorandum on this topic in the Landesarchiv Berlin, I was pleasantly surprised to learn of a published two-volume set containing the annotated memoranda of the *Reichsstelle*, edited by Malte Ewert, which quickly made its significance in the latter respect clear by indexing several more references to this film. The focus on this film is not intended to circumvent the problem of Nazi eugenics as a grievous misapplication of the term "hygiene" and a significant source of subject material for the Nazi propaganda cinema. Instead, it hopes to supplement the scholarly record on pro-racial-hygiene media with an example that not only contains implicit references to the eugenic project but also, and more importantly, shows that the hygienic bodily ideals of Nazi Germany were propagated by heterogeneous entities, could be litigated in service of body parts as "politically" neutral as the teeth, and could still fail to reach the status of official cultural discourse if their media articulation circumvented the necessary political systems.

Finally, I came to the two postwar films in the last chapter, *Fleckfieber droht!* (*Typhus threatens!,* 1946, dir Hans Cürlis and Fritz Dick) and *Seuchengefahr* (*Epidemic Danger,* 1946, dir. Hans Cürlis and Fritz Dick) from the Soviet zone, in light of learning that these were the earliest German-made public-health film productions (in fact, possibly the first German-made non-newsreel films) shot after World War II. They were made under Hans Cürlis, a filmmaker active since the 1910s, notably in the *Institut für Kulturforschung* during the Weimar years. The production quality and *Trümmer* aesthetics of these films, as well as the availability of both published and archival materials documenting the circumstances of their production and the fact that they served within multimedia messaging campaigns (referencing these campaigns in their narratives and mise en scène), convinced me that these films required more significant scholarly attention than the fleeting mentions they have now. That they remain extant only reinforced this

point. In the interest of focusing this chapter upon a particular set of bureaucratic shaping factors—in this case, the Soviet-style structures of authority being constructed in the Zone at the same time these films were being made—I chose not to expand this chapter to include hygienic films made under the auspices of the Western allies, although the hygienic educational contexts of those zones require examination in similar depth.

The immediate aftermath of the war concludes the time period with which this study occupies itself. I chose this limit not only for reasons of focus, but also because I intend for this version of the dissertation to coincide roughly with the forms of European thought about corporeality and technology that led up to, and through, the particularly German manifestations and contortions of modernism. The last chapter, rather than looking forward to the beginning of the postwar order, is still involved in sifting through the debris of everyday life and life-sustaining technologies in the old one, reckoning with a rather singular case in which a modern Western technological society was bombed, in many places, back out of modernity.[10] Events from the year 1949 and thereafter, the parallel development of two German nations from the period of the BRD's *Wirtschaftswunder* onwards, feel as if they would warrant a new volume. The German Democratic Republic, and the film production projects of the revived German Hygiene Museum, provide a particularly vibrant tradition of health-oriented film and television production. When I begin that volume, it will likely focus upon the increasing convergence of hygienic discourse and commercial (or socialist para-commercial) and nostalgic aesthetics and messages, especially with the advent of television.

10. Thanks to Jake Fraser for suggesting this description.

CHAPTER 1

INFORMATION CULTURES OF HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ELEMENTAL: STUDIES FROM THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

The archival case studies in the chapters to follow trace a nebulous question—what is a human body, and what does it mean for such a body to be healthy or sick, in recent European history?—into a tributary that can be investigated on a minute and specific scale. Namely, they address the places where human health and sickness were fashioned as commodities and norms that could be communicated to lay audiences through the medium of moving images, doing so in the investigative context of a single cultural and linguistic realm, modern Germany. The first question parallels fundamental epistemological problems of the history of science, as problematized by Foucault in *The Order of Things*—how are the very notion and architecture of the human body as a knowable thing to be historicized?—whereas the questions I pursue in the archive display a fixation upon the contingent and mundane: how do technological changes, like the inclusion of narrow-gauge film in the repertoire of provincial German health educators, become written down in the official textual apparatuses responsible for propagating popular understanding of how and if bodies and their conditions ought to be valued, and how do these textual phenomena change the course of those expert and popular judgments?[11]

The present chapter endeavors to bridge these two questions by seeking confluences between the tools and method of media studies and the epistemic precedent that shaped the official and public imaginations regarding health in the early 20th century. In particular, it finds

11. See esp. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Vintage, 1994), 312–18, and the introduction to Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), .

in the intellectual history of hygiene in modern Germany preoccupations with the *environmental* that would seem akin to the guiding problems of media studies: the notion that organisms are woven into impersonal structures that facilitate or hinder the transmission of *materials* that are relevant to those organisms and that modify their ways of being. These "things" might be pathogens, they might be critical resources, or they might be propaganda; the structures within which they circulate might be as specific and trackable as a regional clearinghouse for public-health teaching materials, as ideological as the demographic mapping of a population for the purposes of an official positive or negative eugenics, or as ephemeral as the shared air of a city.

In fact, examples of the latter variety—of communal, hygienically-charged "elements" like water, natural light or, especially enduring in the German hygienic imagination, air—will form the guiding figures for this chapter, as they allows for supple engagement with the mid- to late-19th-century hygienic texts that compose the relevant literature. Air has been variously theorized as a medium for sensory information, notably as the Newtonian "ambient medium," a term "used for the practical purpose of emphasizing the immediately surrounding element of any given substance."[12] Air as "medium" has also been recently been brought under the auspices of art history and aesthetics by Ingrid Christian in her study of ethereal language in the writing of Aby Warburg, and under those of media studies by John Durham Peters, who uses the legibility of changes in the air to ground his theory of "elemental media."[13] *Pace* Peters, I should note: by bringing the air, as it serves as an element of the German-language hygienic imagination, into

12. Leo Spitzer, "Milieu and Ambiance: An Essay in Historical Semantics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3, no. 1 (September 1942): 40.

13. John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

alignment with a cinema explicitly cast as an information technology, my priority is not to continue expanding the already-overcrowded stable of possible objects for media studies, but instead to conceptualize ways in which traditional technological media can pervade lived environments in the ways of elemental and ambient matter. With Christian, I find that the cultural significance of elemental language—of air, water, light, and the like—in Western aesthetics cannot be dissociated from the physical and material resonances of those materials.[14] The hygienic literature provides a context in which the aesthetic and ethical resonances of the elemental can be studied directly alongside those elements' nature as physically present and biologically available substances. The air is made legible to the human imagination, both as an encompassing material and a carrier of visual, auditory, olfactory information, as well as a component of weather, fire, and the like. Peters' astute description of media, airy or otherwise, as "ensembles of natural element and human craft" is worth repeating as I characterize the task of information media in the ambiguous assemblage of nature and craft that is called social hygiene.[15]

It is not the business of this dissertation to theorize a point at which nature ends and craft begins, but rather to explore their variously-defined zones of confluence. The definition of "information" that I use must thus be flexible enough to function under both "natural" and "cultural" readings of a given case. I contend that one cannot fully understand the media culture of hygiene without making room for not only conceiving of biological processes like respiration and metabolism as forms of information processing relevant to the technological, inscriptive

14. Margareta Ingrid Christian, "*Aer, Aurae, Venti*: Philology and Physiology in Aby Warburg's Dissertation on Botticelli," *PMLA* 129, no. 3 (May 2014): 401.

15. Peters, *Clouds,* 3.

activities that go on in human processes of communication, but also for conceiving of a multimedia public-health advertising campaign as a set of media materials whose diffusion into the lived environment of living beings can be thought to leave discernible biological traces in populations.

The ostensible didactic goal of hygienic information practices that are accessible to lay audiences—the category into which the films I analyze will fall in the chapters to come—is reproducing the attention that ought to be paid to the different elements of "craft," the various cultural tasks, that must be brought to bear upon the body in its everyday context. They are instructions for private labor intervening into the body, into the contemporary surroundings of the body at work and rest, and, through the above processes, into the form of as a society of a whole. As such, they both presuppose and seek to build upon fluency in the information frameworks by which a living being assesses the potential of the materials and activities available to him in his environment to have a positive or negative impact upon his health.

The remainder of this chapter sketches three coextensive frameworks of legibility that I take to be essential to understanding the hygienic literature of modern Germany in a way that prepares one to analyze the ecological and political phenomena of 20th-century multimedia health education campaigns. These frameworks can be sorted out by their polarity with respect to a hypothetical boundary between nature and culture: the given and contrived elements of the human environment. The first, which I call the ergonomic framework, is resolutely cultural: it conceives of natural processes as functionally equivalent to activities of human craft that require effort and create consequences for the subjects and objects of those activities. Effectively, this is an anthropomorphic representation of nature. The second, the ecological framework, has the inverse polarity, naturalizing human craft as a subset of the pushings and pullings that animate an

equilibrium-seeking, relatively predictable natural system. The third, the utopian framework, collapses this distinction; it conceives of a kind of unity between effort and result, between volition and norm, that makes nature and culture indistinguishable; it represents an apotheosis of the ideals of health that can be projected from the various texts I examine. Thinking of the utopian, however, one must recall its finitude, and that any such system can only be sustained by the political calculus that excludes undesirable or nonconforming elements and impulses from the utopia.

This chapter will deal primarily with works by three social hygienists of the mid-to-late 19th century: Max von Pettenkofer, Jakob Laurenz Sonderegger, and Carl Reclam. I choose the first two for the continuing resonance of their names and texts in the 20th century. Pettenkofer's name is cited in the first sentence of the foreword of Adolf Gottstein's 1925 *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge*, a volume to which I will return in my second chapter for its material on techniques of hygienic education; Gottstein goes on to cite Pettenkofer's canonical definition of hygiene as "the knowledge of the given external conditions...under which healthy people live, and those establishments that influence or enforce the permanent well-being of human beings."[16] Pettenkofer's memory, as a biographer laments, is otherwise tarnished in the scientific community due to his unwavering commitment to a social-hygienic emphasis upon environmental determinants, which led to his public refusal to accept Robert Koch's bacteriological explanation of the Hamburg cholera epidemic unless class and geographical

16. Adolf Gottstein, A. Schlossmann, and L. Teleky, "Vorwort," in *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge*, ed. Adolf Gottstein, A. Schlossmann, and L. Teleky (Berlin: Springer, 1925), 1:V.

considerations were factored in.[17] He is thus an exemplar of the kind of hygienic thinker who privileged attention to the tangible and socially visible conditioners of health; for my study, he is someone for whom nature and culture were intimately interwoven in the problem of human health. The Dresden museum director Martin Vogel, a notable figure in my next chapter, also mentions Pettenkofer as an exemplar of hygienic lay education in the format of the lecture.

Aside from his moralistic bombast and illustrative prose style, the Swiss physician Sonderegger attracts my attention for one of the afterlives of his writing: a slim volume of his more accessible hygienic precepts, titled *Gesundheit ist Lebensglück!*, was printed by Julius Springer Verlag and sold all over Germany during the 1926 *Reichsgesundheitswoche* (National Hygiene Week) organized by the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* the organization that forms the bureaucratic heart of my Weimar chapter. Snippets of his text also appeared, lushly illustrated, on other promotional materials circulated by the *Reichsausschuss.* Reclam, a Leipzig hygienist who appears to have remained rather more obscure in the 20th century, serves my project with his frequent references to the centrality of metabolism to human life. His texts also project a sensitivity to the impact of various cultural phenomena upon human internal health, culminating in occasional irate passages about the deleterious effects of fashion.

Where the aforementioned writers offer monographic treatments of hygiene in which natural elements serve as key themes, a competing set of discourses inverts this model. I refer here to the folk disciplines of *Naturheilkunde,* natural healing, whose canonical examples often center around hierarchies of natural elements to which comprehensive healing powers are gradually ascribed. Fresh water anchored the wildly popular healing practices of the Silesian

17. Martin Weyer-von Schoultz, *Max von Pettenkofer (1818-1901): Die Entstehung Der Modernen Hygiene Aus Den Empirischen Studien Menschlicher Lebensgrundlagen* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2006), 7.

farmer Vinzenz Prießnitz, and earth and mud were amply theorized by the "Lehmdoktor" Adolf Just.[18] The autodidactic naturopath Arnold Rikli composed a philosophy emphasizing light and fresh air (preferably experienced in the nude or in the "air-bathing" garments he offered at his resort in the Carniolan mountains of Austria-Hungary) and serves here to represent these various element-centered traditions of German *Naturheilkunde.* I include him not only because a "quack" healer like Rikli exemplifies, to establishment hygienists in both the 19th and 20th centuries, the kind of bad-object voice that contaminates the hygienic educational discourse, but also because of the relative congruence of the content of his beliefs with the prescriptions of many academic hygienists: plenty of fresh country air and measured "toughening" of the constitution through cooling the skin. Rikli's spa at Veldes also exemplifies the period fixture of the fashionable country resort that emphasized the influence of a particular natural element. The epistemology of Rikli fits with that of the academic hygienists not for his methods or for the evidence he uses to present them, but for a common emotional denominator that compels authors to create textual edifices within which the importance of "elemental" substances can reinforce itself.

The 19th- and 20th-century writers I cite also contain extensive references, both explicit and implicit, to the hygienic system published as *Makrobiotik. Die Kunst, das menschliche Leben zu verlängern* (*Macrobiotics: The Art of Lengthening Human Life*) by Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland in 1796. Hufeland falls neatly into the category of what Gerald Gruman describes as "prolongevity hygiene," assessing the health effects of various conditions and substances by

18. On Prießnitz, see Uwe Heyll, *Wasser, Fasten, Luft Und Licht: Die Geschichte Der Naturheilkunde in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 18–25. Just proselytizes for his system in his two-volume work *Kehrt zur Natur zurück!* (Blankenburg/Harz: Heilerde-Gesellschaft Luvos, 1922).

whether they could be expected to prolong or shorten a typical life.[19] To this end, his volume's "Praktischer Theil" (Practical Part) creates a reductive but highly coherent analytical framework for relating materials like air and water to a binary of good and ill health quantifiable in life years. It therefore not only serves as a forerunner for the genre of text I examine in Pettenkofer, Sonderegger, Reclam, and even Rikli, but as a type sample of the conversion of natural elements into rationalized data structures.

By tracing elemental substances through the hygiene texts I read in this chapter, I also draw attention to the mirror image of my ergonomic conception of hygiene: that the careful attention to the labors of living that must be performed on and around the body respects no strict delineation between the phenomena of nature and the achievements of culture. The intentional normative activities prescribed by hygiene, rather, are negotiations between ongoing productive processes whose natural or cultural origin is only secondary in relevance. The labor of hygiene is to pursue, by varying means, those optimal equilibria whereby the wild work of nature and the domesticated work of culture come as close as possible to having common goals.

The Ergonomic Framework: Work, Wild and Domesticated

Carl Reclam's *Buch der vernünftigen Lebensweise* (*Book of Sensible Living*), first published in 1863, sketches an instructive continuum from the labors of the body's interior to those of its exterior.

> Through the continual metabolic exchange of material, energy is born in the living body; the application of the energies reinforces the power to use them. Nothing in the world has no part in the destiny of the world-budget [*Welthaushalt*]. Does the human being alone wish to be permitted to do this? Does

19. Gerald J. Gruman, "The Rise and Fall of Prolongevity Hygiene 1558-1873," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 35, no. 3 (1961): 227.

> he believe that he alone can, without punishment, mock the eternal laws of nature? Let everyone begin for himself the improvement of his dwelling! No one lacks occasion, once he chases away his bad habits. From the improperly constructed fireplace to the window that spills its light in the wrong direction, occasion for improvement is freely available![20]

As a matter of "destiny," the equilibrium-seeking tendencies of the natural world cannot be forestalled; they go on both inside and outside of the human body. Reclam presents the human being of his historical present as living in an environment riddled with deficiencies and imbalances. His implicit message is that mankind would do better to repair such deficiencies through deliberate cultural adjustments, rather than by letting nature resolve them according to its indifferent, "eternal" laws. The space of the everyday, the realm of fireplaces and windows, is also the ambit of human control and responsibility, and the place where even the layperson has the expertise to perform constructive, scientifically justifiable work.

To preserve health is to perform a set of conscious activities on and around the body in question, a set of activities that works to attune the goings-on in and around that body to a set of "natural," or at least naturalized, norms, ideals, or laws. It is to perform the physical and intellectual work required to negotiate a compact between the conscious labors and activities of human life and behavior and the industry of the natural world, a genius that labors both within and around that body. A given theory of hygiene posits an ecological model (coded as natural, cultural, or as a combination of the two) within which a subject is embedded. The subject recognizes elements in the environment that are helpful or hurtful to its welfare. Likewise, the impersonal mechanisms of the environment call upon the subject to perform as a participant in

20. Carl Reclam, *Das Buch der vernünftigen Lebensweise. Für das Volk zur Erhaltung der Gesundheit und Arbeitsfähigkeit. Eine populäre Hygieine* (Leipzig: Winter'sche, 1863), 234.

an ecology. The environment performs corrections, often violent ones, to maintain the stability of a system within which human well-being is incidental.

Reclam's observations situate human volition at the point where nature goes over into culture while also insisting that the two share a common motor. Fireplaces and windows, as basic technological contrivances, form possibilities for a subject to perform productive hygienic work within his own household. By investing his bodily effort in this way, the subject modifies the variables at play in the *Welthaushalt,* the set of impersonal balances that allows him to live and his house to stand. Culture and technology are not means of escape from a natural order, but are instead epiphenomena of biological processes.[21] The physiological and chemical processes by which organisms maintain life are the same ones that fuel the tasks of environmental optimization that compose much of hygiene, as well as those that drive the cultural works, like industrialization and urbanization, that Reclam views as compromising health. A misguided technics, one of mastery and exploitation rather than of adaptation and reconciliation between nature and culture, can yield no long-term benefit; the score will be settled in the same human tissues in which the metabolic furnaces of culture are fired.

The ongoing, "natural" work of respiration and metabolism, the same processes which make human being possible, become complicit in the body's deterioration or destruction if the conditions under which they operate and the materials in which they deal are compromised. The elements of the world about appear throughout the periods and texts this dissertation handles as busy, able, and amoral. The air refreshes human tissues with the same alacrity with which it distributes the miasmas of pollution and disease; it relieves, and often robs, human beings of

21. Analyzing such a framing of nature and culture is central to Anson Rabinbach's work on labor and modernity; see Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (New York: Basic, 1990), 35–36 and 128–29.

their body heat through its motion while stubbornly refusing to leave our dwelling spaces without the technical assistance of ventilation. It transparently transmits the purifying rays of the sun, but also conveys precious oxygen away from human lungs and into the stoves and gas burners of artificial lighting and heat. Yet it would do none of these things, helpful or harmful, if bodily processes did not function the way they do. In their responses to ambient conditions, bodies manifest the metrics by which the healthfulness of an environment is to be measured. The human body "works" as hard as the air does; the relentlessness of its respiration is what makes fresh air so nourishing and impure air so deleterious.[22] The19th-century pathologist Friedrich Oesterlen writes that "that which is of most use to us can also damage us the most, and it is those very sides of the environment that surrounds us that are the most important to our life from which certain disturbances or diseases can most easily threaten."[23] Living bodies greedily avail themselves of the elements available, even when the latter lack in quality.

Such activities takes as their precondition an epistemic framework that promotes recognition of environmental phenomena and materials as elements that impact health beneficially or adversely, and the recognition of human materials and processes as elements in a larger system. A sampling of texts from my protagonists, the academic hygienists of 19th and early 20th-century German-speaking Europe, reveals figurative language that can read like so

22. Consider the following quotation from Hufeland: "Clean air is just as certainly the greatest means of preserving and strengthening our lives as trapped, stagnant air is the finest and deadliest poison." Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, *Makrobiotik oder die Kunst, das menschliche Leben zu verlängern,* 8th ed. (Berlin: Reimer, 1860), 326.

23. Friedrich Oesterlen, *Der Mensch und seine physische Erhaltung. Hygienische Briefe für weitere Leserkreise* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1859), 32.

many gestures to what would later be theorized in an intellectual tradition running from Heidegger through Stiegler, Kittler, and beyond as originary technicity.[24] Oesterlen, writing in 1859, suggests that a useful strategy for hygienic education would be a return to the four ancient Greek elements, describing these as the interrelated "levers of all that happens on Earth."[25] Describing the maintenance of body heat, Max von Pettenkofer speaks of a finely-tuned "regulation" of the body's "warmth-budget" that instrumentalizes the three natural mechanisms of thermal transfer.[26] Directed at lay audiences, these sets of terms indicate that the human body sustains itself by deploying natural patterns of competence that must guide any artificial, intentional intervention into that body's health. Likewise, the conditions of possibility for human life obtain in the indifferent but convenient balances and processes of nature; a set of mutual corrections between its "levers" make nature a place where one can live (and that the proto-technological indifference of nature is as present within the body's tissues as "out there" in the world of wind and water). The position of the subject, the personality who pays professional or amateur attention to human bodies and their environs, not to mention the personality who consumes or composes texts about the same, comes to light as simply another sort of relay in a self-balancing system comprising both "nature" and "culture;" not, however, as the author of that system.

---

24. I refer here to the tendency of media theorists, following Heidegger and Simondon, to partially impersonalize the impulses that drive technological innovation and practice; originary technicity is not a by-product of human ingenuity, but rather a set of tendencies in nature that co-constitute the human itself, defined as the user and fabricator of tools. See especially Part I of Stiegler, *Technics and Time*.

25 Oesterlen, *Der Mensch,* 30.

26. Max von Pettenkofer, *Beziehungen der Luft zu Kleidung, Wohnung und Boden. Drei populäre Vorlesungen gehalten im Albert-Verein zu Dresden am 21., 23. und 25. März 1872* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1872), 6–7.

Since there is no acceptable way, consistent with any hygienic framework, to suspend the workings of the human body, one must act upon both body and environment to ensure that the body works in its own favor. From the standpoint of social hygiene, the air, like any natural element, can only be rendered a reliable companion to human life if human beings can understand the process of its uptake and adapt technologies at hand to modify its composition. Social hygienists were well convinced that bad air claimed legions of lives annually in Europe's cities and towns, and well aware that the absence of air in general, of the medium that distributed illness and pollution, was no remedy. On an urbanizing continent that could no longer outrun the effects of population density, the only acceptable solution was to improve the air by mastering space technologically. Technology was understood as a series of carapaces, interacting with the air and the other elements, about the naked human form.[27] In modifying the body's ambient climate, technology also modifies the way that body participates in its surroundings.

The hygienic practice of ventilation, a technological endeavor that polices the air quality of an inhabited space, cooperates with the work habits of the air to deliver oxygen into and contaminants out of that space. Pettenkofer offers an example in one of his lectures: The tendencies of the subject's body, a body that is understood to weaken both in stuffy, poorly-ventilated rooms and under the influence of chilling "drafts," set the norms by which the movement of the air in the environment are balanced with the processing capacity of the body: "Ventilation is the necessary exchange of air in a closed space at a speed that still feels to us like complete stillness of the air...That which we call a "draft" is simply a one-sided chilling of the

27. Theories of technology that seem fitting here include those of Theweleit and McLuhan. See esp. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 202, and chapters 12-13 of Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

body or individual body parts...a one-sided disturbance in the economy of heat."[28] This process is, itself, a negotiation with the autonomous breathing habits of the body to ensure that their work results in a health credit, rather than a health debit, to that body's constitution.

The prescriptions of scientific or pseudoscientific epistemologies enter the hygienic equation at the point where resources must be managed, balanced, and selected; they serve the layperson in his private and public tasks of hygiene as a guide for the administration of his radius of responsibility, for his work of ordering the ways he experiences, consumes, and responds to his environment. The popular hygiene text emerges at the juncture between the scientific literature, the folk knowledge of a particular audience or readership, and the materials presumed to be at hand in the environments obtaining in a given historical period. It instructs on how, and how not, to construct linkages and relationships within and between objects in these categories and promises consequences, beneficial and detrimental, that will be perceived within the addressee's ambit of responsibility.

Information Work: From Respiration to Administration

Respiration serves not only as a function for sustaining the life of an animal body, but also as a framework for analyzing and responding to changes in the air. In containing an admixture of materials, the air also contains a message for those who have, so to speak, the biological ears to hear. Even in death, a creature that has starved, smothered, or been violently killed pronounces a judgment: the combination of environmental factors that made up its environment was no longer sufficient to support life in such and such a species.

28. Pettenkofer, *Luft,* 72.

The human relationship with the elemental resources of its environment, as John Durham Peters suggests, has always been one of reading and writing: of analysis, interpretation, and adaptation.[29] While this relationship appears most evidently as such when human intention can be factored into the equation, in processes of exploitation, prediction, and the like, it is not strictly a characteristic of human life. An understanding of biological processes in general as a kind of information work offers the explanation of the vital that Georges Canguilhem describes in *The Normal and the Pathological*:

> All human technique, including that of life, is set within life, that is, within an activity of information and assimilation of material. It is not because human technique is normative that vital technique is judged as such by comparison. Because life is activity of information and assimilation it is the root of all technical activity.[30]

One need not be quite as open to vitalism as Canguilhem to find his "vital technique" an instructive notion. He inscribes human volition and ingenuity into the action-reaction paradigms that govern the formation, disturbance, and re-establishment of equilibria in nature; these paradigms could as well be the work of "inanimate" entities, like chemical elements, as of living creatures. His vital distinction is that biological entities, unlike physical or chemical ones, are not indifferent to their surroundings; they produce and act upon judgments about their environments based upon sensory input. The air does not care how much carbon dioxide it carries, but the nervous system of an animal body in an environment of carbon dioxide overconcentration produces a non-indifferent interpretation, flailing involuntarily in an effort to escape.

---

29. Peters, *Clouds,* 4.

30. Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett and Robert S. Cohen (New York: Zone, 1989), 130.

The embodied subject is thus prevailed upon to perform what I consider a kind of information-processing work: the task of perceiving the elements of its environment as being marked with health-related values, as resources or threats for the project of modern human thriving. This task has its most obvious philosophical echo in Martin Heidegger's constructs of *Gestell* and *Bestand,* translated by William Lovitt as "Enframing" and "standing-reserve."[31] For Heidegger, modern human perception is infected by an ergonomic mentality that prompts the subject to see his environment as an array of resources available for exploitation through technical procedures guided by the natural sciences. By finding hygienic potential in resources, the hygienist performs what Heidegger would consider an act of revealing, showing these resources to be caught up in the web of factors with implications for the welfare of human bodies.[32] Heidegger's phenomenology, however, demands that each act of revealing is simultaneously an act of concealing—a medicalized approach to the elements of the world excludes those facets of those elements' being that are understood as irrelevant to human health. The hygienic readings of environment that my texts pursue use the human body as a focus for the pragmatic organization of its milieu. Hygiene thus manifests as a form of technological *Gestell* that encounters the materials of the world as resources to be exploited for their pertinence to the specific goals of health and longevity. I refer to the "technological" here in Heidegger's abstract

---

31. William Lovitt, "Introduction," in Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), xx.

32. A hygienic theory advances a set of guidelines for perceiving an environment akin to Jakob von Uexküll's classic biological, subject-centered *Umwelt;* space, material, and time appear to the hygienic subject insofar as they affect his or her health and welfare and provide contexts for activity that furthers or damages that subject's health. See Uexküll's classic tick example for his explications of the *Merkmal* and *Wirkmal*, Jakob von Uexküll, "Einleitung," in *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen. Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), esp. 27.

sense, as an impersonal organizing impulse anterior to any given act of human artifice.[33] The human body is a technological thing, to my authors, in that it is the site where hygienic readings of the world about are manifested within the logic of the body's exploitative relationship with its environment.

The labor and leisure of human beings, the metabolic processes taking place in human tissues and the ecological processes that make up environments more or less congenial to human life are all work, manifestations of technological existence, insofar as they encode information that is legible to subjects fluent in the necessary epistemic foundations. In calling these phenomena work, I mean that they are information work, work for which hygiene offers interpretations that suit a more or less consistent structural understanding of the life world of human society.[34] Indeed, the objects that I examine throughout this dissertation will permit a reading of modern health culture as comprising currents of information management that combine, dismiss, and recombine natural and cultural material resources to create a fluid set of epistemologies whose emotional freight is always the fearsome binary of embodied human thriving and suffering, living and dying.

The context of public hygiene instruction—of texts, events, and images made with the explicit content of communicating the precepts and practices of a hygienic technological world—

33. See Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach der Technik," in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), 7:15–16..

34. These interpretations are, of course, fully subordinated to the cultural circumstances of the post-Enlightenment Western world; I do not mean to suggest that "human society" can be read as universal, except for within the discursive universe with which this chapter concerns itself.

offers a juncture at which the information potential of the association between a biological organism and its environment becomes literalized in manmade communicative media strategies, in texts and event created with the expectation that they will serve as resources for human health. If changes in health and behavior serve, for Canguilhem, as normative activities that manifest information from and about the environment, these activities might be considered scalable to different levels of sophistication in human development, living environments, and communicative techniques.[35] The health cultures of a particular period and place, I argue, will respond to an infusion of pertinent information just as it will respond to the changing composition of the air. The individuals who theorize and actualize the relationship between health epistemology and publicly-available information, in my later chapters, will largely be medical practitioners who explicitly identify themselves, using the bureaucratic anatomy of governmental institutions, as stewards of information that has therapeutic or prophylactic potential.

Instructional communications, channeled through various media forms, function in parallel to materials like air. Health-related normative information is effectively a material resource to be encountered in the world, one which may reinforce, reshape, or derail the impact of a given administrative system. Managing the concept of an element goes hand in hand with managing the movement and quality of the substance itself—for example, both a textual edifice that appropriately frames and analyzes air and physical structures that translate theory into practice are essential to creating a discursive and physical space of health, to exercising the appropriate stewardship of the encounters between the body and its inner and outer

35. Canguilhem, *Normal,* 126-27.

environments. Not least among these encounters are those encounters with comprehensible information and the media that transmit it. These encounters may reinforce, reshape, or derail the impact of the system of administration at play in the environment.

The work of management and administration, like any other work as this dissertation understands the word, does not end at the edges of human volition or rational ordering; it also pervades the hygienists' conceptions of the self-regulation of natural systems.[36] Like metabolic work in general, forms of management and regulation take place within the body, and hygienists structure their normative prescriptions to comport with their understandings of the body's natural mechanisms.[37] The border between nature and culture is sketched differently by the different administrative practices to which a given individual, and his particular position of stewardship, is subject.

The Ecological/Economic Framework: *Gesundheitswirthschaft* and *Nationalöconomie*

In the introduction to his Handbuch, Max von Pettenkofer inaugurates his analogy between the biological organism and the national economy.

---

36. Notable among these is Sonderegger's characterization of the body as a "machine that works more precisely than any chronometer." Jakob Laurenz Sonderegger, *Vorposten der Gesundheitspflege,* 5th ed. (Berlin: Springer, 1901), 3.

37. Ready examples for this kind of administrative work, which shapes the instructive text to a conception of the body, can be found in the tables of contents of Hufeland's, Sonderegger's, and Reclam's hygienic volumes. The "Praktischer Theil" of Hufeland's *Makrobiotik* is shaped to be a balanced study in contrasts, explicating various "means of shortening life" in the first section before countering them with "means of lengthening life." Hufeland, *Makrobiotik*, xiv–xv. Reclam, by contrast, contextualizes health in the full arc of a human life before adding sections corresponding to various complexes of elemental material and processes: phases of life, daily rhythms, and technological, moral, and social constructions like "Wohnung," "Arbeit," and "geschlechtlicher Umgang." Carl Reclam, "Inhaltsverzeichniß," in *Lebensweise*, 1863, n. pag.

> I have already, upon an earlier occasion, drawn attention to the fact that the national economy [*Nationalöconomie*], the study of commerce with saleable goods, has many analogies with hygiene, which one can consider as the study of health-economy [*Gesundheitswirthschaft*], and that hygiene offers our *Medizinalpolizei* and public health care a scientific foundation like the one the *Nationalöconomie* has given the fields of financial management [*den Cameralfächern*].[38]

Pettenkofer's expansive view of the field of activity associated with hygiene, which extends the object of study far into the lived environment, corresponds with other arguments he makes in the introduction to the *Handbuch*. In particular, Pettenkofer's analogy brings the tasks of administrative labor and responsibility to the forefront; a successful *Gesundheitswirthschaft* requires a *Wirt,* some entity who will tend and administer *Gesundheit.* This role is not just supervision or policing, but also requires that a common epistemic model anchor the system.

The lived environment that Pettenkofer describes is as cultural as it is natural; his figures not only metaphorize nature through a capitalist ecology, but also intimate that the body's practices of exploiting resources and excreting wastes are intertwined with that body's place in a labor economy producing commodities of value. As Pettenkofer's own focus upon environment will bear out, the body is intricately embedded in the natural-resource economy of its environment, thriving or suffering based upon the availability, quality, and costs of the good it "imports," of appropriate disposal of its wastes. The thriving and productivity of the body is calculable, in particular, based upon the body's outputs that have economic currency, whether the economy this currency is based upon is a market economy (demanding useful work), an

38. Max von Pettenkofer, ed., *Handbuch der Hygiene und der Gewerbekrankheten* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1886), 6.

authoritarian one (demanding properly calibrated subjects), or a liberal one (aspiring to corporeal, mental, and spiritual self-actualization).[39]

Clear from Pettenkofer's economic language is that the structures governing 19th-century Western society extend, at least metaphorically, into the body. The importance of this is twofold. First, and most obviously, such a vocabulary suggests that the body's processes are analogous to industrial labor, and that its internal regulatory functions are akin to administrative operations in commerce and government. The individual, in such a figuration, is then neither quite the author of his own work and actions nor the product of his own willed efforts to self-cultivation (as Enlightenment humanism would like to have it). Instead, the boundaries of the body, and of the subject, are fairly arbitrary waypoints along a continuum of work thinkable in political or technological terms.

The second implication of Pettenkofer's terms is the inverse: the mysterious, autonomous interior of the body, one of the key loci of "nature" for the hygienist, makes a figurative escape into the spaces of culture, naturalizing technics and politics. If the human body is thinkable as a rational and productive mechanism, as Fritz Kahn's image of the *Industriepalast* does, then banks and factories can also appear as so many moist organs. While this naturalization can serve to make Western ideologies seem preordained, it can also polemically render the structures of

39. In their international study of health policy, Herbert Gottweiss and his co-authors offer the following succinct description of modern biopolitical tendencies: "Since absolutism, public health [*Volksgesundheit*] has been understood as an urgent task for national administration [*Verwaltung*]. The mercantilist definition of public health, which was oriented toward increasing the economic power of the nation, had the goal of preserving and improving the average health, and therefore the capacity to work and to cosume, of the population." Herbert Gottweis et al., *Verwaltete Körper: Strategien Der Gesundheitspolitik Im Internationalen Vergleich* (Wien: Böhlau, 2004), 47.

power, economy, and technics in general savage and arbitrary, as much the domain of a wrathful deity as a rationally conceivable set of systems.

The Swiss physician Jakob Laurenz Sonderegger introduces his popular-hygiene volume *Vorposten der Gesundheit* with a set of metaphors that, read comparatively with Pettenkofer's, makes the systems of nature appear at turns less cultural, operating according to inflexible, preordained laws, and more, its phenomena embodied in metaphors of concrete technological objects:

> Yet there is no forgiveness of sins in the realm of nature; rather, the complete rule of law prevails. The human body is a machine that works more precisely than any chronometer, and that responds to particular disturbances with particular responses. Life is a chemical-physical experiment whose starting conditions must be fulfilled exactly if it is to succeed. The budget [*Haushalt*] of the body is a ledger-book that permits no spending without equivalent income; tears and despondency do not change the result of a poorly-kept account, medicines and therapies can only delay the inevitable fall for a short while.[40]

He carries Pettenkofer's metaphor further by enshrining its terms in and against objects of modern human being: the disciplined machine and the indifferent information technology of the ledger-book. Balance is maintained through according to indisputable rules; maintaining health is akin, for Sonderegger, by turns, to religious redemption, to natural laws governing the properties of chemical elements and physical bodies, to mechanical engineering, and to business best practices.

He therefore outlines a hierarchy of clearly circumscribed responsibilities and the tasks required to fulfill them. Nature rules with the arbitrariness of a deity, but for Sonderegger's positivism, the mind of this god is exhaustively knowable by empirical science. Where laypeople

40. Sonderegger, *Vorposten,* 3.

enter the equation, so do the scriveners: the health of neither an individual person nor of a population can be sustainable without a balanced ledger-book. The imperative of the "*well*-kept account," that same imperative that prompted the development of cuneiform script, comes in Sonderegger's modernity as a demand to make marks upon paper, to examine them, and to process them; to extract from columns of figures the qualitative verdict of balance or insolvency, sickness or health.

Not all shopkeepers are scrupulous, and good intentions do not a competent accountant make. Add these problems of economic information processing to the positivist fallacy of Sonderegger's clockwork body, and one emerges not with a single, unified, and centrally plannable *Gesundheitswirtschaft*, but with an ill-regulated collection of market stalls, a multiplicity of little economies whose guiding principles conflict and whose ledgers do not necessarily employ a fungible system of variables. Here emerge the rifts between *Naturheilkunde* and academic medicine, between social hygiene, eugenics and bacteriology, and between the fiefdoms that make up each.

Whereas Sonderegger's natural order is inflexible enough to resemble a clockwork universe tended by a wrathful god, Pettenkofer's figure of the economy embeds Pettenkofer's elements of technology and dutiful recording into a broader and more variable system of competition and regulation. What these various economic endeavors have in common is the commodity in which they purport to handle: healthy human bodies.

It goes without saying, at least since Foucault, that the definitions of "healthy," "human," and "bodies" are subject to change as one moves from the one economy, with its attendant epistemology, to another; what is important is the output and command of public information that attracts the customer to a given economy's definition and persuades them of the validity of

its practices. Furthermore, one cannot have both a robust advertising strategy and a viable business without keeping track of the costs and benefits of that advertising. There are thus two critical and interlinked types of information work at play in the economy of health that I wish to investigate: practices of advertising and practices of record-keeping and accounting. These notions correspond in a rather more literal way to the media objects that will form my objects of archival study in subsequent chapters.

In the introductory passage cited at the beginning of this section, Pettenkofer works to differentiate the purposes of his social hygiene from those of his predecessors; or, rather, he describes his hygiene as not only encompassing the various pathology-oriented goals of previous interventions, but also providing strategies for optimizing the healthy person: increasing the *Leistungsfähigkeit* of the healthy body. For Pettenkofer, work begets work; a practical understanding of the inner workings of the body permits the engineering of a body that can achieve more through its various labors, either as a place of private satisfaction or as a cell of political economy.

Utopia and the Text

The place where nature and culture are in synchrony, where every being acts automatically in his or her own best interest and in keeping with the interests of the population or the ecosystem is, of course, no place at all; it is a utopia. One finds provisional utopian proposals, I argue, in the hygienic texts and media objects with which this dissertation occupies itself. A hygienic regimen can only guarantee its effectiveness if its epistemology is exhaustive; such an epistemology is only available to naive positivists and to quacks. While I would be willing to accuse none of the authors I study of hawking a conclusive, infallible theory of health,

all of them develop systematic figurations within which the variables of nature and culture that bear upon human health become rationally tractable. Problems with fatal consequences can be predictably solved using the resources supposed to preexist in the human being's environment.

Common to Pettenkofer, Sonderegger, Reclam, and others—crucial to the project of optimizing human life through adjustment of environment—is the assumption that a life lived in optimal attunement to nature will be one lived in good air and among other good-quality elements. The goodness of the air is measurable to each writer, legible from its concentration of oxygen, that substance whose reactivity sustains metabolic work. Utopia is all around, but its concentration varies; it can be moved, modified, and sullied. This means, of course, that dystopia is equally available, marking its presence in percentage points of carbon dioxide from which the hygienist deduces the presence of unhealthful arrangements of human life.[41] The means of holding dystopia at bay, just like those of holding sickness at bay, are forms of information work: of perceiving and shaping the environment in accordance with a set of presumptions about how health is constructed.

Part of the project of realizing a hygienic utopia is an ability, whether that of the natural sciences or of more esoteric approaches, to read the signs of nature, interpret them, and take action upon the norms they present. Such a process tends to require the information work of developing fresh figural notions of natural structures and processes: the hygienist's both attuning his work to the management and processing of resources and labor that he finds in nature and presenting this information, in the manner of advertising, in a compelling textual fashion. The hygienist constructs a cultural and textual edifice around that which is taken to be "natural," and

41. For the correlation between carbon dioxide composition and the forms of air pollution caused by human respiration and combustion processes, see Pettenkofer, *Luft*, 62–63; Reclam, *Lebensweise,* 177–78, and Sonderegger, *Vorposten,* 47–48.

the applicability of this edifice to the corporeal and spiritual sufferings of human beings and populations is what gives it utopian potential.

The self-taught Swiss naturopath Arnold Rikli, a theorist of sunlight- and air-based therapies, saw as one of the main obstacles to implementing his programs the mischaracterizations of the dangers of the air that had become an intrinsic part of "culture," such as the fear of catching cold. Calling upon the prolongevity hygienist Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland as a predecessor, Rikli theorizes the human being as an "animal-plant" (*Thierpflanze*) whose systems, vegetal and dendritic in form, require the input of the Hufelandian "guardian spirits" of air, water, and light.[42] Rikli cultivates such an environment through a program of "atmospheric baths" derived from a blissful childhood memory that he made programmatic through a series of experiments upon his own body.[43]

Esoteric healers like Rikli personify pseudoscientific approaches that are largely viewed as inimical by the authors and actors I am studying primarily; indeed, *Naturheilkunde* and its "quacks" tend to form the constitutive exterior against which the social-hygienic information economies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are constructed. Nonetheless, I would like to suggest that the activities of establishment hygienists and *Naturheilkundler* often overlapped not only in the materials and elements at play in their therapies and prophylaxes, but also in the structural imperative by which they processed and acculturated "natural" information.

The therapeutic interventions of social hygiene were always focused upon finite, spatialized projects, provisional utopias to be realized amid the existing conditions of nature and

---

42. Arnold Rikli, *"Es werde Licht" und Es wird Licht! oder Die atmosphärische Cur. Ein Beitrag zur natürlichen Gesundheitslehre*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Fernau, 1894), 13.

43. Rikli, *Licht*, 3–4.

culture. Pettenkofer the social hygienist and Rikli the *Naturheilkundler* would agree that a kind of logistical work is necessary to maintain the balances of the corporeal economy. Regardless of whether the practitioner is a bacteriologist or a quack, the forms of knowledge, readings of signs and measurement, and processing of human affects that practitioner employs make normative claims upon the relationship between organism and environment. Illustrative of this principle, pragmatic actualizations of hygienic practice tend to compose spaces apart, where culture is subject to scientific scrutiny or esoteric auguring, and where nature is subject to domestication and systematization. One might consider Rikli's open-air resort, the Alpine tuberculosis sanitarium of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Rudolph Virchow's Charité hospital, or even Max von Pettenkofer's proposals for the well-ventilated room, as kinds of provisional utopias. This provisionality, of course, arises at the point of difference between topography and utopia; the latter, by its very etymology, cannot exist in space, and the space of health that does not communicate with a world of sickness has lost the need to process information, as normativity ceases to be an activity.

The perfectly oxygenated environment would abolish the work of culture and normativity; the only work left to do would be the work of nature, not of culture; only breathe. The hygienic utopia is nonetheless a place of work, but one where the information is already there; the normative critiques of the organism (as theorized by Canguilhem) are pre-empted; one need never measure carbon dioxide nor breathe stale air, because one will find that one has already opened the window to remedy the problem. In the hygienic utopia, the tasks of *Kulturarbeit* that are minutely detailed in the literature would have become natural, involuntary, autonomous; the breaths that occur twelve to twenty times a minute would not only occur on schedule, but would also always be breaths of good air. The utopian structure of the health resort

is an environment in which a given message about the hygienic treatment of environment has developed a monopoly; it is utopian because those who do not follow the rules (or who are exceptions to them) immediately cease to participate in the resort's system; they no longer have access to it as a relevant place in their own hygienic world. The person too "cultured" or too prudish to expose his skin to the air at Rikli's Veldes resort, who fears catching cold or nakedness too much to participate fully, is not a relevant actor in the planned hygienic economy of the place; he cannot be counted as a patient, for he has failed to invest the capabilities of his body in the system that is to enhance them; therefore, he is insignificant.[44]

The popular hygiene text or lecture functions as a kind of hygienic paradise in its congenial finitude, even when its claims aspire to universality and draw upon a pathos of the body presumed to be transcultural and ahistorical. The task of a media-centered investigation of such objects and events is to discover the practices of information work through which such little textual utopias are constructed and policed, as well as the lapses in the consistency of the logic of that work.

Max von Pettenkofer's three-part lecture series on the hygienic qualities of air, held in the spring of 1872 at the Albert-Verein in Dresden, submits its own format to reflexive questioning. In his introduction to the first lecture, Pettenkofer announces that the attendee who expects "unusual things…, which could not be transmitted from Munich to Dresden in writing" will be

44. See discussion of communal acculturation in Inge Baxmann, "Der Körper der Nation," in *Nation und Emotion: Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Etienne François, Hannes Siegrist, and Jakob Vogel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 353–65.

disappointed.[45] He goes on to ventriloquize contemporary doubts about the intellectual value of popular scientific education: that it cannot communicate scientific information in a rigorous way, and therefore fosters "that dilettantism from which our time already suffers enough."[46] Yet, he states, the role of the popular lecture is not to create new experts, but to bring a group of people under the beneficial influence of scientific thought, to allow them to taste a environment proximate and relevant to their own, in much the same way as a concert attendee "senses the harmony" without being expected to emerge from the experience as a trained "musician."[47] For this reason, Pettenkofer intimates, he has a selected a set of profoundly ordinary objects: air and two basic forms of climate control, clothing and the domestic space: these are "well-known things, which everyone already knows from daily custom."[48] The salutary intellectual currents of popular scientific education circulate most efficiently in a substance that is both pervasive and liable to be overlooked (and therefore ripe for defamiliarization).

No attendance figures are available for Pettenkofer's lectures at the Albert-Verein that would help to determine if the ventilation in the auditorium was up to his own standards, calculated, as he suggests doing in his lecture on *Wohnung*, on the basis of how much air a person inhales and exhales in an hour. One can only presume that he spoke, and his educated audience listened, in at least a passably well-oxygenated environment. Of course, his lectures do not spend time on this question; the closest they come to an assessment of the air quality is his

---

45. Pettenkofer, *Luft,* 3.

46. Ibid., 4.

47. Ibid.

.

48 Ibid., 3.

invocation of musical *Stimmung*, of developing a wholesome educational environment for a lay public, one whose teachings can gradually be transported into the mustier corners of Dresden and the wider world. In other words, he considers the format of the gathering (*Versammlung*) to arrange the audience to be receptive to reverberations progressing through an interceding airy medium; for a variety of reasons, Pettenkofer would not be able to think of his own lecture as performing hygienic work if it took place in a (literal) vacuum. I am working toward a rather facile revelation: when Pettenkofer states that "we need the air for different purposes, but primarily for two: first, as nourishment, second, for cooling the body,"[49] he is already invested in a third purpose, that of transmitting auditory information. "Good air" is not only a clean vehicle for oxygen, but an element of the infrastructure for hygienic discourse.

Reading Pettenkofer, the theorist of ventilation, tempts me to make the following analogy: like the auditory pendant of an open window, the lecturer at the podium enriches the hygienic potential of the air in the auditorium. The rules of this hygienic utopia are rather simple; attune yourself to the expert's discourse so that it may dilute and overcome the miasmatic ignorance and indolence against which hygiene claims to strive. Of course, availability does not equal uptake any more than attendance equals participation. The auditor who does not pay attention, who scoffs at Pettenkofer's claims, or who falls asleep is the leper of this arrangement and excludes himself from the community of utopian beneficiaries. This is a minor utopia, and exile is not catastrophic: the inattentive attendee will leave the auditorium with a poorer understanding of Pettenkofer's theories, a condition which is not immediately fatal. A sanatorium patient who failed to breathe would fare worse, but that example is also absurd. The

49. Ibid., p. 5.

modern German context will offer other hygienic utopias, however, where nonconformity is punished with the literal, violent, and state-sanctioned cessation of breath.

The expulsion of the unwanted and "unclean": it feels vulgar to sketch a continuum between clearing the air of a room and the projects of "racial hygiene" that will dominate the provisional utopias of my third chapter. Yet a necessary component of a biological-metabolic notion of utopia extending outward from the human body is, of course, the narrative of excretion and cleansing; accordingly, although fundamental disagreements in mission and method remained, alliances with eugenicists emerged. Social hygiene thus did its part toward creating the intellectual conditions of possibility for the *Rassenhygiene* that would form the genocidal "hygienic" task of National Socialist health and welfare authorities. The problem of bad air, from the 18th-century theories of Hufeland onward, was always a social problem: the most-discussed air contaminants were accumulated human respiratory waste products; a view of the body as an economic system could easily entertain the idea of the reproductive system, like the respiratory or digestive system, emitting "waste" products, even ones whose "concentrations" in a given populated environment could be positivistically deduced from the cultural framing of that population. These products would then logically need to be evacuated or sequestered to preserve a salutary environment for human thriving.

The eugenic theories that proliferated around and after the turn of the 20th century are too various for me to responsibly handle here; suffice it to say that while explicit racism, anti-Semitism, or even interest in negative eugenics were not prerequisites for a given thinker to support "racial hygiene" (indeed, many earlier German eugenicists were Jewish), these political programs had the most to gain from the eugenicist impulse. A hygiene only has salutary potential to those that a given text or theory includes on the "right" side of the balance sheet in the

economy of healthful work and reciprocity with nature upon which its prescriptions are founded. To be excluded from a program of hygiene—of the German official who tolerates stuffy schoolrooms, Carl Reclam writes that he "deserves to live in bad air!" —is not only to be cast out of its provisional utopia, but quite possibly to be labeled a pathogenic or otherwise undesirable agent who labors against the interests of human beings' health. [50] In other words, the processes by which health, according to a given theory, are to be maintained are more important than the bodies and populations to which they are applied. As my case studies will show, the epistemologies and systems of administration that are earnestly dedicated to the care of human health will take easily to genocidal tasks.

I will now move on to 20th-century hygiene films and their attendant organizational and textual phenomena. These will, by turns, reinforce and transform the kinds of spaces and substances associated, in the medical and pseudoscientific traditions, with hygienic behavior. An aesthetic of purifying sunlight and air will persist, in various representational and rhetorical forms, throughout, but the bureaucratic records of film production and distribution will cite other problems of creating hygienic spaces: how to maximize the penetration of hygienic information throughout the cities, towns, and countryside of Germany when practitioners and officials so frequently encounter political, financial, and material restrictions that prevent the projecting of film? How to turn the atmosphere of the movie theater, associated with stale people and lower-class air, into a space where, to fancifully apply Rikli's precepts, the element is purified by the light that streams through it? The next chapter will examine the moving image as a new and

50. Reclam, *Lebensweise,* 142.

immature strategy for infusing beneficial information into environments in which living creatures pursue projects of health.

CHAPTER 2

EMBODYING *HEIMAT*: THREE STUDIES FROM THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

In my last chapter, I reviewed certain influential conceptions of human health in the German mainstream at the start of the 20th century, both academic and esoteric. I suggested that these rested upon a conception of the body as a node in a system of critical resources with utopian and dystopian possibilities. The language used to describe the effects of good or bad air upon a body or population, for example, united scientific or pseudoscientific causality with moral judgments and strong affective cues. This process resulted in hygienic precepts that were more comprehensible to the public, and more immediately attentive to the social factors in pathology, than the emerging science of bacteriology, represented by Robert Koch. Dr. Martin Vogel, the director of the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden, published a detailed descriptive study of hygienic education practices in Germany in the 1925 volume *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge* (*Handbook of Social Hygiene and Health Care*). In the historical portion of that text, he argues that social hygiene has distinct pedagogical advantages over bacteriology when the goal is behavior modification among the general public: "One felt and knew things from the practice of real life, that not only those things you see under the microscope played a part, but also that through personal hygiene, an appropriate diet and, in general, a reasonably 'natural' lifestyle the susceptibility to and the prognosis of illnesses—not only communicable ones—is significantly influenced."[1] A hygiene focused upon everyday activities, social systems, and infrastructure worked at the right scale to be operative for non-

1. Martin Vogel, "Hygienische Volksbildung," in Gottstein, Schlossmann, and Teleky, *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge*, 1:306.

experts (as did academic medicine's *bête noire,* naturopathy—all the more reason to beat it at its own game).

The present chapter is the first in which I deal with the material archives of particular historical endeavors to map Germany as a site for hygienic improvement through the dissemination of exoteric information. My case studies lens these endeavors through technological experimentation, namely, with the new medium of moving image film. In this way, they highlight the pressures on educational technology ensembles and associated rhetorics of expert-lay address to meet the masses where and how they lived: both in terms of scale of the objects under discussion, as I mentioned above, and with a modicum of sensitivity to regional, class, professional, gender, and other differences.[2] Curt Thomalla, one of the chief protagonists of health-oriented filmmaking in the interwar period, writes about the considerations that must be taken when tailoring a combined lecture-film educational program for different audiences: "The script delivered with the film should only serve as a suggestion and a support for the lecturer's own design. After all, one will have to speak differently to Pomeranian peasants than one will in a Westphalian industrial city, to nurses differently than in a homemakers' club."[3] What Thomalla and other hygienic educators presume remains constant between these different groups is each person's desire for relatively good physical health. In order to provide each individual and each community with the information it needs to care for itself, the hygienic administrator mobilizes educators with knowledge of their target communities. These educators then furnish local pieces of a general utopian project: a German *Volk* made wise and healthy through hygienic education

2. See Scott Curtis, *The Shape of Spectatorship: Art, Science, and Early Cinema in Germany*, Film and Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), especially chapters 2 and 3.

3. Curt Thomalla, "Hygiene und soziale Medizin im Volksbelehrungsfilm," *Zeitschrift für Medizinal-Beamte und Krankenhausärzte* 35 (1922): 610.

(*hygienische Volksbelehrung*). The educational organization's challenge is thus to perform a two-phase act of acculturation. First, the healthy body, as defined by the academics and political functionaries of the *Reichsgesundheitsamt,* must be made at home in Pomerania or Westphalia, among farmers or miners or office workers. This must happen so that those people can feel an allegiance to the body thus defined that is compatible with the other ways in which they describe themselves. In this chapter, I view a central problem of hygienic education as the task of making the hygienic body a coequal form of *Heimat* for the lay person whose feelings, thoughts, and activities are conditioned by cultural geography.

The present chapter occupies itself with a set of state welfare interests working in the field of hygienic education for a mass public in Weimar Germany—intervening in lay people's conceptions of the ways that they inhabited everyday spaces, with the goal of keeping the body safe from the dangers to good health that might be found there. I approach this work by linking practices of personal hygiene to the concept of *Heimat*, reading those practices as schemata for creating and maintaining spaces of security (variously valenced, and variously defined) in which to live. In turn, this approach permits me to view a set of 1920s forays into a relatively new ensemble of sociopolitical and technological practices (the moving image) as efforts to evaluate those practices for whether and how they can belong in those spaces of security. When experts and administrators work with moving-image film as a medium for public hygiene instruction, they leave behind proposals for how the psychological and material characteristics of cinema can shape *Heimat* figurations both large and small with the goal of facilitating an equally broad spectrum of forms of security and well-being. What I am calling *Heimat* ranges in scale from the population or nation down to the immediate physical surroundings, and even the surface and interior, of a particular human body. One of the most curious aspects of these case studies is how

the coordination of the systems involved, including flows of money, materials, and people, mutates in practice. These mutations, though they often consign the projects themselves to historical insignificance, nonetheless deserve to be preserved as artifacts of the ways in which technological utopianism functioned in a highly specific field—a field that envisioned itself as having intimate access to human beings in their living spaces, political access to the shape of the nation, and technological access to the future of pedagogical representation.

My case studies center upon three film projects—two completed, one proposed and abandoned—undertaken under the auspices of the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung* hereafter referred to as and its subsidiary organizations in the 1920s. In the 1922 film *Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande* (*Malchen, the Innocent Country Girl,* dir. Alexander Erdmann-Jesnitzer), the title character transcends her country origins to become a hygienically and culturally advanced woman. The film was made by the *Landesverein für Volkswohlfahrt* (Regional Association for Social Services) in the Prussian province of Hanover. The film prints themselves traveled from their origins in Hanover throughout Germany, and the administrators supervising this process discusses the dual hygienic services it has the potential to provide to its home province: both pecuniary, through leasing fees, and corporeal, in the form of hygienic education.[4] In the film's narrative, a figure who embodies the rural *Heimat* (and its titular "innocence") confronts the unhygienic habits with which her home has left her. She does so in a film that was a locally-funded excursion into a medium whose efficacy in the field of hygienic

4. Synopsis of *Malchen,* 1922, 352-3 Medizinalkollegium (1814-1964) II N 35 Band I, Staatsarchiv Hamburg, folio 64r (hereafter cited as Medizinalkollegium Hamburg); Curt Sander to *Landesausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung (Gesundheitsamt) Hamburg*, November 1, 1922, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 54r; Curt Sander to *Landräte/Magistrate der Provinz Hannover,* November 25, 1922, Hann. 180 Lüneburg Acc. 3/021 (Regierungspräsident Lüneburg) Nr. 179, Niedersächsisches Landeshauptarchiv, Hannover.

education was still unfounded. In the 1927 animated short *Majanka the Fly and her Adventures* (*Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer,* Kraska-Film)*,* the title character betrays her species, counseling a rural community of humans on the importance of eradicating flies that spread disease. The turncoat fly guides a doctor through her world so that viewers might gain an overview of rural hygienic practices and problems. The film itself is one of the technological highlights of a concerted nationwide campaign to bring hygienic education to the countryside.[5] The film creates a world in which it is possible for disease vectors to accede to remorse and rehabilitate themselves, trading one *Heimat* for another; the film object itself moves in a system that prizes the accessibility of rural country to new educational technologies, creating a new home for hygiene via infrastructural inroads into the countryside. Both of these films have since been lost, and my analysis will be derived from the reviews, synopses, promotional material, and correspondence that remains. This chapter then turns to a film that was never made at all: in the negotiations over a proposal for a color film intended for rural hygiene education, experts weighed the attraction of color film against the funding it would require, using the urban-rural divide in arguments for or against the expense. The resulting debate both casts the countryside as a potential site of modernization for film culture and illuminates tensions between the technological adventurousness and the technological conservatism of period hygiene educators.[6] Although film did not fundamentally change the project of hygienic education in this period, the

5. Brochure for *Majanka,* 1927, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, folio 120r (hereafter cited as Preußisches Kulturministerium); *Bericht des Reichsausschusses für hygienische Volksbelehrung über das Geschäftsjahr 1927/28*, ed. C. Adam (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1928), 42, BArch R 154 (Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung)/1124, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

6. Carl Adam *to Landesausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung Hamburg*, July 17, 1928, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2; *Deutsche Verein für Säuglings- und Kleinkinderschutz, Landeszentrale Hamburg* to Georg Hermann Sieveking, July 23, 1928, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

material I examine shows that it forced administrators to reimagine and remap German *Heimat*, in both its most intimate and domestic and its most collective or geographical manifestations, as sites for technological innervation and as comprising possible nodes for the practices of communication that shaped the psyche of interwar Europe.

Notes on Approach and Sources

This set of perspectives recalls Christian Bonah and Anja Laukötter's programmatic description of motion pictures in medicine as "boundary objects" that reside along "geographic boundaries (national/international); professional boundaries; narrative boundaries (facts/fiction); and, finally, boundaries of communication (information/persuasion/propaganda)."[7] They take the phrase from Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer, whose essay "Institutional Ecology" is a foundational text in the subdiscipline of critical infrastructure studies. In that essay, Star and Griesemer ask: "How do heterogeneity and cooperation coexist, and with what consequences for managing information?"[8] Laukötter and Bonah allege that motion pictures in the service of medicine are subject to unique pressures. They are largely defined by the ways in which they mediate between the disciplinary demands of the medical establishment and the aesthetic possibilities and technological challenges of motion pictures.[9] My theoretical intervention of bringing *Heimat* into the equation grows organically out of their logic. *Heimat* is relevant to the

7. Christian Bonah and Anja Laukötter, "Moving Pictures and Medicine in the First Half of the 20th Century: Some Notes on International Historical Developments and the Potential of Medical Film Research," *Gesnerus* 66 (2009): 137.

8. Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39," *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (1989): 414.

9. Bonah and Laukötter, "Moving Pictures," 137.

boundary object because the boundary object must prove that it belongs to, is at home in, different schemes of valuation. In the case of the film in the service of public hygiene, the successful film will use institutional resources efficiently, deliver a message approved by medical professionals, and be formally engaging enough for an audience to sit through (perhaps even paying a nominal admission fee). Its value in the repertoire of educational tools and in the exhibition context of the filmic event cannot be taken for granted, but must be proven in the currencies of these different disciplinary and technological homes. Given the context of personal hygiene, a significant way in which the medium's effectiveness will be registered in my case studies is a set of hygienic traces it leaves in the literal homes—or at least the intimate living and working spaces—of the subjects who make up its audience.

By tapping into the rich and ideologically fraught semantic vein of German *Heimat*, I hope to better understand the possibilities for how technology can shape the way Western subjects feel "at home" in their bodies (squaring traditions and habits centered upon the body with norms propagated by academic medicine). But I was also guided to make this connection through the language used to express and administer the project of hygienic education in interwar Germany, as well as to situate that project among other tasks undertaken in the national interest. As I noted earlier, two of the films I discuss below were proposed as part of a rural education campaign. In support of this campaign, the *Reichsausschuss* published an essay that proposed measures for modernizing hygiene in the countryside while proclaiming that "the countryside is the source of the German people's power [*deutscher Volkskraft*]."[10] Local public health functionaries associated with the *Reichsausschuss* and its educational campaigns frequently referenced personal experiences with the populations in their assigned regions. In the topology of

10. "Allgemeine Vorschläge für eine hygienische Volksbelehrung auf dem Lande," (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1927), 1, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 125r.

Weimar *Kulturfilm* and *Lehrfilm,* health-related communications treaded the same infrastructural pathways as those of groups like local and national organizations for *Heimatpflege,* for the preservation of folk culture, who were also moderately significant producers and exhibitors of educational film. Martin Vogel describes the hygienic educator as working in a "*volkstümlich*" mode. That German term primarily references broad comprehensibility in this context, but also carries a strong resonance of the cultural specificity of folkways and traditions.[11] He also argues that educators should prioritize "hygiene free of charge [*kostlenlose Hygiene*]," which makes use of ambient elements like "light, air, cleanliness, etc....as opposed to the '*Komforthygiene'* that is only accessible to the well-off."[12] In so doing, he affixes monetary value and class distinctions to the materials that I explored, in the last chapter, as compromising economic systems of hygiene. But he also recalls the material culture of health as, like the more literal definition of *Heimat,* a sort of birthright—one might recall that Carl Reclam, whose hygienic encyclopedia I discussed in the last chapter, theorized human beings as "*Luftthiere."*

In her 1990 book *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, Celia Applegate offers a classic elaboration on the notion of *Heimat:* it is "what both region and nation have in common: the effort, for better or for worse, to maintain 'community' against the economic, political, and cultural forces that would scatter it."[13] Furthermore, it "tried to make sensible at least small pieces of that changing society, brushing them with a false patina of fixedness and familiarity."[14] By exploring the integral role of modernization in producing *Heimat,* she makes

---

11. Vogel, "Hygienische Volksbildung," *Handbuch,* 305.

12. Ibid., 310.

13. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 6.

14. Ibid., 10.

explicit a dialectic that Johannes von Moltke would later sharpen for use with visual culture technologies in his 2005 *No Place Like Home: Locations of* Heimat *in German Cinema.* There, Moltke adapts the tension between cultural dynamism and stasis for his study of popular film, writing "I aim to show how different aspects of spatial, economic, social, or cultural modernization leave their mark on the place of *Heimat*."[15] Since then, Friederika Eigler has pulled together new currents in critical writing on *Heimat,* especially those informed by theories of place, space, and the everyday by the likes of Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, to argue that bringing *Heimat* into the "spatial turn" of 21st-century cultural studies would "contribute to the rethinking of place and space just as much as discourses in the social sciences concerned with analyzing material space-power constellations."[16] After Eigler, I venture the following operational definition of *Heimat* as a topos of hygienic education: *Heimat* comprises both the most intimate places of human being, including domestic locations and the surfaces and spaces of the body itself, and the manifest space-power constellations that translate cultural geographies into political and administrative ones.

Writing in *Der Spiegel* on the "crisis of the notion of *Heimat* in the globalized world," Peter Sloterdijk situates *Heimat* between private emotional experiences of safety and belonging and the protective impersonality of the nation-state: "It has...been the cultural achievement of the modern nation-state to enable, for a majority of its inhabitants, a kind of domesticity, that simultaneously imaginary and real immune structure, that could be experienced as the convergence of location and self or as regional identity in the positive sense of the word. This

15. Johannes von Moltke, *No Place like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 17.

16. Friederika Eigler, "Critical Approaches to Heimat and the 'Spatial Turn,'" *New German Critique* 39, no. 1 (2012): 48.

achievement was most striking where the domestication of state power into a welfare state had occurred most successfully."[17] Sloterdijk's tendency to figure phenomena of social cohesion and differentiation in the terms of immunology tempts me to depart into allegory, but that figure is much more useful for the affective congruence it suggests between corporeal health and the sense of personal stability associated with having a place (regional, architectural, professional, or cultural) of one's own. In this particular quotation, these affects of security are facilitated by the state administration of a social good that is presumed to be universal. Ulf Schmidt references the same causes and components of utopian domesticity as Sloterdijk while directly referring to the relationship between medicine, state, and (cinema) technology: for Schmidt, "an uninterrupted belief in the technological, scientific, and sociocultural advancement of industrial society comes to light" with filmmakers working in service of "the notion that, in a modern industrial society, health and social problems were to be solved through the interplay of scientific research and the interventionist social state as well as through a systematic, permanent practice of health education."[18] The irony of *Heimat* is that the executors of this technocratic vision also recognized how essential it was that sentimental appeals to tradition and the visual and textual evocation of premodern pastorality be part and parcel of it; to co-opt Moltke's language, modernity and tradition "leave their marks" upon each other.

In the remainder of this chapter, I study instances in which the new visual and communicative technology of motion picture film imprints itself simultaneously on three of the sites where people sought stability (and often enough "fixedness and familiarity") amid both ordinary and extraordinary hazards to established norms of health, society, and homeland. The

17. Peter Sloterdijk, "Der gesprengte Behälter. Notiz über die Krise des Heimatbegriffs in der globalisierten Welt," *Spiegel Spezial*, no. 6 (1999): 24.

18. Ulf Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme und Propaganda in der Weimarer Republik," *Gesundheitskommunikation* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2000), 78.

first of these sites comprises the intimate spaces in, of, and around a specific human body, including the immediate topologies of domesticity and labor. The forms of instability in question there arise on the spectrum between sickness and health, particularly as visited upon the human body by the conditions of its customary environments. The second site is that of professional, organized, and learned stewardship of the bodies and places that make up the first, an activity practiced by doctors, nurses, and hygienic educators, as well as by public health administrators and social workers. The forms of instability in question there arise on the spectrum between good and poor practice: between fulfilling the obligations of one's institutional position or failing in them. The administrative office or medical profession undergirds not only the financial well-being, but also the social legibility of the individuals who inhabit them; it is kept up by a material and textual apparatus of honorific titles, institutional letterhead, formal turns of written phrase, and stewardship of institutional resources of which such offices are neither the originating suppliers nor the end users. The third site is that of political and cultural geography: a container susceptible to the composition and stirrings of the biopolitical fluid that fills it, a human population. The forms of instability in question there arise on the spectrum between the coherence and fragmentation of a given nation, province, or other political space, which may, in a metaphorical evocation of the first site, be figured as the health or sickness of a body politic. What I am figuring as a *Heimat* here is thus the somewhat mythologized, even utopian anchor position that allows for the construction of the value of material things. To anchor a schema of value in a *Heimat* is to attach that schema to something that presents itself as either quasi-natural and ahistorical or contingent and constructed, depending on the angle of the critical light in which one views it.

If a canon were to be formed from the films that anchor the present scholarship on the body of human health-oriented *Kulturfilme* in interwar Germany, what would it comprise and what possibilities for expansion would it present? Answering this question for the Weimar period brings up several productive veins of scholarship. Both alone and together with Christian Bonah, Anja Laukötter has helped to re-ground the study of medicine-proximate cinematography in programmatic essays like "Moving Pictures and Medicine in the First Half of the 20th Century: Some Notes on International Historical Developments and the Potential of Medical Film Research," which argued in 2009 that "medical films need to be addressed as a coherent audiovisual corpus."[19] Her further work on the subject fleshes this corpus out around a spine of educational films about sexually-transmitted diseases running through Weimar hygiene film, including *Die Geschlechtskrankheiten und ihre Folgen* (*Sexually Transmitted Diseases and their Consequences,* dir. Nicholas Kaufmann and Curt Thomalla, 1918), *Falsche Scham* (*False Shame,* dir. Rudolf Biebrach, 1925), *Geißel der Menschheit* (*The Scourge of Humanity,* dir. Erich R. Schwab, 1926), and *Feind im Blut* (*Enemy in the Blood,* dir. Walther Ruttmann, 1931). Particular areas of focus include the manipulation of emotion and affect and the use of animation and optical special effects. She explores the latter set of problems in detail with respect to the cancer education film *Krebs* (*Cancer,* Verlag wissenschaftlicher Filme, 1931) and an international collection of animated films including the German series *Lustige Hygiene* (*Merry Hygiene,* Excentric-Film Zorn und Tiller, 1927-1931).[20] Anita Gertiser provides another

19. Bonah and Laukötter, "Moving Pictures," 143.

20. See Anja Laukötter, "'Anarchie der Zellen.' Geschichte und Medien der Krebsaufklärung in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 7 (2010): 55–74; Laukötter, "(Film-) Bilder und medizinische Aufklärung im beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert: Evidenz und Emotionen," *AugenBlick* 50 (2011): 24–38; Laukötter, "Medien der Sexualaufklärung. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven," *NTM. Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und*

monograph on the Weimar tradition of sexual health films, using a Foucauldian framework to examine visual strategies of persuasion and the consolidation of the power of academic medicine.[21] Philipp Osten provides a detailed historical analysis of UFA's *Kulturfilm* activities (several of the films named above being UFA productions, as were numerous other prominent hygiene *Kulturfilme*), particularly in medical and hygienic contexts, laying bare many of the institutional through-lines that united documentary filmmaking through the early decades of the 20th century.[22] The "popular version" of the *Steinach-Film* (dir. Curt Thomalla, 1922), a film about the sensational claims of Austrian endocrinologist Eugen Steinach to have developed a method to reverse aging, also receives pride of place in several studies of the relationship between *Kulturfilm* policy and the human body, particularly as it is not only a patent expression of technocratic utopianism, but also quite text-heavy, designed for public screening without the help of a lecturer.[23] The 1923 tuberculosis film *Die weiße Seuche* (The White Plague, dir. Nicholas Kaufmann) is another title referenced frequently in the literature—both in

---

Medizin 20 (2012): 225–32; Laukötter, "Wissen als Animation. Zur Transformation der Anschaulichkeit im Gesundheitsaufklärungsfilm," *Montage A/V. Zeitschrift für Theorie und Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation* 2 (2013): 79–96; Christian Bonah and Anja Laukötter, "Introduction: Screening Diseases. Films on Sex Hygiene in Germany and France in the First Half of the 20th Century," *Gesnerus* 72, no. 1 (2015): 5–14; Laukötter, "Vom Ekel zur Empathie. Strategien der Wissensvermittlung im Sexualaufklärungsfilm des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Erkenne Dich selbst!: Strategien der Sichtbarmachung des Körpers im 20. Jahrhundert* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 305–19.

21. Anita Gertiser, *Falsche Scham: Strategien der Überzeugung in Aufklärungsfilmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten (1918 - 1935)* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 32–33.

22. Philipp Osten, "Emotion, Medizin und Volksbelehrung: die Entstehung des «deutschen Kulturfilms»," *Gesnerus* 66, no. 3 (2009): 67–102.

23 See Osten, "Emotion;" Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme;" as well as Rainer Herrn, "Die Darstellung des Arztes in zwei frühen Sexualaufklärungsfilmen," in *Frankensteins Kinder. Film und Medizin*, ed. Jutta Phillips-Krug and Cecilia Hausheer (Stuttgart: Cantz, 1997), 55–65.

contemporary pieces (generally favorable) by prominent hygienic educators, and also in recent scholarship discussing the failure of its dry didactic address to compel period audiences.[24]

I have chosen to work outside this "canon" in this chapter—or rather, to continue developing it in a direction to which Ulf Schmidt has gestured (his 2000 article "Sozialhygienische Filme und Propaganda in der Weimarer Republik" references two of the three films that anchor my case studies). These film projects offer the chance to probe the intersection of corporeal health, regionally defined and materially mediated *Heimat* affects, and articulation of the nation in the matter of narrative structures, the filmic aesthetics of place, and the institutional discourses that shape filmmaking, distribution, and exhibition. My case studies also trace multiple ways in which hygienic discourses "escaped" their de facto metropolitan homes of Berlin and Dresden and settled elsewhere in Germany—whether as films made elsewhere in Germany that attained nationwide distribution, or as Berlin-made, centrally-distributed pieces meant to remedy what academic experts increasingly viewed as their unsustainable neglect of hygiene education in the countryside. Accordingly, this is a selection of films made by entities other than UFA (although two of the three case studies nonetheless involve films made or planned with scripts by Curt Thomalla, head of UFA's medical film archive and screenwriter, if not also director, for most of the more "canonical" films mentioned previously). This chapter intervenes historically by broadening the scholarship on the period to

---

24. For period references by important officeholders in the *Reichsausschuss* and the Prussian *Landesausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* see Carl Adam, "Der Tuberkulosefilm 'Die weiße Seuche,'" *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung* 19, no. 6 (1922): 187–88. and Karl Bornstein, "Hygienische Volksbelehrung in Wort und Bild!," *Ärztliches Vereinsblatt für Deutschland. Organ des Deutschen Ärztevereinsbundes* 51, no. 1257 (1922): 156–59. For further period references see "Die medizinischen Volksbelehrungsfilme der Kulturabteilung der Universum-Film-Aktiengesellschaft, Berlin," *Schleswig-holsteinische Wohlfahrtspfleger* 5, no. 7 (1922): 92–93 and Nicholas Kaufmann, "10 Jahre Kulturfilm-Arbeit," *Ufa-Feuilleton*, no. 25 (June 20, 1929): 5–7. For a recent secondary discussion, see Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme," *Gesundheitskommunikation,* 69.

comment on films that left extensive archival traces in the records of the *Reichsausschuss* and its subsidiary committees, but have only been mentioned in passing in the literature. It intervenes theoretically by investigating the entanglement of modern practices for optimizing and operating bodily, administrative, and technological systems, especially when those entanglements are visualized in rural settings not paradigmatic for industrial modernity.

***Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande* (1921)**

Malchen, subtitled "*humoristischer Lehrfilm über die Gesundheitspflege des Täglichen Lebens*" (Humorous *Lehrfilm* on the Hygiene of Everyday Life), was successfully produced and distributed by a regional social services office rather than a commercial studio. As Ulf Schmidt has noted and as period reviews make clear, the film was also an early pivot away from the descriptive didacticism of earlier hygiene films toward a style that pairs its teaching with a comedic or melodramatic narrative, a style most prominently represented by 1925's *Falsche Scham.*[25] Finally, as its title would indicate, the film's pedagogical and narrative content is framed around the rural-urban divide of the time, which places it in touch with a set of problems that would occupy the *Reichsausschuss* and its subsidiaries for years to come (as my later case studies will explore in a different light). As late as 1928, at least one regional hygiene organization reported owning and exhibiting a copy of the film.[26]

I argue that this film's distribution archive can be read as one kind of utopian proposal to create security for bodies and populations in Weimar Germany: an administrator can perform his

25. Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme," *Gesundheitskommunikation,* 70.

26. The *Provinzialausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung* in Schleswig-Holstein lists *Malchen* as the single film it owns in the yearly report of the *Reichsausschuss. Bericht des Reichsausschusses für hygienische Volksbelehrung über das Geschäftsjahr 1927/28*, ed. Carl Adam (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei,1928), 93, BArch R 154 (Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung)/1124, Bundesarchiv, Berlin (hereafter cited as Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung).

technocratic duty by using the charm of rurality and *Volkstümlichkeit* to right the deficiencies of rural life and by using innovative implementation and persuasive marketing of technological media to secure valuable intellectual property for his health organization. *Malchen* mobilized *Heimat* on a narrative level, having the title character neutralize the hygienic problems brought upon her by her country upbringing. The written archive of *Malchen* also describes kinds of proposed environments in which the members of the public targeted by the hygiene lessons are to take part in the educational process and in which the film is screened, as well as the process of integrating the film project into the administrative topology of both tasks and places in which the film's use must be justified and carried out. Introducing, distributing and exhibiting a successful film about hygienic practices was a way of securing a stable administrative position for the Hanover *Provinzialausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung* (which was, like the Hanover *Provinzial-Lichtbildstelle* or educational film center, a subdivision of the province's *Landesverein für Volkswohlfahrt*); the security such a position provides was needed in order to confront the administrative irritants of financial hardship, imperfect organization, and risk of mass disinterest threatening an ambitious hygiene education project. In other words, the Hanover hygienists linked together tradition and modernity in service of a modified, improved *Heimat* with bureaucratic power.

The pastoral face of the rural German *Heimat* serves a dual purpose in the film *Malchen*. The character types, activities, and settings of the country presumably serve as guarantors of spectatorial pleasure, as does the folksy nature of the scenes and language (they illustrate a text that one reviews describes as "loosely based upon Wilhelm Busch").[27] The pedagogical work of the film, however, is a hygienic critique of this *Heimat.* However playfully, *Heimat* is relegated

27. Reproduction of review from *Viersener Zeitung,* Oct. 11, 1922, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 56r.

to the role of the hygienic bad object, a set of things that one must rework one's relationship to in order to be healthy and at home in modernity. *Malchen* consists of a humorous frame narrative in which the rustic title character, a swine-tender, is abandoned by her romantic interest because she "is not cultivated enough for him."[28] She responds by taking a domestic position in the home of a doctor's family. There, the audience learns about hygienic principles, organized over the course of a typical day; in caring for one of the doctor's children Malchen learns "the basics of skin care, dental care, home gymnastics, clothing, etc."[29] All the while, she and the doctor's "doltish nephew" provide amusing examples of how these hygienic principles ought *not* to work.[30] The doctor and his wife split the work of developing Malchen into typically gendered roles; the wife teaches her the hygiene of the kitchen and the dining table, while the doctor allows her to sit in on afternoon appointments in his office, where she sees another parade of hygienic failures: "the corseted secretary with cardiac illness, the farmer's boy who is overheated from his inappropriate clothing, the spoiled only child, etc."[31] Finally, Malchen "acquire[s] so much culture [*Kultur*] that she soon outgrows [her former love interest] Franz," who must beg her for forgiveness.[32] The narrative finished with an engagement scene, "in front of the bear cage at the zoo," no less, which "offers every narrative-hungry [*romanbedürftig*] film spectator a satisfying ending."[33]

---

28. Synopsis of *Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande*, 1922, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 64r.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

The film thus portrays a fish-out-of-water narrative that specifically thematizes a country person's encounter with intimate and professional spaces associated with academic medicine—namely, a doctor's home and his practice—as a transformative experience that equips her permanently with so-called *Kultur. Kultur*, a German term as loaded with thick culturally-specific resonances as *Heimat,* seems to represent here not only abstract mobility out of the more ignominious qualities of her native milieu (Malchen initially receives Franz' letter of rejection beside her pigs' manure lagoon), and does not only confer upon her the qualities necessary to ground a hygienic home of her own (starting by attracting a partner).[34] It also creates a linkage between the modest, necessary physical practices one undertakes in the intimate spaces around one's body through cleanliness, exercise, proper attire, child care, and the like, and the spiritual cleansing propagated by the forms of classicist aesthetic culture that had shaped German modernity since the Enlightenment and would continue to make up one of its utopian grammars through the official visual culture of National Socialism. The film's more instructional sections involving Malchen are followed by a montage of "stunning" gymnastic sequences and interwoven with images of classical statuary.[35] The latter, according to the official synopsis, should evoke an antiquity in which "bodily *Kultur* was connected with *Kultur* of the mind and soul."[36] This synopsis does not indicate whether Malchen returns to her *Heimat,* or what changes she might have brought about there. It is difficult to imagine the film concluding without redeeming the countryside for hygiene in some way. But the film's valence seems clear: that simple people can and should learn hygiene and *Kultur* from educated elites, and that hygiene

34. See Curtis, *Shape,* 144-45.

35. Synopsis of *Malchen,* Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 64r.

36. Ibid.

and *Kultur* are likely to spread through exposure, through inhabiting hygienic spaces and becoming attuned to the practices that prevail there.

By its nature, the film propagated public gatherings whose parameters were set by health educators, mainly by doctors. The screening room thus formed an echo of the screen doctor's home and practice. The film was intended to be exhibited as a part of a three-hour event that also included a lecture with diapositive slides, often delivered by the film's creator, Carl Dohrn.[37] This was one possibility for how the film might be screened: in an educational facility or event with medical professionals like Dohrn speaking. Dohrn's own letter describes elements of this learning environment, even going so far as to suggest designs and solutions for minor pieces of exhibition infrastructure, such as how to make admission tickets.[38] His letter appears fashioned to encourage the school and community administrators associated with screenings to think of the film not only as a single moving picture, but also as an event and event space with many different activities and materials at play. All of these could be fashioned and adjusted in cooperation between the doctors and educators—the representatives of *Kultur*—and local pedagogues with intimate knowledge of the public health needs of their *Heimat,* be it urban or rural. Another venue, of course, was the commercial movie theater, as part of a program including a popular feature-length film.[39]

---

37. Transcription of report by Anne Perlmann in *Der Kinematograph*, Dec. 30, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 62r; Dr. Carl Dohrn to *Gesundheitsamt* Hamburg, January 20, 1924, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 71r-71v.

38. Carl Dohrn to *Gesundheitsamt* Hamburg, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 71r.

39. Hr. Lubliner of Ostdeutsche Lichtspielhaus-Gesellschaft m.b.H., Königsberg, to Carl Dohrn, October 11, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 57r.

In his review of *Malchen,* later *Reichsausschuss* chairman Carl Adam metaphorizes good health as a stable investment in a time of rampant inflation: "At a time in which money and property have a very limited value and only health and employability are secure possessions, enough can never be done to increase the bodily performance of the individual."[40] As dubious as Adam's assumption that individuals "possess" their own health and labor may be, what it signifies here is that government hygienic projects are simultaneously public and private investments in human capital. The hyperinflated German mark, which bore the name and styles of the *Deutsches Reich,* was not a guarantor of personal or social security; neither was one's home or business. Neither of these, in other words, could serve as valid supports for a person's need to feel situated and secure; to have a *Heimat.* In such dire times, the body, as an optimizable and pragmatic set of capacities, must underwrite the spiritual and material shelter that gives that term its resonance. Caring for one's *Heimat* in 1922 was a task to be undertaken in the most intimate spaces: the systems of the body and its immediate domestic, ergonomic, social, and sexual contexts.

What exists of the film, at present, is a collection of references in multiple archives; the main texts I will engage with are two letters, with their corresponding attachments, sent by Dr. Curt Sander, the director of the *Landesverein für Volkswohlfahrt*, the *Provinzialausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung*, and the *Provinzial-Lichtbildstelle* (Provincial Image and Film Library) in the province of Hanover. One letter was sent to a group of recipients within the province itself: the local *Landräte* (district authorities) and *Magistrate* (municipal authorities). The other was sent throughout Germany, addressed to the sister organizations of Sander's own:

40. Carl Adam, "Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande, humoristischer Lehrfilm über die Gesundheitspflege des tägl. Lebens, von Kreisarzt Dr. Karl Dohrn, Hannover," November 1, 1922, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 61r.

the *Provinzialausschüsse* ("provincial committees," in Prussia) and the *Landesausschüsse* ("state committees," in the German free states and Hanseatic cities) *für hygienische Volksbelehrung*. Though these two letters were written in the same month and bear the signature of the same administrator, each presents a subtly different picture of how the film *Malchen* is to be assigned value.

In the Hanover letter, the film makes up the entirety of the educational material Sander promotes; the imperative that the film "also" play in its *"Heimatprovinz"* seems designed to empathize with an administrative topology viewed from the perspective of a local official: on the first order of importance regional/administrative *Heimat,* then the *Reich,* then the world. Sander devotes much of the letter to offering logistical, pedagogical, and economic advice to reassure cash-strapped localities that film screenings could be sustainable and effective, even in a time of inflation. In the letter to the other *Ausschüsse*, Sander again tailored his message to his readers, choosing this time both to show that the film could strike an elusive balance between didacticism and entertainment, and to situate the film within the portfolio of a media-making entity, the Hanover *Landesverein für Volkswohlfahrt*, which also worked in more proven (and much cheaper) media like the illustrated leaflet.

The letter to the provincial *Landräte* and *Magistrate* focused exclusively upon the film *Malchen,* which was screenwritten by the prolific Hanover *Kreisarzt* (district medical officer) and educator Dr. Carl Dohrn. The film purports to teach its audience about "the hygiene of daily life, about the dangers of tuberculosis, frequenting pubs [*des Kneipenlebens*], unsatisfactory

housing [*des Wohnungselends*], and rickets."[41] Sander writes, "how highly this film's importance is estimated can be seen by the purchases of copies by several provinces and states, both in Germany and abroad. It must be striven for that the film also plays throughout our home province [*Heimatprovinz*] and educates the population about the fundamental requirements of a healthful life [*eines gesundheitsgemäßen Lebens*]."[42] After discussing the rental price and some possible local strategies for cost-sharing, Sander reminds his addressees that "price may be no object when the goal is to give our population guidance toward recovery [*Wiedergesundung*]." An appreciation for economic hardship, in other words, does not cloud the ethical imperative of technologically advanced hygienic education—rather, it reinforces it.

To make such a hygiene the norm in the province simply requires a sharing of financial burdens between all local entities with an interest in improving hygiene—foremost, in the members of the public themselves. Ignoring the period's frequent debates on whether or not admission ought to be charged for screenings of educational films, Sander simply writes that "admission costs of 20 Mark per person are happily paid, and in this way all costs will be covered."[43] Likewise, he suggests allowing local social, educational, and business groups to negotiate bulk ticket pricing for their members and employees. These mitigation strategies were advanced to persuade localities to plan screenings of *Malchen*. But they also show that hygiene was not only a set of tendencies for the betterment of individual health, but also created forms of social cooperation that could be propagated all the more effectively because of the inconvenient financial and logistical complications associated with the medium of film.

---

41. Curt Sander to *Landräte/Magistrate der Provinz Hannover,* November 25, 1922, Hann. 180 Lüneburg Acc. 3/021 (Regierungspräsident Lüneburg) Nr. 179, Niedersächsisches Landeshauptarchiv, Hannover.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

Sander's letter to his sister organizations does not only rethink this vision of a hygienic present as a more perfectly networked, cost-sharing collective on the national level—it reverses the geographical argument he used in the other letter. Instead of suggesting that the film's success outside Hanover needed to be duplicated in the province, Sander writes, now, of the film's popularity in the *Heimat* in order to foreshadow continuing nationwide success: "We required two copies for our service area, the province Hanover, in order to meet all requests, [and] also the *Ausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung* in other provinces, states and countries have purchased prints of the film."[44] Where the letter to the Hanover *Landräte* and *Magistrate* implies that the province Hanover, as the film's *Heimat,* is entitled to the benefits that film is already conferring upon the nation at large, the nationwide letter situates Hanover as merely another of the many locations in Germany and abroad where demand for the film is high. Sander attaches nine newspaper articles and personal testimonials on the value of *Malchen*: eight of these originate from outside the province, three are from cinema owners or film publications, one is from a medical journal, and three are from professional educators or social services providers (including one detailed formal endorsement from Dr. Curt Adam, one of Sander's immediate superiors in the national hierarchy of hygiene educators). Correspondingly, Sander notes in his letter that the film's "value…[is] recognized by experts in hygiene as well as in the film industry."[45] The second half of the letter is dedicated to promoting hygiene leaflets published by the *Landesverein*, also written by Dr. Dohrn; a sampling of these is attached as well, after the testimonials on *Malchen.*

---

44. Curt Sander to *Landesausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung (Gesundheitsamt) Hamburg*, November 1, 1922, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 54r.

45. Ibid.

In these passages, Sander combines multiple strategies for describing the film's value. While the nationwide and international interest in the film affirm that the film is worth showing, the educational efficacy of *Malchen* is augmented by an additional emotional factor when the film is shown to its home audience. That home audience, furthermore, is still in a deficient state of physical and economic health from the war that ended four years earlier, as evidenced by Sander's choice of the term *Wiedergesundung*: recovery as "becoming-healthy-again." That deficient state of health makes the value of effective hygienic instruction incommensurable with a scale of costs measurable in the inflated German mark. Finally, Sander prefaces his negotiations of the value of exhibiting *Malchen* in the province with a listing of the hygienic concerns the film addresses. In 1922, motion pictures were still in the early stages of being used as an educational medium in Germany, for hygiene or other topics. In this letter, Sander implies that the hygienic use value of a particular film—and, by association, of the medium itself—is something negotiated in at least three interconnected registers of political and experiential space. One comprises the intimate spaces and surroundings of a human body (the state of its lungs, the establishments it visits, the home it keeps); the others are the *Heimatprovinz* and the German *Reich*. Sander does not feel obliged to defend the film's capacity to contribute to public health; when he insists it be used to aid the provincial population's *Wiedergesundung,* he seems to take this point as a given. In the rhetorical world of this letter, film screenings seem to equal hygiene and recovery, and marshalling the resources to screen *Malchen* more broadly in the province is the only form of hygienic care for the local population that Sander chooses to describe. This fact makes of the letter, more so than Sander's letter to his colleagues at the other *Ausschüsse,* a kind of textual enclosure that caricatures the considerations at play in promoting a hygiene film, or indeed any article of teaching material, in this fashion.

Sander places the film in the context of a wide set of educational materials spanning both moving-image photography and print, and covering a broader range of public health problems (for example, one of Dohrn's leaflets addresses sexually-transmitted illnesses, a topic never mentioned in connection to the *Malchen* film). Rather than appealing to their duties to their *Heimat* and to their local populations, as he did in his home province, Sander informs his colleagues elsewhere in the *Reich* that certain important groups of people have responded well to the film: on the "expert" side of the equation, motion-picture and hygiene professionals; on the "lay" side, audiences of ordinary spectators. The testimonials he includes to confirm this give a rough picture of the different kinds of assimilation processes that commentators from varying professions envisioned for a successful educational picture. Adam prefaces his description of the film with the statement "film has recently placed itself in [hygienic education's] service," and this narrative, whereby film is assimilated into pedagogy, is echoed by pedagogues and professional film commentators alike.[46] A school director from Dresden writes that "showing the film in the upper classes of the *Volksschule* promises to be quite useful", while *Kinematograph* contributor Anne Perlmann writes that the film is a tool for reaching "uneducated people" who are "childlike" and require "teaching through play."[47] The converse narrative is also in place: a theater operator proposes a place for the educational enterprise in a nightly film program by noting that *Malchen* "is not [a film] that one would set as the main feature in a program, but it

46. Carl Adam, "Malchen, die Unschuld vom Lande," Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 61r.

47. Karl Freyer and Helene Vogt of the 54th *Volksschule*, Dresden, to Carl Dohrn, September 19, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 58r; transcript of report by Anne Perlmann in *Der Kinematograph*, December 30, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 62r.

could be played as a comedy alongside a major film for any audience."[48] Finally, one adult educator enthuses that the film's marriage of didacticism and narrative was a pivotal proof of concept in the culture film debate: "I see the opportunity to awaken interest for the *Lehrfilm* and thereby to secure it a permanent place in the film world."[49] These accounts demonstrate that the film's mobility, portability, and versatility had to be sufficient to make it appeal to the pragmatic standards of varying professions.

The archival record gives reasons why Hanover might be a likely place for such a film to arise. In March 1921, around the time of the film's production, the *Landesverein* held a multi-day training course for doctors involved in the public welfare in the province. Sander offered a seminar titled "Methodik und Mittel der Volksaufklärung. Organisation der Wohlfahrtspflege in der Provinz" (Methods and Materials for Public Education: Organization of Welfare Care in the Province).[50] The Hanover organization, at the time it was distributing *Malchen,* had had relatively recent experience discussing the possible pitfalls of hygiene filmmaking, especially in the prevalent sober, didactic mode. The apparatus of hygienic education had yet to fully incorporate film into hygienic programming in a matter that suited its disciplinary needs and preferences. This placed the individual administrators and bureaucrats of public health, particularly those interested in the new medium like Dohrn and Sander, into a position of professional discomfort. Filmmaking involved significant costs to amortize, and it was uncertain that films could transmit hygiene information in a way that was both pedagogically effective and

48. Hr. Lubliner of Ostdeutsche Lichtspielhaus-Gesellschaft m.b.H., Königsberg, to Carl Dohrn, October 11, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 57r.

49. H. M. Finger, lecturer at the Volkshochschule und Volksbühne in Peine, to Landeswohlfahrtsamt Hannover, October 21, 1921, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35 Band I, folio 20r.

50. "Bericht über die Teilnahme an dem Lehrgang für Fürsorgeärzte in Hannover," June 10, 1921, Preußisches Kultusministerium, VIII B Nr. 2037, folio 184r.

acceptable to the medical professions. *Malchen* was a fresh attempt to make the medium of film fit within the hygienic administrator's ambit of responsibility. Doing so involved not only mastering geographical space (the tasks of film distribution), but also cultural geography (understanding how to address ordinary Germans in terms that engage them, as well as using the appropriate narrative and aesthetic techniques to create drama and depict an everyday milieu). Effective strategies for articulating national and domestic modes of *Heimat* were necessary to make the medium at home at the disposal of the hygienic administrator, for whom tasks, titles, and institutional culture constituted their own sort of professional home.

The Rural Health Campaign of 1927

An essay circulated by the *Reichsausschuss* for Hygiene Education in 1927 bases its argument for the future shape of hygiene education upon the supposed virtues of rural Germany as *Heimat*. Its first sentence, which I cited perfunctorily in the second division of this chapter, reads: "The countryside is the source of the German people's power [*die Quelle deutscher Volkskraft*]; we must strive in every way possible to preserve it."[51] *Deutsche Volkskraft:* this is not *Macht,* the power attained through political processes; instead, it is *Kraft,* power as physical or biological energy. In an essay whose primary purpose is proposing implementation practices and improved administrative structures for more evenly distributing hygienic knowledge throughout the nation-state, the author visualizes that nation-state as drawing its vitality from rural people, places, and products. This *Kraft* seems to animate the metaphorical link Alon Confino draws between national and local dimensions of *Heimat:* "an iconographic

51. "Allgemeine Vorschläge," p. 1, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 125r.

stereotypization of Germans and German landscapes that united local and national memories" that helps "people visualize the impersonal nation."[52] But this specific example was a visualization strategy by and for health educators, and the rural *Quelle* was less of a spring that produced of its own accord and more of a field that required tending. It thus anchored an economy of responsibility: hygienic education needed to move from the hospitals and academies of the cities out to the agrarian countryside, and *Volkskraft* (or, less romantically, raw materials, as well as a morale-building sense of national identity) needed to move back. The *Reichsausschuss* thus positioned itself as one entity creating the social and infrastructural linkages between local and national. Being a hygiene organization, it created these linkages under the sign of corporeal health, caring for the production of healthy agrarian bodies. It thus made of *Volkskraft* a cooperative effort distributed over technological and administrative junctures between the country and the city. The grouping of these technological and administrative junctures with which I concern myself here are those associated with making, distributing, and exhibiting moving image film for the purpose of hygiene education. In the previous section, I discussed how *Malchen* successfully used the educational and quality-of-life distinction between urban and rural Germany as an opportunity to promote hygienic practices associated with cities and the professional class. I now turn to conversations that became routine in the *Ausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung* in the late 1920s that reversed *Malchen's* country-to-*Kultur* trajectory.

The physicians in charge of the *Reichsausschuss*, whose personal addresses generally placed them in exclusive Berlin neighborhoods like Grunewald, Dahlem, and Lichterfelde, now

52. Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 10.

began trying to devise and implement multimedia overtures that they could bring "into the remotest of farming villages," to the sizable percentage of Germans who lived in the countryside.[53] To this end, they planned a campaign, which they alternately call the Health Campaign or the Fly Campaign (*Gesundheits-* or *Fliegenfeldzug*), for the summer of 1927. The *Reichsausschuss* chose to place particular emphasis on avoiding illnesses spread by flies, although childcare was also the topic of considerable investment. The campaign of 1927 was devised to engage communities underserved by one of the key accomplishments and organizing foci of the *Reichsausschuss,* the *Reichsgesundheitswoche* (*Reich* Health Week) of 1926. The latter was a week of educational events held more or less simultaneously throughout the country.[54] *Post facto* reflections showed that its events were primarily held in relatively urbanized areas.[55]

The *Reichsgesundheitswoche* was not only the central project of the *Reichsausschuss* in 1926: it was the impetus for continued expansion of the hierarchical administrative structure of

53. "Allgemeine Vorschläge," 1, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 125r.

54. For a recent study of the *Reichsgesundheitswoche*, see Sebastian Weinert, "Vorreiter des Public Campaigning im Deutschen Reich? Die Reichsgesundheitswoche von 1926," *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 18 (2016), 111-128. For official period reporting, see *Die Reichsgesundheitswoche 1926. Spezieller Teil. Verlauf der Reichsgesundheitswoche in den einzelnen Ländern*, Ed. Curt Adam (Vogel: Leipzig, 1927) and *Die Reichsgesundheitswoche 1926. Allgemeiner Teil,* Ed. Curt Adam (Vogel: Leipzig, 1928) as well as the minutes of the *Reichsausschuss* meeting from August 7, 1926, BArch R 86 (Reichsgesundheitsamt)/937, Bundesarchiv Berlin (hereafter cited as "Reichsgesundheitsamt"). For a rich archival look at the specifics of how the RGW took place in one large German city (Munich), see DE-1992-WOHL (Wohlfahrt) 3381, DE-1992-GES (Gesundheitsamt) 0183 and 'DE-1992-GES (Gesundheitsamt) 0158, Stadtarchiv München.

55. Minutes of *Reichsausschuss meeting* from Aug. 7, 1926, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

central, regional, and local committees (*Reichs-, Landes-/Provinzial-,* and *Ortsausschüsse*).[56] If the metaphorical map of the highways along which officially sanctioned hygienic information still showed large blank areas of underserved agrarian communities, the *Reichsausschuss* had learned from experience that the proper way to fill in the map further was by holding another similar nationwide event series that took the particularities of teaching in the countryside into account. In other words, events like this one had become synonymous with internal territorial expansion of academic hygiene's area of influence—its administrative *Heimat* of sorts—that administrators hoped would be permanent.

The *Reichsausschuss* offered a number of reasons that holding a broad-based hygiene education program in the countryside was "significantly more difficult" than doing so in large, medium, or small cities.[57] Some of these related to less-developed infrastructure and institutions there ("the shortage of transportation resources;" "the absence of qualified teaching personnel"); others to the agrarian economic basis of the region ("the dependence upon work in the fields"); still others to presumptions about rural people's prejudices and learning styles ('the aversion of the rural population to innovations, as well as the shortage of visual aids that are appropriate for the rural population.")[58]

The necessary solutions would be technological, logistical, and pedagogical/psychological, and would entail more regional variation than hygiene education programming for cities and towns. Discussions of the appropriate practices took place before,

56. Report on meeting of representatives of the *Ortsausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung* in the province of Brandenburg, January 25, 1930, 10, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4517.

57. "Allgemeine Vorschläge," 1, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 125r.

58. Ibid.

during, and after the Rural Health Campaign. Lecturers would have to be vetted for their willingness to work in the country and their understanding of the psychology of rural people, and would optimally be recruited from the individual communities in which events were to take place.[59] Event schedules could be instituted around the rhythms of essential agricultural work and cooperative possibilities with existing educational infrastructure; furthermore, they would need to be flexible: "The best time appears to be the time between the first hay harvest and the grain harvest, which, in most areas, falls in the second half of June. Also, school summer vacation has not yet begun at this time. In areas in which the local and, particularly, the climatic circumstances are different, the schedule of events would have to be arranged differently."[60] While educational materials would have to be produced or adapted to suit the cultural conservatism and low levels of education presumed to prevail in rural areas, they would also need to feature the particular hygienic problems and mechanisms that were most characteristic of agrarian regions.

It is unsurprising that the choice to incorporate film screenings into rural hygiene events added additional wrinkles to all of these sets of concerns. The film most frequently mentioned by name in the *Reichsausschuss*'s 1927/28 yearly report, which details the execution of the rural campaign on the state and provincial level, is *Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer.* It was made by the small Berlin-based production company Kraska-Film along with a second animated

59. Ibid., 2; Report on meeting of representatives of the *Ortsausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung* in the province of Brandenburg, January 25, 1930, 4-5 and 6-7, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4517.

60. Minutes of a meeting of the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung* on the topic of the *Gesundheitsfeldzug,* April 7, 1927, 7, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

film, *Hygiene des Kindes* (*The Child's Hygiene,* 1927)*,* which was occupied with childcare.[61] In the specific context of rural exhibition, regional organizations purchased equipment or set up partnerships to bring mobile movie theaters to the countryside or to furnish lecturers with portable "suitcase cinemas."[62] The spaces selected for screenings tended to be schoolrooms, whose size could provide an obstacle to projection; a discussion in 1930 contains suggestions about how to work in compact spaces, including projecting through windows from outside the school.[63] Finally, legal impediments were common: the usual fire safety regulations had to be followed if 35mm nitrate film was in use, and several *Länder* and provinces had passed laws prohibiting mobile operators from working in communities where a commercial movie theater was already present, even if they were only projecting with suitcase-sized portable models.[64] Just as the efficacy of film as a hygiene education medium, in general, was still greeted with significant skepticism in the late 1920s, some hygienists felt that rural film screenings would constitute an ill-advised encroachment of modern rhythms into the country, patterns unintelligible to a rural mind: at a meeting in 1930, an insurance representative notes that "film seems...not to be appropriate to the same extent as it is for urban audiences; the progression of

---

61. "Die Tätigkeit der Filmabteilung," *Bericht des Reichsausschusses 1927/28*, 41-43, Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung. The two films were advertised by the *Reichsausschuss* on reverse sides of a single-sheet illustrated brochure. Brochure, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 120r-120v.

62. Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme," 59; minutes of meeting of *Geschäftsführer* of the *Landes*- and *Provinzialausschüsse,* May 21, 1932, 28-29, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4518.

63. Minutes of meeting of *Geschäftsführer der Landes- und Provinzialausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung*, June 3, 1930, 5-6, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4517.

64. Ibid., p. 5; Hr. von Schenck (*Verband der preußischen Provinzen*) to *Preußischer Minister für Wohlfahrt*, September 17, 1931, B Rep. 142-06, Verband der preußischen Provinzen, Nr. 650, Landesarchiv Berlin.

the plot is often too fast for the less alert rural population."[65] All of these individual problems frame the position that prevailed for hygienic educators in the 1920s: the seemingly backwards and infrastructurally poor countryside put pressure on their activities just as the advanced and resource-intensive medium of motion pictures did. To create a modernized and healthier Germany that nonetheless preserved a traditional consciousness of its cultural "sources" was, at least some small part, a matter of taking up both of these challenges at the same time.

Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer (1927)

Although *Majanka,* like *Malchen,* has been lost, it leaves rich enough traces in the archive to suggest a set of arguments about the work of determining hygienic value in the rural Weimar Republic. The hygienic value of rural intimate space—from the immediate surroundings of a person's body to the topographies of farms and the communal spaces of the village—can be adjusted based upon its navigability and hospitality to disease-carrying flies. In political space, hygienic value inhered in maximizing the countryside's ability to vitalize the nation-state as a "source of German *Volkskraft*." Thus, a study of *Majanka* is a study of what it meant to incorporate moving-image film as an element in the repertoire of the medical and administrative professionals tasked with working between hygienic and political geographies. These professionals asserted their own hygienic value by attending to both the biology of modern rural life and the psychology of modern rural culture, as well as by exhibiting logistical flexibility. The moving image must prove its hygienic value within these parameters: by depicting and organizing intimate space in a way that is interesting and accurate; by being both thematically and logistically flexible in its deployment; and by appealing to the needs of people in different

65. Report on Brandenburg *Ortsausschüsse* meeting, 16, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4517; draft of encyclopedia entry on *Reichsausschuss,* 1921, 4, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

parts of the country, even when it is a centrally made and distributed object.

Taken together, these considerations suggest that Germany can be read as a topology of places either more or less accessible to the projected moving image, a quintessentially modern technology, set of moral problems and sensory experience that would falter in the premodern conditions assumed to prevail in the countryside. At the same time, it suggests that Germany can also be read as a topology of places in which flies performed a greater or lesser role as disease vectors and antagonists of human physical and economic thriving. These are two of the many specific mappings of Germany that one finds hygiene administrators giving their attention to, and this particular pair converges, so to speak, at *Majanka.*

450 meters in length, *Majanka* is executed in a manner similar to that of the contemporaneous *Lustige Hygiene* series of shorts (more prominent in both the archive and the scholarship), also commissioned by the *Reichsausschuss*, scripted by Thomalla, and made by a small Berlin studio.[66] The aesthetic of all of these films was dominated by cel-animated characters superimposed onto photographic backgrounds. *Majanka* was additionally furnished with microscopic photographs, evidently of fly eggs and larvae. The narrative of *Majanka* focuses upon an anthropomorphic housefly who is so taken with *Kultur* (which she encounters on an excursion into a library) that she casts her lot with mankind, arguing successfully for the extermination of her species. After being ostracized by the other flies for suggesting that the species should change its ways to be less deleterious to human beings, she befriends a doctor and leads him through the primary interaction points between flies and human beings in domestic space. Further perambulations in the village give the doctor a chance to discover, show and discuss optimal and suboptimal practices for fly hygiene. After the flies are wiped out, Majanka,

66. Brochure for *Majanka/Hygiene des Kindes*, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 120r.

"as the sole survivor, is put, with great honor, into a museum."[67]

This ceremonial consignment to history shows that critical *Heimat* elements can be exchanged between species, and in fact that this transfer can be a necessary part of creating secure *Heimat* spaces for human beings. Hygienic value appears in this film, and is conferred upon the intimate spaces of the rural community, specifically through the extirpation of flies from shared intimate spaces of human and fly eating, mating, excreting, and the like. In another twist, Majanka is an odd specimen who takes the fly's privilege of hypermobility in the rural everyday space and uses it to purge those same spaces of flies. Majanka becomes effectively, and without bitterness, homeless by the end of the synopsis. Her own body becomes, to recall the formulation Bonah and Laukötter applied to hygiene *Kulturfilm,* a new kind of "boundary object:" as the turncoat, she can translate between the ways in which two rival species perceive the need to perform activities of daily life at shared locations in intimate space.

This fact mirrors the mobility that the *Reichsausschuss* and its subordinates aspired to with respect to the film medium. Although the infrastructural difficulties I noted above limited this mobility, the film nonetheless appears to have penetrated deep into rural Germany and have reached large audiences there. A retrospective conversation at a *Reichsausschuss* meeting the next year notes particular success in Westphalia, where 67 screenings took place and the film was of "particular interest to the youth."[68] The Westphalian report in the *Reichsausschuss*'s yearly report for 1927/1928 praises film as an education technology at length. It notes that the film was in circulation there not only in special educational events, but also as

---

67. Ibid.

68. Minutes of meeting of *Geschäftsführer* of the *Landes*- and *Provinzialausschüsse*, November 28, 1928, 20, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937, referenced in Schmidt, "Sozialhygienische Filme," *Gesundheitskommunikation,* 71.

in the programs of the province's commercial cinemas. It then adds some conclusions about the particularly powerful position of film among the media techniques used for hygienic instruction, and about optimal pedagogical filmmaking style:

> Nothing can arouse the audience's attention quite like film screenings. Lectures, lantern slides, and exhibitions usually do not have the same effect as a well-made and appealing film. If purely didactic content is avoided and the content is presented in the form of a rather entertaining and humorous narrative, the screening will always find a thankful public, who will also truly bring some of what it has seen back home.[69]

Several other regional sections of the same report also note successful, widespread implementation in the corresponding provinces and *Länder*.[70]

Figs. 1-2. Film stills from brochure advertising *Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer.* SOURCE: Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

In light of these observations, the film's technique deserves more extended attention. As I noted earlier, the *Reichsausschuss* was at this time fairly prolific in collaborating with Berlin studios to produce hygiene shorts in a technique that combined cel-animated main characters and

69. *Bericht des Reichsausschusses 1927/28,* 105, Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung.

70. These include the Prussian provinces of Brandenburg (60-63) and Upper Silesia (84-85), the free city of Bremen (160-62), and the free state of Waldeck (168-71).

objects with photographic backgrounds (often location footage—although whether it was all shot specifically for these films remains unclear). Such films were particularly powerful in the ways in which they could develop endearing "mascot" figures to guide the hygienic lessons. The most notable (and largely extant) example of such filmmaking is the series *Lustige Hygiene,* with its extensive self-reflexive references to the composite nature of its own images, anchored by the dandyish "hygienic conscience" Leberecht Klug.[71]

Unlike *Lustige Hygiene,* in which numerous self-reflexive gags involve the animated mascot interacting with live-action human figures, *Majanka* appears, from the stills published in its promotional materials, to portray its fly mascot and her human interlocutors strictly through animation. It nonetheless performs similar work in using the animated plane to enact the "hygienic conscience"—in this case, by allowing animated humans, everyday objects, and insects in the animated foreground to demonstrate hygienic readings of the photographic footage of rural life in the background.[72] The photographic plane, including many pleasing rustic images, largely depicts the *Heimat* in question, while the animated plane is largely where human beings and flies act out their competition for control of that *Heimat.* Thus, a pastoral scene of a shady tree, meadow, and stream is made into the stage

Fig. 3. Film still from brochure advertising *Die Fliege Majanka und ihre Abenteuer.* SOURCE: Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

71. Brochure for *Trickfilm-Serie 'Lustige Hygiene'*, 1932, Reichsgesundheitsamt 4518.

72. For images, see *Bericht des Reichsausschusses 1927/28,* 43, Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung; brochure for *Majanka/Hygiene des Kindes*, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 120r.

for hygienic drama by a dozing human figure, who is awoken and otherwise molested by flies.[73] An outdoor table at an inn (where human figures and furniture are animated, but the background buildings and trees are photographic) becomes an area of hygienic transaction when human figures, relaxing and consuming food, are threatened by flies carrying bacteria from a nearby outhouse.[74] And this outhouse itself—as both an indispensable piece of critical infrastructure for rural domesticity, and the "paradise of the flies," an acute source of potential contamination—is dramatized by the foreground presence of an animated baby and carriage, where a cut-in shows flies crawling on the nipple of his bottle.[75]

Also notable is the fact that, according to the synopsis, the hygienic education is carried out by a fly and a doctor touring these *Heimat* scenes together and offering advice to village dwellers. As the mouthpiece for the hygienic enterprise in the film, this odd pair is joined by Farmer Kluge (Thomalla seems to favor naming his good hygienic examples after their cleverness), who both demonstrates optimal fly hygiene in house and farmstead and complains that his efforts are undermined by his "slovenly neighbor," whose farm throws the first one into relief, and who must be persuaded that fly hygiene is also in his best interest.[76] In this film, the *Reichsausschuss* creates a hygienic educational message that disavows its own centrifugal movement from urban cultural centers to rural agrarian communities—the doctor, in fact, serves not as the source of hygienic information, but as a conduit, signing off on strategies developed

73. Brochure for *Majanka/Hygiene des Kindes*, Preußisches Kultusministerium VIII B Nr. 2043, folio 120r.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid..

76. Ibid.

and exemplified by figures (whether they are flies or humans) whose wisdom about human-fly relations in the countryside derives from practical experience, rather than from book-learning.[77]

Though conceived and produced by entities based in Berlin, *Majanka* was an attempt to actualize a vision whereby the distribution and administration of hygienic knowledge in the countryside would develop organically through cooperative structures involving local practices and practitioners. Just as the film's diegetic world provides a setting for coordination of a shared project by collaborators from diverse quarters (flies, farmers, doctors), the practices of hygienic education in the countryside were understood to be futile without incorporating actors with intimate knowledge of the customs and needs of the individual communities in which lectures were held and films were exhibited.

After its success in the *Gesundheitsfeldzug,* the film appears to have remained in public circulation for some time. Further magnified photographic sequences, including a shot of a fly grooming itself, were evidently added by Kraska-Film under supervision of *Reichsgesundheitsamt* President Karl Hamel in 1928, suggesting that the *Reichsausschuss* envisioned the attraction value, pedagogical value, or both of the film to be increased by additional live-action microphotgraphy, which would also bring flies deeper into the "photographic" side of the film.[78] Records exist of *Majanka's* being exhibited in Thuringia in 1930, and the film remained serviceable past the National Socialist rise to power as late as the

77. This statement must be qualified with the fact the Majanka has her initial change of heart in a scientific library; while hygienic best practices are here shown as being indigenous to the countryside, hygienic knowledge in consolidated, persuasive textual form is nonetheless an academic phenomenon. This is also evidenced by the fact that the "slovenly farmer" is persuaded to change his ways not through observation of his neighbor Kluge, but through the doctor's explanation of the insect-borne causes of several problems in his life, like spoiling food and a sick child. Ibid.

78. Karl Hamel to unknown recipient, December 5, 1927, Fliegen und Fliegenbekämpfung.

spring of 1933, when the *Reichsausschuss* wrote to the *Landesausschüsse* promoting hygienic educational materials for camps of the civil labor program (the *freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst*).[79]

A Color Film Project

In the summer of 1928, the *Reichsausschuss* considered doubling down on the gambit of rural film exhibition by planning a costly new project: a film on rural hygiene shot in "lifelike color."[80] The process in question was likely a two-strip system developed by the firm Emil-Busch-A.G. in Rathenow, west of Berlin.[81] This set of events provides a media-historical inquiry with some curious convergences. The *Reichsausschuss* prepared to invest in a prestige film project intended to draw viewers by offering many of them the first color-processed film they had ever seen, which would place that committee at the technological forefront not only of film pedagogy but of the entire German film industry. Yet this technological achievement was to bear its fruit in the countryside—a domain, at least as it is represented in the correspondence and meeting minutes of the *Reichsausschuss* in Berlin, to which film exhibition equipment of any kind is somewhat foreign. A tension emerges here which echoes a paradox at the heart of the hygienic opposition between city and country: the city as civilized but polluted and decadent; the country as primitive but rich in healthful light, air, and traditions. The *Reichsausschuss,*

79. *Landesausschuss Thüringen für hygienische Volksbelehrung* to *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* February 19, 1931, 6-32-0020 Thüringisches Ministerium des Innern, E 788, Landesarchiv Thüringen/Hauptstaatsarchiv, Weimar, folio 29r; *Reichsausschuss* General Secretary Christiansen to Thuringian *Ministerium des Innern,* April 26, 1933, 6-32-0020 Thüringisches Ministerium des Innern, E 792, Landesarchiv Thüringen/Hauptstaatsarchiv, Weimar, folio 189r-191r.

80. Carl Adam to *Landesausschüsse für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* July 17, 1928, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

81. The Busch system was showcased in an invited screening by the *Reichsausschuss* in March 1928. Invitation, March 30, 1928, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

furthermore, requests feedback on the nature and content of the project from its subsidiary organizations. Like the programming for the 1927 fly campaign, this process effectively permits organizations in different parts of the country to contribute their own descriptions of the countryside and its hygienic importance. The changing technologies of the cinema provide a context for the hygienists to reflect upon the evolving geographical imperatives and challenges of their educational work and vice versa; occurring under the sign of hygiene, this confrontation also implicitly negotiates questions of how human living and thriving is to be valued and made reproducible.

Reichsausschuss General Secretary Carl Adam circulated a four-page letter to his subsidiary organizations in mid-July 1928 requesting print orders and feedback for the film that was still slated for production that summer. This letter references a variety of the technological, logistical, financial, and institutional pressures and possibilities that characterized the situation of the *Lehrfilm* in the late 1920s. Adam begins the letter, marked "Very Urgent," by noting the prevailing problems with using *Lehrfilme* in the countryside before detailing his proposal for cooperative work with a film production company and the financial obligations incumbent upon the *Reichsausschuss* to see the project through.[82] He goes on to promote the new color film process and to urge its adoption, to describe the favorable terms under which prints would be provided to local health organizations, and to request feedback on pedagogical content from the various local organizations.[83] He finishes by noting the high purchase price, attempting to defend and contextualize the expense, and stating that the *Reichsausschuss* must commit to the project

82. Letter from Adam to *Landesausschüsse,* Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

83. Ibid.

quickly if it is still to be realized while the weather is inviting for location shooting in the countryside.[84]

The film itself, as described in the preliminary exposé included with Adam's letter, involved two young female childcare workers from the city who spend a vacation on a bicycle tour of the surrounding countryside (the latter ostensibly being the vehicle for the "colorful changes of milieu" that the exposé mentions, presumably to exploit the availability of color film).[85] This turns out to be a working vacation, one that involves heated debates on hygienic practices with country folk wedded to traditional remedies, the death of a child from her lack of access to modern child healthcare, and the engagement of the nurses to a pair of progressive but fiercely rural local landowners (complete with an engagement party that "includes a chance to take a stand against the abuse of alcohol").[86] The project was ultimately tabled by the *Reichsausschuss*, and does not appear to have been taken back up.[87] Given the language that Adam used to describe the new technique of color film, the relative lack of further references to the innovation in the other archival material around the film feels startling. The story of process color film's false start in Weimar educational film is a story told through oblique references as administrators discuss other aspects of the film. Until that point, the terms of the film's hygienic value were renegotiated multiple times. *Reichsgesundheitsamt* President Karl Hamel showed interest in the project, but did so without engaging with the suggestion that it be a color film.

---

84. Ibid.

85. "Vorläufiges Exposé für die Rahmenhandlung eine Natur-Farbenfilms über ländliche Wohlfahrtspflege," 1928, 1, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

86. Ibid., 1-3.

87. Report on the meeting at headquarters of the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* October 5, 1928, 1, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

Rather, he offers suggestions toward improving the pedagogical efficacy of the plot. While the original proposal involved two female children's nurses from the city visiting a village and instructing country dwellers in better hygienic practices (and ultimately marrying rural men), Hamel found that the film's message would only seem authoritative if it came from characters who were (male) doctors.[88] He thus suggested substituting the nurses with a physician and a dentist and placing them in conversation with an old study colleague serving as a rural district doctor.[89]

Leaving the per-meter price of the proposed film for the last page of the letter, Adam goes on to describe the proposed private-public cooperative production in this way: "Now, the possibility has appeared for the film center of the *Reichsausschuss* to close a relevant agreement with a capable firm. This firm commits itself to making a film about rural welfare in accordance with the exact stipulations and wishes of the *Reichsausschuss* and to make the necessary capital available at its own risk. The condition is only that orders for at least 20 copies of this film can be guaranteed."[90] Adam gives pride of place to two transactional details: the authorial control that will be vouchsafed the *Reichsausschuss* and the offloading of some financial risk. What he does not mention until the subsequent paragraph is what was likely the most startling detail, for both the contemporaneous reader of the letter and the researcher in the present: that the new film was to be shot using a newly developed color process.

---

88. Karl Hamel to *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* August 2, 1928, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

89. Ibid.

90. Letter from Adam to *Landesausschüsse,* Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

Adam described both the firm to be engaged and the color process to be used using the same adjective: "*leistungsfähig*," which could be contextually translated as "capable" and "effective," respectively.[91] The *Leistung* (achievement, output, service) of which firm or process was *fähig* (capable) is, with respect to the firm, could likely be defined as the production of a commissioned film in a timely manner; in the next paragraph, with respect to the film process, it could likely be defined as the convincing or appealing printing of lifelike color images on 35mm film stock. Each of these *Leistungen* was thus invoked as a guarantee the *Reichsausschuss* would not be disappointed by the quality, reliability, or aesthetic value of the services it received from the third-party vendor. The letter makes clear that the pedagogical content or potency of the film, the ostensible priority of the *Reichsausschuss*, is only part of what Adam is arguing for; he is primarily mediating a business agreement. The value of such an agreement, its capacity to produce the desired *Leistungen,* was thus the infrastructure to the pedagogical activity required to overcome the problems mentioned in the first paragraph: an effective educational address to the communities of rural Germany, with the goal of supporting the health and welfare of the populations there.

The value of the technical *Leistung* to the *Reichsausschuss* was, however, something that would depreciate over time. The novelty of the color process shaped the flood of qualifiers with which Adam introduced it as "recently, extraordinarily perfected and now fully technically impeccable."[92] His pitch suggested that the prospective agreement offered the *Reichsausschuss* a chance to remake its relationship with the film medium, which had been (and would remain) a fairly conservative use of forms established elsewhere in popular and technical filmmaking.

---

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

Color film would permit hygiene educators to situate themselves at the forefront of image technology: "we are given the opportunity to connect what is likely to be a widespread, sensational innovation in cinematography with propaganda for hygiene and healthcare. This chance must be used at all costs before this process belongs to the everyday matters of course in the movie theaters."[93] The *Reichsausschuss*'s subcommittees could thus get a return on their investment in the form of both prestige and funds: under the proposed agreement with the filmmaking company, purchasers of prints would receive a generous package of legal rights, allowing them, "by renting and leasing the film copies, to quickly amortize the invested buying price and, in certain circumstances, even to be able to turn a profit."[94] This would certainly also be made possible by the fact that the color process required no new or specialized equipment on the part of exhibitors, and that the film was to be scripted by Curt Thomalla and to adhere to recent conventions of hygiene educational film, using a "harmless, light plot" as a vehicle for the "unobtrusive connection and combination" of pieces of hygienic advice.[95]

Given the abundance of historical discourse on color that is hygienic or pedagogical in nature—from Goethe's color wheel to Louis Prang's desire to harness color for mass aesthetic education to concerns about color film and eyestrain—it is worth noting that little further discussion took place on the comparative merits of color and black-and-white film.[96] The primary objections focused upon financial and technological resources: to the per-meter price, on the one hand, and in light of the exhibition conditions, on the other. It is noted that, while a

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Joshua Yumibe, *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 20 and 29–30.

specialized projector was not required for the color film process in question, a high-powered light source was, and such a light source was not reliably available given the infrastructural conditions in the countryside.[97] There were thus were no serious objection to Adam's initial suggestion that the presence of color—which he construes as making the images more verisimilar—would increase its pedagogical potential, nor that the spectacular value of color would increase the films' appeal. The hygienic value of color film was not any more in question then that of black-and-white film. Of course, it was still being litigated, as some of my citations from the last section noted, to what extent film was a useful medium in the countryside at all.

Some urban organizations were baffled as to why they should support an expensive project that was designed for regions different from their own. The head of the Hamburg chapter of the German Association for the Protection of Infants and Children (*Deutsche Vereinigung für Säuglings- und Kleinkinderschutz*) responded by describing the state of urbanization in his office's service area. The writer speculates that the kind of "purely rural area" for which the film is suited could only be found in Ritzebüttel, the Hamburg exclave around Cuxhafen at the mouth of the Elbe.[98] Otherwise, many of the villages under Hamburg's jurisdiction had lost their rural character, becoming "exclusive residential neighborhoods or exurbs;" on the other hand, areas of metropolitan Hamburg that had retained an agrarian lifestyle and mentality—the "marshlands" that "surely still harbor all manner of old farmers' tales"—were nonetheless too close to the city

97. Minutes of meeting of the *Geschäftsführer der Landes- und Provinzialausschüsse des Reichsausschusses für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* November 28, 1928, 21, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

98. Letter from *Deutsche Vereinigung für Säuglings- und Kleinkinderschutz, Landeszentrale Hamburg* to Dr. Sieveking, Gesundheitsamt*,* July 23, 1928, Medizinalkollegium Hamburg II N 35a Band 2.

to demand the kind of hygienic education the *Reichsausschuss* envisioned for more isolated rural areas.[99]

"Throwing away 2,000 Mark on little Ritzebüttel—this I find unwise," the writer concludes.[100] The color film process is never directly referenced in this letter—the writer begins the letter with a grudging acknowledgment of the film proposal's strengths, limiting these to the plot—but appears through the pressure that the large cost figure introduces. By amplifying the financial outlay associated with the hygienic education effort, the color process induced the writer to reflect upon the living environments to be found within Hamburg, the administrative division within which his work took place, and the distinctions between the forms of hygienic education materials that could appropriately pertain to them. Not even a *Landesausschuss* with a geographically small area of responsibility could view that area as homogeneous or avoid the contradictions of a modernizing country, in which old and new existed beside one another. But neither could it avoid making utilitarian generalizations in decisions about how to allocate resources, prioritizing outreach to the urbanized majority in Hamburg over close work with the remaining agrarian enclaves.

This letter, in its response to a proposal for a color film, also recalls our focus to more global tensions in the *Reichsausschuss* and its affiliates. The purpose of the *Reichsausschuss* and its *Landesausschüsse* was, largely, to place experts from specific fields of public welfare into conversation with one another, permitting the tailored local development and deployment of common resources. But as I have attempted to show in this chapter and the one prior, the intellectual underpinnings of hygienic education as practiced in interwar Germany presume a

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

more organic flow of information and of the salubrious effects of its distribution. If the "countryside is the source of German *Volkskraft,*"and if the movement of *Volkskraft*—like that of other common resources like hygienic information, fresh air, and sunlight—is only a matter of channeling and conducting, then an outreach to country people anywhere the *Volk* is to be found would yield benefits tangible in central Hamburg. Why else would the Berliners in charge of the *Reichsausschuss* figure the circulation of *Volkskraft* in the way they did when they editorialized on the merits of the rural health campaign?

A further fissure in the constellation technology-health-*Heimat* is evident in this example: if *Heimat,* as the cultural capital and force of the German people, was to be sourced in the countryside, and if color film was not a feasible or worthy investment for the population there, then either that population was not hygienically valuable to the nation as a whole, or the modern institutionalized definitions of health themselves showed that the romanticized figurations of rural *Heimat* were also reflection of a breakdown of the cultural relevance and vitality of agrarianism. There were technological and financial thresholds to how relevant the countryside was to modernizing Germany, and those were exceeded by the color film project. A pragmatic decision against a new technological order of spectacle—color film—was then based upon those limitations.

Conclusion

Between *Malchen, Majanka,* and the color film project, one finds the notion of German *Heimat*—that is national, regional, and personal senses of collective belonging and security—expressing itself differently through the constant (but continuously changing) bureaucratic vehicle of the *Reichsausschuss,* its *Landes*- and *Provinzialausschüsse,* and their local

subdivisions; through the changing relationship between new media technology and hygienic education; and through the changes and developments of the technology of film itself. Each of these films anchors a web of negotiations and debates that frames the integrity of *Heimat* in terms of the proper distribution of technological and financial resources. Curt Sander's letters promoting *Malchen,* itself a film that thematizes hygiene in terms of movement between peasant and bourgeois milieus, also seek to use the film as a mobile commodity that serves the fiscal health of the *Heimatprovinz* as it serves the hygienic knowledge of the nation. In the case of *Majanka,* the discourse around infusing hygienic information into rural Germany in the late 1920s frames a parallel between the salutary movement of image technology into rural areas, the reclaiming of such rural areas for the culturally rich practices of German peasants, and the expulsion of undesirable populations (this latter point particularly ominous given the focus on so-called "racial hygiene" that would dominate activities of "hygienic" education in the "Third Reich"—often under the guidance of Curt Thomalla, *Majanka's* screenwriter). And the rural cinema debate also frames an abortive attempt to appropriate, at great distributed cost, the aesthetic cutting edge of cinema technology for the cause of hygienic education; the *Reichsausschuss*'s final decision showed the limits of that institution's willingness to risk its financial stability on either the farthest-flung practical corners of the medium, or of the German map.

Taken together, these instances show that new media technologies were assimilated into the conservative management of fiscal and hygienic resources without markedly transforming the way hygienic education was carried out. They also show that the medium prompted hygienic administrators to create new mappings of familiar spaces: for example, viewing the German countryside as a source of visual enrichment for hygienic lessons, as a site for cautious

technological incursions, as a place where color film's spectacle would shine into nothingness, and as a place where the proportion of film cameras to flies was a relevant datum. These novel mappings are utopian in the sense that they are written and spoken proposals for spaces and communities, from the household up to and including the national community, that do not exist, but that depict the realization of ideals by which the weighty consequences of hygienic problems become tractable. If the countryside were to be remapped as a place that makes it possible to show the film *Majanka* in a widespread fashion there, and if these film events were to be so structured as to be effective hygienic lessons, and if most of the audience members were to realize the practices it prescribes in the intimate spaces where they spend time, then the "fly plague" would be diminished, yielding a victory over human suffering in rural Germany. Changing information technologies would continue to permit these and similar utopian mappings to proliferate, informing the further development of hygienic, technological, geographical and population politics in the later Weimar Republic and the "Third Reich."

CHAPTER 3

LEBENDE WERKZEUGE (*LIVING TOOLS,* 1936): AN UNAUTHORIZED HYGIENIC *KULTURFILM* UNDER THE "THIRD REICH"

Working under contract from Leo-Werke GmbH in Dresden, the first firm to mass-produce toothpaste in Germany (under the ubiquitous brand name "Chlorodont"), UFA's *Kulturfilm* Division finished the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* (*Living Tools*) in late summer of 1936. The film, just over 400 meters in length, uses a variety of visual mechanisms to impress its central hygienic message upon the user: that healthy teeth are crucial to a healthy body. To this end, one should make wise dietary choices, never misuse one's teeth, and brush them daily. Each member of a family should have his or her own toothbrush, and only high-quality toothpastes should be used (preferably Chlorodont).

Notable among the visual mechanisms applied are animation (both moving anatomical diagrams and a cartoon sequence) and poetic montage illustrating the titular metaphor by comparing dental anatomy to everyday tools. In a brief sequence toward the middle of the film, its voiceover warns that "every 'dead' tool is destroyed by foolish and incorrect use" before stating that the same principle applies to the "living tools" of the teeth. This message is heard over a montage of children misusing household objects. Most prominently, a boy uses a pair of scissors as a prying tool and to cut wire. A pair of scissors with one broken blade then fills the screen against a black background, dissolving to an animated sagittal cross-section of the human mouth, an image similar to those that appear regularly throughout the film to illustrate the dynamics of chewing, tooth decay, and other processes. The verbal metaphor that undergirds the entire film becomes more tangible through a visual rhyme.

The image of the scissors—clean, shining metal filling the screen in the brief absence of any human figures—is also consonant with an image that will appear a few moments later, of the mixing equipment used to make Chlorodont toothpaste. The clean blades rotate before the camera before being shown at work in a series of pleasurable, nearly abstract sequences in which the liquid and solid components of toothpaste are mixed to a uniform product in a manufacturing process that leaves the toothpaste, as the voiceover states, "untouched by human hands [*Menschenhand*]."[1] Yet it carries all the fruits of *Menschengeist*: it is introduced by a long camera movement across a table of bubbling laboratory equipment and white-coated men peering down microscopes while the voiceover describes the rigor with which Chlorodont upholds its quality standards when selecting its ingredients.

While this film seems to me to be an understudied curiosity—because of its production value and its compelling imagery, and particularly because it remains extant in full in the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv—it has its primary appeal as a research object for two other reasons. First, *Lebende Werkzeuge* offers the scant trace of an exterior to the documented corpus of propaganda campaigns in Nazi Germany related to "hygiene." This corpus overwhelmingly contains films dedicated to so-called racial hygiene: in particular, eugenicist campaigns supporting mandatory sterilization and the T4 euthanasia program. A good deal of high-quality film-historical scholarship has already been devoted to this tradition of National Socialist filmmaking, most notably in book-length studies by Karl Ludwig Rost in German and by Ulf

1. Leo-Werke clearly aims to harness the compelling aesthetics of what Salomé Aguilera Skvirsky would theorize as the "process genre:" that "the sequential representation of people successfully making and doing things produces in the spectator a singular wonder and deep satisfaction." Salomé Aguilera Skvirsky, *The Process Genre: Cinema and the Aesthetic of Labor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 1.

Schmidt in English.[2] By contrast, pedagogical and especially filmic attention to a more classical, practical definition of personal hygiene, such as communicable disease prevention, cancer awareness, and dental health, withered dramatically as the Weimar Republic gave way to National Socialism.[3] While *Lebende Werkzeuge* is thus a somewhat marginal object, I think it and objects like it provide historians and theorists of popular science an opportunity to trace the progression of National Socialist ideology and aesthetics as those are used to frame not shock images of mental patients or the genetic vigilance required of prospective married couples, but mundane, intimate activities—in this case, brushing the teeth.[4] The title's two ways of thinking

2. See Karl Ludwig Rost, *Sterilisation und Euthanasie im Film des "Dritten Reiches": nationalsozialistische Propaganda in ihrer Beziehung zu rassenhygienischen Maßnahmen des NS-Staates*, (Husum: Matthiesen, 1987); Ulf Schmidt, *Medical Films, Ethics, and Euthanasia in Nazi Germany: The History of Medical Research and Teaching Films of the Reich Office for Educational Films—Reich Institute for Films in Science and Education, 1933-1945* (Husum: Matthiesen, 2002). See also Karl-Heinz Roth, "Filmpropaganda für die Vernichtung der Geisteskranken und Behinderten im 'Dritten Reich,'" in *Reform und Gewissen: "Euthanasie" im Dienst des Fortschritts*, ed. Götz Aly (Berlin: Rotbuch-Verlag, 1989), 125–93; Christian Bonah and Vincent Lowy, "D'Erbkrank (1934-36) à Opfer der Vergangenheit (1937): les représentations du handicap mental dans le cinéma de propagande nazi," in *Normes et normalisation en travail social: pour une posture critique entre responsabilité, résistance et créativité*, ed. Vincent Meyer (Bordeaux: Les Études hospitalières, 2010), 35–49; Ramón Reichert, *Im Kino Der Humanwissenschaften: Studien Zur Medialisierung Wissenschaftlichen Wissens* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007).

3. This corresponds to the National Socialist remaking of the *Reichsausschuss für hygienische Volksbelehrung,* the institutional focus of my previous chapter, into the *Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst* under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Gütt. The charter of the new organization, ratified in August 1933, specifies it purpose as serving "education on the necessity of the preservation and propagation of the population and health of the *Volk,* especially the importance of race and genetics." Charter of the *Reichsausschuss für Volksgesundheitsdienst* e.V. (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1933), 1, Reichsgesundheitsamt 937.

4. At least one other similar film was made and remains extant, also in the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv: the dental hygiene film *Gesunde Zähne, Glückliche Menschen* (Boehner-Film, 1934) sponsored by the Linger-Werke, Chlorodont's hometown competitors and the founding donors for the German Hygiene Museum.

about the tooth—as a useful tool and as a "living organism"—were in high circulation in Chlorodont's print advertisements at the time.[5]

Secondly, *Lebende Werkzeuge* was unique in its status as a gadfly film for the *Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm* (*Reich* Office for Teaching Films, hereafter references as "*Reichsstelle*"; after 1940, the *Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* and the Classroom [*Reich* Institute for Film and Images in Science]), the organ of the *Reich* Ministry for Science, Education, and Culture that was responsible for producing, vetting, and exhibiting educational films in Nazi Germany. After receiving lukewarm conditional approval for school exhibition of *Lebende Werkzeuge* from the *Reichsstelle,* the Leo-Werke began claiming that it had broad permission to distribute the film itself, misquoting the Office's approval to support this point in an aggressive promotional campaign directed at lower-level film offices, local schools, and other possible exhibitors. They thus bypassed the discretionary power of the official regional intermediaries (the state and provincial film offices [*Landes- und Provinzialbildstellen*]).[6] The *Reichsstelle* responded to this campaign with periodic warning letters to the manufacturer, as well as through memoranda to its own regional and local

5. Two advertisements designed by Herbert Bayer for a 1937 campaign use images from the film (labeled as such) to make this clear; one has as its central image a broken pair of scissors with the text heading "Unvernunft ist stärker als Stahl." Reproduced in E. Hölscher, "Herbert Bayer," *Gebrauchsgraphik* 15, no. 6 (Jun. 1938): 5. Another includes an anatomical cross-section drawing of the tooth, which it labels a "wunderfeiner Organismus." "Der Zahn—ein wunderfeiner Organismus," advertisement in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): back cover, Bestand 12741, Personal Papers of Rudolf Neubert (hereafter cited as Neubert Papers), Nr. 220, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

6. Kurt Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 101/37 an sämtliche Landesbildstellen," in *Neue Dokumente zur Geschichte der Schulfilmbewegung in Deutschland. Die Rundschreiben der Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfdU) und späteren Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (RWU)*, ed. Malte Ewert (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 2003), 1:265–66.

subsidiaries and interlocutors requesting that they stop dealing with Leo-Werke.[7] Through this set of events, *Lebende Werkzeuge* offers a set of rich materials with which to theorize another kind of limit phenomenon: the fissures that appeared in the centrifugal nature of National Socialist political power, as public and private entities negotiated the conditions and limits of propagandistic image culture. In this case, film and the body provide sites for the emasculation of a set of minor institutions of National Socialist state discursive power, the national *Reichsstelle* and its subsidiary regional and local film offices—a mildly subversive act performed not in the interest of principled resistance, but of market access.

Taken together, these two characteristics of the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* —that it privileges personal everyday hygienic practices, rather than reproductive choices, as loci of National Socialist demographic politics and that it illuminates the problems of public-private cooperation in the media enunciation of dominant discourses of the body circulating in 1930s Germany—make it possible to frame a new ensemble of contexts in which to trace the particularities and fissures of National Socialist corporatist biopower. These are the educational film viewing space and the technological and administrative determiners of that space's use, on the one hand, and the mouth and teeth of the state subject and corporate consumer, on the other. Based upon that analysis, I conclude that the power of a visual medium for realizing a technocratic and utilitarian utopian vision depended, in the National Socialist context, upon that medium's capacity to construct communicative relationships simultaneously legible to educational administrators, corporate publicists, and target health subjects or consumers. This utopian vision might have been the founding of a Germanic ethno-state, that ethno-state's

7. See esp. the letter from Kurt Gauger to the *Landesbildstelle Ostpreußen*, quoted in Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 71/38 an alle Landesbildstellen," *Neue Dokumente*, 2:454–56.

interest in creating a hierarchically administered clearinghouse system for educational technologies, or a even just a self-perpetuating relationship of mutual patronage between toothpaste manufacturer and dental subject. The "tool" serves as a reflexive poetic topos in the film *Lebende Werkzeuge*. In so doing, it shows the leakiness and difficulty of mapping the utopian interests of corporate and state entities onto human anatomy in a way that makes the communication technology mutually acceptable as a "tool" of corporeal, corporate, and state interests alike. It also provides an oblique, minor-scale glimpse of how the poetic and aesthetic power of rationalized, technologized figurations of body parts and systems could sustain the horrific biopolitics of the National Socialist state.

Notes on Historical and Theoretical Approach

The extant apparatus of written discourse around the film *Lebende Werkzeuge*, besides reviews in the cultural sections of medical journals and in daily newspapers, largely falls into two categories. The first consists of the regular, glowingly favorable accounts of the film published in the monthly magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* (*Practical Hygiene for School and Home*), a periodical that describes itself as a "journal for the methodology of health education" but also performs extensive public-relations work for the products of the Leo-Werke during the period in which that firm was the journal's chief sponsor. In that periodical, stills from *Lebende Werkzeuge* occasionally illustrate articles championing dental hygiene.

The second category appears in the circulars of the *Reichsstelle*, written by that organization's head, Dr. Kurt Gauger, in order to set and maintain policies for the subsidiary film offices, most immediately the state and provincial offices (*Landes*- and *Provinzialbildstellen* that

operated directed below the national level. In these documents, the Leo-Werke and *Lebende Werkzeuge* appear as an antagonist and an irritant, respectively, in a scattering of texts ranging in date from 1937 to 1940. In these, Gauger writes to his subordinates informing them of infractions against the chain of command, eventually recommending that the film should not be exhibited at all under the auspices of his organization.

I turn to the terms *Reichsstelle*, *Landesbildstelle*, *Kreisbildstelle* and the like to reorient my analysis toward what those terms literally encode. Namely, the German terms combine an entity of political geography (*Reich, Land, Provinz, Kreis*) within which that center's responsibilities are enacted; a reference (*Bild)* to image media that elides the distinction between still and moving images (as well as between projected images and printed ones); and a concluding noun (*Stelle*), which carries agentive traces of that institution's origin, having been set up in a particular place by human beings for a particular purpose. Since my case study involves the Leo-Werke's active disregard for the authority of institutions in the hierarchy of the *Reichsstelle*, the specific framing conditions of that authority, both semantic and as present in founding legal documents, seem germane: a circumvented *Landesbildstelle* betrays a gap in that institution's power to exert control over both its territorial extent (*Land*) and the media forms with whose disposal it has been entrusted (*Bild*).

The title *Lebende Werkzeuge* makes explicit the crossing to two sets of concepts crucial to National Socialist utopianism (and therefore to National Socialist *Kulturfilm*). These concepts collect around life, *Leben,* as both a biological construct (one conditioned and internally differentiated by both the inheritances of early 20th-century *Lebensphilosophie* and the newly empowered precepts of negative eugenics) and as a technological one, the moving image that

early German film commentators so often described as "living;" and around tools, *Werkzeuge,* as both a technological metaphor of living tissue and a mythologization of work. The promotional discourse around the film in the magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* presupposes a particular ideologically and technologically defined notion of life and the living. Specifically, "life" pertains to a form of vibrancy that can be opposed, as it is in some of the glowing reviews of *Lebende Werkzeuge* published in that journal, to older, garden-variety media for hygienic pedagogy: one Dr. H. von Kameke writes that the film "shows us things not individually, but always in their living context," and that the film is not only about the teeth, but also about "the reality of life."[8] By this logic, the film not only captures norms for dental hygiene, but also creates that hygiene as a vital, habitable context: it builds a world. The teeth it features therefore serve as a piece of corporeal territory upon which a particular kind of utopia could be constructed. Indeed, the contributors to *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* were quite willing to label the teeth as the main bulwark against an impressively broad variety of physical and social problems associated with modernity. A review in 1939 affirms the thesis of a pamphlet titled *Der Gebissverfall als Ausdruck einer unorganischen Lebensordnung* (*Dental Decay as Expression of an Un-Organic Way of Life*), a title which also appears as the headline for that issue's review section: "Dental decay is the topic, the starting point; mental illnesses, pathological disturbances in social life, fear of life, moral decay, stomach and intestinal illnesses, cancer, the rural exodus, urbanization, a materialistic worldview, increasing bureaucracy, and disproportionate valuation of trade and technology are the endpoints."[9] Preserving the "tools" of

8. H. von Kameke, "'Lebende Werkzeuge'," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): 94, Neubert Papers.

9. "Der Gebissverfall als Ausdruck einer unorganischen Lebensordnung," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 8, no. 3 (Dec. 1939): 60, Neubert Papers.

the teeth (using the magazine's sponsor's product, of course) also preserves their artisanal status of their chewing labor against impersonal modern ways—bureaucracy, industrial technology—of getting things done. Dental hygiene protects the sovereignty of ergonomic subjectivity.

The teeth are, then, both artifacts and avatars of a project of living which, it would seem, gains its deepest positive affective charge by conforming to National Socialist body aesthetics from the teeth outward. The normative scenes of "the reality of life itself" that make up much of the visual appeal of *Lebende Werkzeuge* are thus illustrations of the ways in which teeth can be tools for upholding the conservative social relations, communities, and institutions prized by the state. One can use one's teeth, for example, in the process of sharing meals with one's family. On the other hand, these relations themselves provide contexts for the teeth to serve as sites where the tools of hygienic pedagogy can intervene in the hygienic perfection of those prized "living" contexts: the viewer learns one should also *not* use one's teeth as a venue for sharing one's toothbrush with that same family. Teeth are not just tools for the process of digestion; they are also tools for making the concepts of the single-user toothbrush and of Chlorodont toothpaste relevant, and for caring for the social makeup of one's intimate space. The use of a tool creates a technological or ergonomic substrate for the moral, aesthetic, and economic imperatives that provide opportunities for sociopolitical normalization.

The salutary aspects of technical objects thus appear only when those objects operate in harmony with a rational application of free will that is conducive to human thriving, aesthetically pleasing, and marketable. Accordingly, both the film and its commentator in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* insist upon a mutually reinforcing relationship between the diet and the integrity of the teeth. A healthy set of teeth is the precondition for proper digestion; therefore,

dental hygiene reflects a commitment to efficient nourishment of the entire body, including those same teeth.

The casting of the tooth as an artisanal or industrial tool is therefore one manifestation of the ways in which *Lebende Werkzeuge* asks the teeth to serve as nodes in a commercial-social cosmology compatible with the National Socialist *Weltanschauung.* In particular, the teeth—and accordingly the Leo-Werke, and the film itself—intervene at a point of crucial interaction between the human being, the earth, and the heavens. "Nourishment," in turn, is not only a physiological norm, but also a chance to embed the project in National Socialist political aesthetics; proper chewing unlocks *Aufbaustoffe* that transmit the "energy of the sun [and the] energy of the soil" (Kraft der Sonne, Kraft des Bodens) into the body. The work of chewing is thus grafted onto the agricultural process, and the maintenance of the healthy *Gebiss* gains explicitly rural connotations through a cut to a family of hale farming folk sitting down to a meal at their simple table. The following comparison with the alleged diets of city dwellers, largely comprising processed convenience foods, brings more reciprocity into the equation: not only do the sun and the German soil deserve to have their natural products respectfully processed by healthy teeth, but a diet subjected to the insults of industrial packaging avenges itself upon the teeth of its consumer (a flapper-like cosmopolitan woman): these "unhealthy" foods "get stuck between the teeth" and lead to decay, demonstrated anatomically in the next animated sequence.

The film's images of ill and good health, then, strive to negotiate the proper proportionality of modern medicine and Germanic folkways. The mutually reinforcing relationship between healthy teeth and healthy food engenders a proximity to nature that also manifests as the artisanal knowledge of good technological practices and a preference for modern academic medicine over folk remedies; consider the sequence I describe at the beginning

of this chapter, which negatively urges the *vernünftig* use of both "dead" and "living" tools before cutting to a sampling of inadequate home and quack remedies for the relief of tooth pain. This set of concrete explanations, demonstrations, and warnings gives way, toward the end of the film, to two kinds of ecstatic aesthetics. One is the smooth, white plasticity of the toothpaste being manufactured. The second is the closing footage of sport and gymnastics (reminiscent of the work of Leni Riefenstahl or the 1925 *Kulturfilm Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* [dir. Wilhelm Prager and Nicholas Kaufmann]), accompanied by a voiceover calling dental hygiene the "duty of each individual in service of the health of the *Volk.*" As a population within which the film's hygienic principles are to be actualized (or, put differently: to whom Chlorodont-branded toothpaste and toothbrushes were to be sold or distributed) the *Volk* only reaches this state of ecstatic beauty in movement by overcoming the state it is in for much of the film: an endearingly fallible collection of rural folk whose occasional resistance to dental hygiene is based upon innocence and simplicity (but who consume simple, hearty food, which predisposes them to a good outcome once each family member gets their own toothbrush). Furthermore, if the *Volk* depends upon dental health, and dental health depends on Chlorodont*,* then the Chlorodont factory is one of the sites where the *Volk* is indirectly manufactured. More precisely, it is a place where the material is created that makes the individual's dental duty to the collective realizable, and therefore binding.

The process sequences from inside the toothpaste factory and the sport sequences of the film's ending implicate toothpaste and bodily beauty in the commodity aesthetics of one another. The theory of commodity aesthetics, as promulgated by Wolfgang Haug, holds that the use value of a given object is eclipsed by the system of appearances that merchants set up around it, and that commodities develop detachable surfaces (of packaging and promotional material) that

augment and facilitate the mobility of those same commodities.[10] Commodity aesthetics provides a way for the athletic corporeal imagery of the *Volk* to attach itself to mundane objects like toothpaste and toothbrush. The *Volk* has become a surface of the saleable product. This link makes the products themselves legible as critical infrastructure for a *völkisch* utopia in which rays of the sun are converted into limber Germanic bodies through the relay of the teeth. The accumulation of corporate revenue, like the whiteness of teeth, becomes a measure of progress for that part of the utopia that is grounded upon dental hygiene.

The moral universe of this film then clearly marks the salutary limitations of modern technological proliferation in a way that works to illustrate some theses of the modern German political right. If the teeth are tools, they are artisanal ones, costly possessions upon which their owners rely and in which they must invest continuously if they are to enjoy their ongoing services. They belong to a genus of pre-industrial work practices whose ontological separation from the world of modern technology also appears in Martin Heidegger's discussions of the authenticity of work: for Heidegger, artisanal techniques, as opposed to industrial production, preserve a mutually supportive, rather than antagonistic and exploitative, relationship between the human being and the natural resources it relies upon. Conversely, technology becomes dangerous once it rationalizes nature.[11] Through its heavy use of detailed animated diagrams of

---

10. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Kritik der Warenästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), 15 and 61.

11. See especially Heidegger's introduction of the term *Herausfordern* in "Die Frage nach der Technik" and his comparison of modern resource extraction to traditional agrarianism shortly thereafter: "Ein Landstrich wird dagegen in die Förderung von Kohle und Erzen herausgefordert. Das Erdreich entbirgt sich jetzt als Kohlenrevier, der Boden als Erzlagerstätte. Anders erscheint das Feld, das der Bauer vormals bestellte, wobei bestellen noch hieß: hegen und pflegen." Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach der Technik," in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), 7:15–16.

the dental anatomy, *Lebende Werkzeuge* provides an imagistic record of the way that a "tool" can be embedded within a just natural order, a balanced economy where the proper use of the tool brings about both the conditions for the preservation of that tool and the environment that enables this transaction to occur *ad infinitum*. Until, at least, some break occurs that would betray the authenticity and rupture the autarky of this system.

Purporting to embed modern lifestyle practices into an evolutionary continuum that also includes other toothed animals, A. Wiegand's essay "On the Evolutionary History of the Human Teeth" attempts to combine a somewhat Heideggerian critique of technological modernity with a reflection upon evolutionary trait loss. The essay appears in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* in 1937 and is illustrated with two stills from *Lebende Werkzeuge.* Wiegand suggests that both the physical strength and the regenerative vigor of human teeth have become attenuated in response to the plenty and security offered by sedentary, agricultural human *Kultur.*[12] The regenerative capacities of this bodily resource are negatively affected by our cultural techniques, but must also be supplanted by technological means. The most obvious manifestation of the technological solution, the artificial tooth*,* is both the most literal and the most dangerous to Wiegand: "One could think, using superficial judgment, that dental care is a luxury, because the human being can so easily acquire replacements."[13] Prosthetic technology, by its presence, risks causing people to yield to the temptation of skipping the hard work of dental hygiene by reassuring them that any consequences can be repaired. The way in which *Kultur* repays us for what it has cost us in dental regeneration is, rather, that it "puts...the best means once again in our hands: the

12. A. Wiegand, "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des menschlichen Gebisses," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 4/5, (Feb./Apr. 1937): 92, Neubert Papers.

13. Ibid., 93.

toothbrush and everything that comes with it."[14] This article does not refer to any brand of toothpaste—in fact, it does not explicitly mention toothpaste at all—but by its logic, the work of a Dresden toothpaste factory does not only serve the health of Germany's teeth, but offers a dialectical remedy for losses sustained during the movement of man out of a state of nature. Or indeed, a recollection of how that natural order of human culture ought to look in an industrialized but transfigured German nation.

The limits of the power of commodity aesthetics to blend racial ideology and corporate profit appear where standing monopolies on discursive power are disturbed. Whether or not the hygienic prescriptions, toothpaste vats and gymnastics of *Lebende Werkzeuge* comport with the utopian imaginary of the administrative state is immaterial. The pertinent distinction for propaganda is how well the media object subsumes itself as a "tool" of state power (however spurious we may, in the final analysis, find that state's attempts to distinguish itself from its corporatist supports).

Accordingly, the *Reichsstelle* brings with it a framework of technological structures, from its hierarchical apparatus of command and discretion to its existing catalog of films and its pools of mobile moving and still image projectors. The Leo-Werke's film must be integrated into this structure if it is to serve the state. If the Leo-Werke's and the *Reichsstelle*'s notion of a healthy *Volk* are not endowed with congruence by precise language in the proper documents, then those two notions—a nation of people who maintain healthy teeth using Chlorodont toothpaste and unshared toothbrushes on the one hand, a nation of people kept apprised of the most useful

14. Ibid.

developments in state-sanctioned science, technology, and culture by educational authorities that keep the cities and countryside well innervated with the advanced pedagogical medium of the moving image on the other—compete in a way that threatens the coherence, and with it the power, of the official utopian destination.

The *Reichsstelle* is thus deeply invested in the forms of authenticity that attend its own technological domain—its own tools. However useful an entity the Leo-Werke may be through its coordination of dental hygiene education campaigns and its sponsoring of magazines like *Praktische Gesundheitspflege,* only the consent of the *Reichsstelle* could integrate the Leo-Werke's educational efforts with those of the *Reichsstelle* itself. This kind of distinction was noted by Max Weber in his canonical descriptions of bureaucratic power: that precisely the written, documentary nature of bureaucratic positions and decisions serves the essential purpose of marking out the collective interest, estranging it from the personal interests of the actors involved.[15] Without a document on file stating that the corporate interests of the Leo-Werke can be effectively bracketed from the salutary effect its film may have upon the *Volk,* screening that film in the name of the public good threatens the integrity of that public bureaucracy.[16] The amendments the *Reichsstelle*'s own governing documents enshrine its fundamental suspicion of external contributions to the educational film corpus. The danger seems to be that of a counterfeit hygiene, wrought with unauthorized tools, leading to a parallel health and an unauthorized flourishing of the teeth of the *Volk*—the more intolerable for being superficially indistinguishable from the utopia that the *Reich* Film Office itself aims to implement.

---

15. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922), 651.

16. For a magisterial theorization of the kind of administrative logic in play here, see Cornelia Vismann, *Akten. Medientechnik und Recht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2000).

The Magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* and the Film *Lebende Werkzeuge*

As I have argued is the case with other hygiene campaigns in this dissertation, the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* forms less of an autonomous media object than a facet of a multimedia campaign that records and advances both hygienic and aesthetic norms. In the case of *Lebende Werkzeuge,* a neat sample of this media ecosystem remains extant in archival copies of the journal *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus.* In particular, I will cite the three issues that I have collected from the magazine's fifth print year (1936-37), a period coinciding with the release of *Lebende Werkzeuge*. I hope to fill in the gaps in this series at a later time; what I currently reference are the first, third and fourth numbers of that year, namely August 1936 (shortly before the film's release), December 1936, and February-April 1937. The latter two issues, appearing after the film's release, are consecutive.[17]

Fig. 4. Film still from *Lebende Werkzeuge*, reproduced in the magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege.* SOURCE: *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 4/5, (Feb./Apr. 1937): 95, Neubert Papers, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

Outside of advertisements and pieces about *Lebende Werkzeuge,* the name of the Leo-Werke, its flagship brand Chlorodont, or both appear frequently in the 1930s issues of *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* (issues from 1940 onwards no longer feature Chlorodont as a sponsor, and the advertising pages become significantly more diverse). The context is invariably

17. My work with *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* has thus far been restricted to those issues archived with Rudolf Neubert's papers in Dresden.

a positive one, generally having to do with an act of generosity or conscience on the part of the company: in 1933, the company offers prizes to incentivize readers to share cautionary and edifying stories for use in dental hygiene instruction, and in 1936, an article on a campaign to put toothbrushes in the hands of schoolchildren mentions Chlorodont as the donor of the brushes. Two articles describing regional studies on the state of dental hygiene, which I will discuss in more detail shortly, mention Chlorodont as a collaborator with the *Landeskomittee Sachsen-Anhalt für Schulzahnpflege* (Saxony-Anhalt State Committee for School Dental Care).[18]

In addition to illustrating items that directly pertain to *Lebende Werkzeuge,* such as reviews and collections of newspaper blurbs, still images from the film, captioned as such, also appear alongside articles that do not refer to the film. In the issues I have collected, these articles are: "Drink Skim Milk" and "How Many Residents of the Province Saxony and the State of Anhalt have their Own Toothbrushes?" in the December 1936 issue, and "On the Developmental History of the Human Teeth" in the February/April 1937 issue. Each of these issues also contains a longer piece reviewing the film itself, which is also illustrated with captioned stills. I will briefly consider the roles of these images with respect to the pieces they accompany and to the overall visual identity of the publication in this period, which is, conveniently, elaborated upon within its pages.

18. "Die schönste Geschichte und der beste Vergleich. Eine Preisfrage," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 2, no. 1, (Aug. 1933): 8-9; "Zahnpflege-Hilfswerk für die Schulkinder," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 1, (Aug. 1936): 20; "Wie viele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?", *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 1, (Aug. 1936): 15, " "Wieviele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 3, (Dec. 1936): 62-66, all in Neubert Papers.

Not including the image on the front cover and the advertisement (for Chlorodont) on the back cover, the December 1936 issue intersperses 13 images among its articles. Of these, four are stills from the film *Lebende Werkzeuge*; three are reproductions of slides from a series of images published by the Hygiene-Museum to accompany lectures on tuberculosis; six are art images, mostly woodcuts, that are not intended to illustrate the texts they appear beside. The February/April 1937 issue prints 11 images. Of these, four pertain to *Lebende Werkzeuge* (three stills and one reproduction of the cover of the leaflet published by Willibald Ulbricht to accompany the film); three are photographs pertaining to school instruction (a girl at a desk; a teacher and a child; a visiting dentist and a group of schoolchildren); four are miscellaneous woodcuts.

Fig. 5. Woodcut by Bodo Zimmermann, reproduced in the magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege*
SOURCE: *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 4/5, (Feb./Apr. 1937): 82, Neubert Papers, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

Between these two issues, seven pieces are dedicated to dental hygiene (of these, two are about the film *Lebende Werkzeuge*), constituting a plurality of the material. Other objects of repeated attention are nutrition (three articles) and hygienic pedagogy (two articles), as well as lengthy theoretical pieces that veer between psychology and esotericism. In the December issue,

A. Wiegand also publishes the conclusion of a piece on the 1933 "Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses" (Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring), which had been serialized across multiple issues. Both close, as all issues I have seen do, with reviews of books and magazines.

In the August 1936 issue, a brief explanatory piece, "Woodcuts and Etchings," appears under the name of Walter Sichler, who would eventually share chief editor duties with Rudolf Neubert before replacing him as chief editor in 1938. Sichler describes the new scheme of illustrations for the magazine. In previous volumes, illustrations tended to be more tightly tied to the content of the essays they appeared alongside—a parade of anthropomorphic vegetables above piece on nutrition in 1933, a reproduction of a poster urging parents to train their children in appropriate behavior for the doctor with a piece called "Teaching for the House Call." Sichler writes that the magazine has begun printing artworks from artists enrolled in the Association for New German Art (*Bund für junge deutsche Kunst*), stating that aesthetic education is a part of public health education: "In the future, as we have so

Fig. 6. Film still from *Lebende Werkzeuge*, reproduced in the magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege.* SOURCE: *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 3, (Dec. 1936): 63, Neubert Papers, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

far, we will publish images of all kinds, and we hope to perform a practical health service in this way, too."[19] Furthermore, and although "the [images] were and are mostly unrelated to the content of the essays," Sichler argues that they serve to expand the publication in the direction of visual education (*Anschauungsunterricht*)*:* "we are all, to a great extent, dependent upon the book, and our so-called education [*Bildung*] barely has anything to do with the image [*Bild*] anymore."[20] The art images serve as equipment for maintaining the emotional and psychical well-being of the German people ("refreshment for the souls of human beings").[21] They tend heavily toward rural landscapes and village scenes: frequent contributors are Bodo Zimmermann, who offers seasonal woodcut scenes of villages in his native Silesia, and the Munich woodcut artist Willi Döhler. The moods of the images tend toward pan-German nostalgia or *völkisch* melodrama—in the latter category, Otto Kast's painting of a gaunt family, titled "Die Flucht" ("Fleeing").

In this new visual campaign, photographic images appear still to be topically matched with the adjacent texts. This is the case for the stills from *Lebende Werkzeuge* (at the very least, through their being captioned as taken from the film). Each of these images contains both human figures (often children, but also figures clearly coded by dress and setting as peasants) and some evidence of a source of natural light—the figure is either photographed outdoors or near a window, and is almost invariably sunlit. It would not seem far-fetched to suggest that these

19. Walter Sichler, "Holzschnitte und Radierungen," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 1, (Aug. 1936): 18-19, Neubert Papers.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

images participate in the same affective program as the art images; the themes of nature, agrarianism, and family are equally present in the stills.

From the perspective of an editorial team adjusting the visual presentation of its journal, then, what kind of object is the film *Lebende Werkzeuge*? It is a source of emotional and aesthetic information rather than of practical hygiene instructions. This is unsurprising; the images featured tend to reinforce the same kinds of emotional overtones privileged by the film commentators published in the magazine. Writing on *Lebende Werkzeuge* in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* in 1937, H. von Kameke comes to the conclusion that the Leo-Werke urges human beings toward harmony with nature, which has "generously...given man everything he needs to be happy; he must only learn to incorporate himself into her order, that he must live factually [*sachlich*], that is, to do justice to people and things; this requires, of course, insight and love, even for what is small."[22] This ethos is concretized at the end in the physical affirmation of "life," at least as the notion was legible to Third Reich humanism, mediated by movement and youth: "the film concludes in praise of...strong, sparkling life, in images...of the spear-waving, running, dancing young people [*Volk*]."[23] These are the people who have integrated themselves into the order of nature—and as the product of the economic relationships advocated in the film, we should understand that the physiological and aesthetic superiority of these figures has a direct causal relation to brand loyalty, dental care habits, and thorough chewing.

Kameke's piece goes beyond these ahistorical claims about man and nature to make historical ones about German economics and politics. According to him, for example, the process sequence from the Chlorodont factory salves economic and psychic wounds that Nazi Germany

22. von Kameke, "'Lebende Werkzeuge'," 94.

23. Ibid., 96.

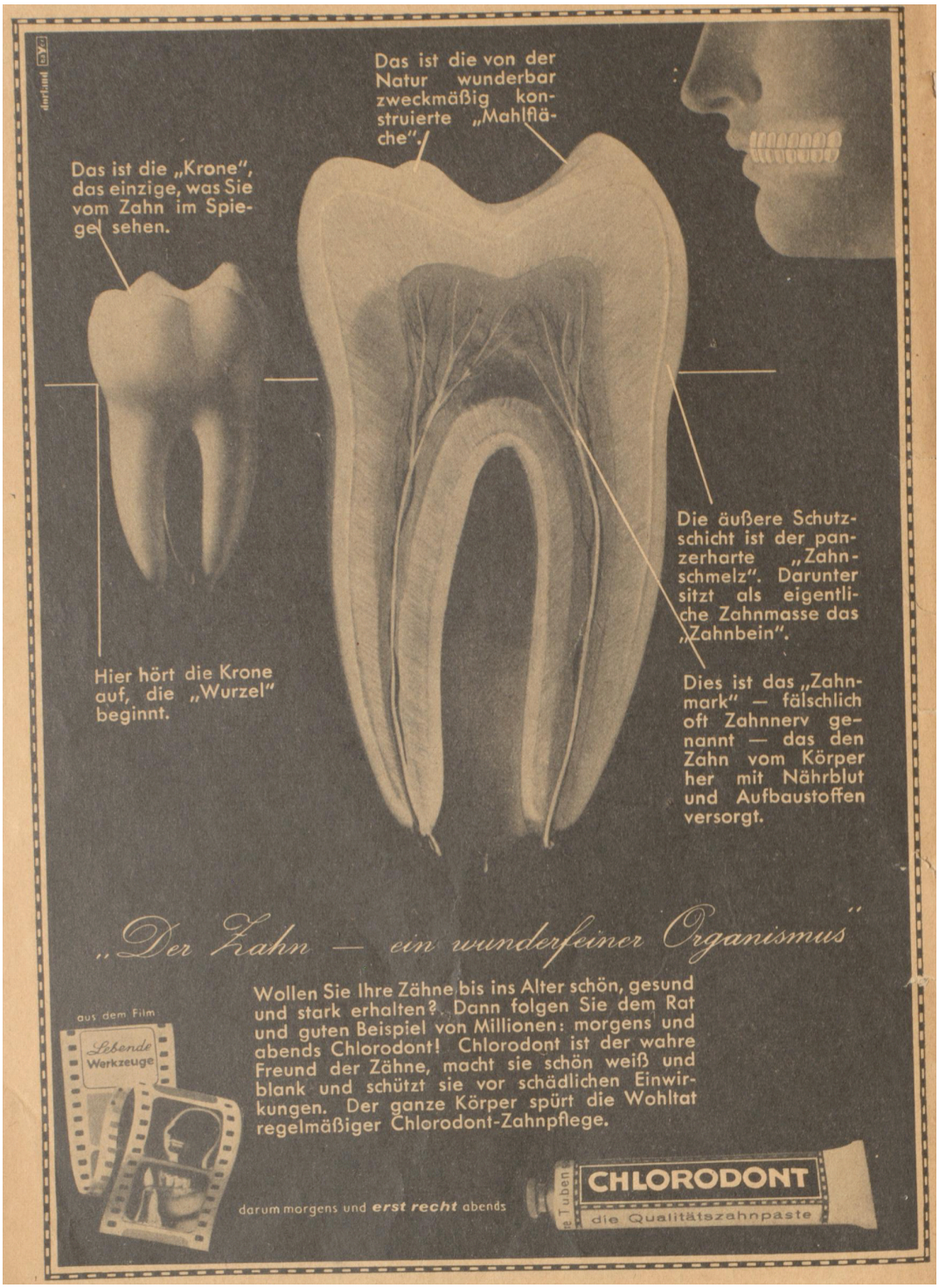

Fig. 7. Full-page advertisement for Chlorodont toothpaste in the magazine *Praktische Gesundheitspflege,* referencing the film *Lebende Werkzeuge.* SOURCE: *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): back cover, Neubert Papers, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

allegedly inherited from Weimar democracy: "The scientific saturation and constant observation of the process, the exact, scrupulous hand work, the high level of mechanical performance. Such images awaken pride in quality German work, strengthen the appreciation for quality that is still in shambles among our people, a result of the dreary years of inflation."[24] From making this point, Kameke moves on seamlessly to finding in it validation of his key point of praise for the film, that its subject is not only dental hygiene, but also "life itself." The sensual pleasures of the factory scenes are thus linked not only to economic and ergonomic success, but also with forms of positive affect that touch all facets of life (and also promote a conservative view of gender roles):

> To teach us to have the taste for the good and the right, that is what matters! And that is what this film does, because it is full of the lust for life! A kindly and humorously seen world opens itself before us: I am thinking for example, of how the mother puts the children to bed in the evening and takes care of the youngest in a particularly loving way, the way she stands over the stove and then brings the meal to the family, and everyone helps themselves happily."[25]

Kameke hastens to draw general conclusions from specific images, joining them together to create a "world" that has more to do with abstract affective evocations of vigor, love, and happiness than with the mechanics of dental care.

Furthermore, Kameke considers the film to have exceptional pedagogical potential because it works on the level of the "subconscious;" only by intervening there, he suggests, can a hygienic message immunize a person to "some drives, for example, hedonism."[26] This appeal takes place through the aesthetic overtones of the various situations and environments, and the

---

24. Ibid., 95.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 94.

people that populate them, that the film features. For example, he describes in vivid terms the film's treatment of a classic hygienic "other"—a quack healer (a *Besprecherin*, as he calls her, one who cajoles ailments to heal through speech), together with her living and working space. The woman herself ("shapelessly fat"), her clothing ("a shady-looking suit"), her furniture ("upholstered"), the room ("which gives the impression of being poorly-ventilated...the cabinet full of knick-knacks with countless photos on top"), and her childless spinster lifestyle ("a black cat, apparently the only living thing associated with her, slinks around") come together of their own accord to furnish Kameke with the numerous adjectives he uses to write of the affective impression they leave upon him.[27] But the effect of this sequence (I would fill out its atmosphere by noting that it is underscored with barrel-organ music whose diegetic source, if it has one, remains unclear, even as the traveling shot ends with the view of the street out the parlor window) is only consummated after a cut to a shot Kameke reads as its opposite. The latter also takes place in a living-room, but this one is subject to the cleansing influences of familial domesticity: "Two boys, having just jumped out of bed, run ahead of their mother into the living room, they push the windows upon, morning light floods in."[28] The result, he claims, is a lesson that easily comprehensible because it is guided by *Anschauung* and emotion ("feelings of pleasure and displeasure"); he renders this lesson by reducing the *Besprecherin* to a list of negative attributes: "Thus: *Besprecherin*—ugly—airless—clumsy—covetous, etc."[29] She and the two healthy boys of the next shot join a large company of human figures shown in the film who, for Kameke, are both instantly legible as to their normative valence through their appeal to

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 94-95.

29. Ibid., 95.

emotion: “children with pale and sick faces, of whom one can effectively tell from a glance at the tips of their noses that something is not right” on the one hand, “the sweet little blonde thing” on the other, whom “one doesn’t easily forget.”[30] (A still of a young blonde girl is printed near this portion of Kameke’s review.)

If the human figures and their everyday environments form, for Kameke, unambiguous affective markers that guide the viewer’s interpretation of the film’s hygienic message, the film’s tool metaphor is the most direct vehicle of that message. Kameke praises the film’s tactic of performing its more directly didactic tasks efficiently and, once again, prosecuting them as much on the level of affect and sensation as on that of judgment through analogies to everyday objects of use and value: “Does Mother clean her silver with sand? And if you were to use a pair of scissors as a pry bar...such images sink in and awaken insight.”[31] The general argument of his review is thus that the affective and emotional markers necessary for good hygienic pedagogy are best transmitted through illustrative environments and events and familiar objects, and that the film does well to spend the bulk of its time doing such work. The film’s most explicitly anatomical lessons, rendered as animated diagrams, form its “in the narrower sense didactic part” and do not compose the main pedagogical thrust, but are rather visually interesting and “cleverly inserted.”[32] Perfected pedagogy, according to this review, is self-negating: it works on the level

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Scouring sand seems to have been a common point of comparison for inferior dentifrices at the time; the Lingner-Werke’s 1934 film *Gesunde Zähne—Glückliche Menschen* features a sequence of a woman wearing a hole in a pot while cleaning it with sand and throwing it onto a scrap heap.

32. Ibid.

of affect, aesthetics, and figurative communication, rendering direct instructional content all but superfluous.

Kameke's review thus has little to do with dental hygiene and much to do with hygiene as a set of emotional currents, stereotypes, environments, and activities. In other words, this is hygiene as a world-building strategy. On the other hand, *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* picks up on the film's toothbrush culture to provide statistical images of the *Volk,* measuring the human progress of such world-building. As the emblematic "dead" tool (the offering given by *Kultur* in exchange for what it took in dental regenerative capacity, according to Wiegand) for the upkeep of one's "living tools," the toothbrush is not only an item for personal hygienic practice and a branded commodity, but also a figure for statistical information for modelling the population as a distribution of different levels and practices of dental well-being.

In 1936, Chlorodont sponsored a poll administered by the *Landeskomittee Sachsen-Anhalt für Schulzahnpflege*. Results from the poll were published in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* shortly thereafter in multiple versions, most extensively in the December 1936 issue, where it appears across five pages. The result is a set of data harvested from "133,089 families with 577,209 heads" in Saxony-Anhalt that uses the toothbrush as the central figure for assessing the condition of dental hygiene in each household: "The toothbrush seems best suited to serve as our object of investigation because dental care as we understand it today cannot be carried out without one."[33] The survey reports that 68.6 percent of respondents owned toothbrushes and that, of these, approximately 7 percent shared the "family toothbrushes"

33. "Wie viele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 1, (Aug. 1936): p. 15; "Wieviele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 3, (Dec. 1936): 63. Both from Neubert Papers.

Lebende Werkzeuge depicts in an animated sequence, working its way from the head of the family down to the baby and the household pet.[34] Only fifty percent of the total respondents used their toothbrushes on a regular basis; this figure went down to 40 percent when the definition of "a regular basis" was narrowed to exclude "monthly or weekly" brushing.[35] Finally, only 20 percent brushed their teeth before going to bed; the other regular users brushed "only in the mornings." The outstanding pedagogical imperative follows the statistical analysis in boldface type: "About 2 million people in the Province of Saxony and the State of Anhalt alone must still be won over for sensible dental care."[36]

Attached to the article discussing the results is a table classifying the respondents according to the profession of the primary wage earner. Thus, patterns of toothbrush ownership, sharing, and use are not only a way of modelling a population's dental health in the abstract, but a granular comparative tool for the intimate personal activities of individuals of varying classes, incomes, and educational levels. This table cross-references two technological registers: the patterns of resource use in service of the "living tools" of the teeth and the professional classification, itself related to technologies and tools of any given trade in more ("lathe operator") or less ("worker") specific terms.[37]

My impression of this table—especially as it is one of only two inclusions in this article that is separate from the body text, the other being the aforementioned film still—is as much

---

34. "Wieviele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?," 63-64.

35. Ibid., 63.

36. Ibid., 64.

37. Ibid., 64-65.

graphical as it is textual. Both of these, in light of the text, are images that depict the *Volk* in one way or another, particularly given that the article notes: "we have no doubt that the newly received results on the dental hygiene conditions [in Saxony-Anhalt] are representative of all of Germany."[38] One image is of a representative of the *Volk*, a fair-haired boy in a sunlit garden scene, misusing his "living tools." In the film itself, this was one of the shots that was intercut with the broken scissors and other mistreated mechanical implements. In *Praktische Gesundheitspflege*'s party line on the merits of the film, this image would likely be considered endearing and attractive even as it exemplifies a forbidden behavior. The other is a tabulated view of the population of a German province that interweaves the categories of social and professional functioning—both the roles that people fill with respect to the state, and the kinds of materials, tools, and settings over which they might be expected to exert mastery or competence—with their relationship to a particular tool, one whose use and ownership ought to be democratized, the toothbrush as defined by a number of parameters—ownership, frequency of use, quality of cleaning products used, and attitudes toward the task itself.

This example suggests another dimension of the tool: as a measure of the *Volk*. Generalizing from the toothbrush example, one could claim that the patterns of availability, capacity and competence pertaining to any tool could provide the necessary distinctions for creating a statistical image of a population (analogous to the literacy rate). In this case, the "dead" tool stands in as a proxy for competence with respect to the "living" tool, and the "living" tool offers a dynamic record (through its hygienic state) of that competence. The data thus derived allow for the revision of hygienic and pedagogical goals, as well as providing a sense of where resources are needed (or could be sold or donated). The toothbrush and its use patterns

38. Ibid., 65.

provide a pragmatic framework for thinking about the *Volk* as a human collective that could be optimized. The definition of the tooth as a "tool" likewise means that populations could be conceived of as textured by different gradations in the competence in using and maintaining that tool. Norms that are derived in this way recast hygienic education not (or not only) as a practice to boost the number of healthy or decrease the number of unhealthy people, but to make a larger percentage of the population good technicians or stewards of its bodily "tools."

The issues of the journal *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* published in the late 1930s were not only a venue for the promotion of the products of the Leo-Werke, like the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* and Chlorodont toothpaste. They were also the site of an attempt to extract a maximum degree of discursive value—hygienic, aesthetic, and commercial—from the corporation's film project. It furnished not only images that were useful for illustrating texts on topics related to dental health, but also the occasion to discuss dental hygiene in a different genre of writing: namely, reflections on health pedagogy in a relatively new medium. Doing so broadened the possibilities for discussing quotidian dental practices as being related to aesthetic pleasure and emotional investment, as well as to the fortunes of toothpaste companies.

The Memoranda (*Rundschreiben*) of the *Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm*

The film was digested by the *Reichsstelle* in a rather different way. To it, *Lebende Werkzeuge* was a highly flawed, if not inadmissibly so, piece of near-advertising that nonetheless educed some sincere interest in the teaching of dental hygiene to ordinary people.[39] In neither its

39. Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 101/37," *Neue Dokumente,* 1:351.

form nor in its content did *Reichsstelle* consider the film readily advisable for use in classroom contexts.[40] It nonetheless remained conditionally approved (to be considered for further, locality-specific approval) by the *Reichsstelle* until that organization received reports of attempted direct dealings between the Leo-Werke and individual schools to have the film shown.[41] In making these overtures, the Leo-Werke threatened to circumvent the mechanisms for ensuring the pedagogical and ideological consistency of films shown in German schools and public educational events. These appeals effectively threaten the jurisdiction of the *Reichsstelle,* its subsidiaries, and the authorities designated in its bylaws over the political territory they were formed to control. The question of screening *Lebende Werkzeuge,* especially as 1937 and 1938 went on, thus quickly became a question of how much authority the *Reichsstelle* exercised over its own territory, which was coterminous with the political extension of the German state. The *Reichsstelle* had neither financial nor ideological reasons to prioritize dental hygiene instruction over any other educational niche; if the "living tools" of the mouth were of any concern to its functionaries, they were so as a topic of pedagogical encounter like any other. Conversely, the Leo-Werke, like any other private film supplier who sought distribution through the *Reichsstelle,* had no incentive to prioritize the coherence of the state's pedagogical image-media apparatus over its own profits and goals; if the political divisions of territorial authority that structured the *Reichsstelle* were of any interest to the Leo-Werke*,* it was as an organizing principle for markets.

This debacle results in the film's afterlife in the official memoranda of the *Reichsstelle*, texts which were compiled and published in 2003 by Malte Ewert along with institutional

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 352.

histories and commentaries from personalities involved at the time. Across Ewert's two volumes, the Leo-Werke and their film appear sporadically over a period from 1937 to 1940.[42] Kurt Gauger, the chief of the *Reichsstelle* at the time, shifts his position from January 1937, when he informs the regional film offices that the Leo-Werke could no longer use documents from the *Reichsstelle* in its advertisements, to February 1940, when he extends a prohibition on school screenings of *Lebende Werkzeuge* to the *Wehrmacht*'s instructional and entertainment activities for its troops.[43] In between, the film office's encounters with *Lebende Werkzeuge* are memorialized in a series of memoranda, which cross-reference one another heavily and describe two primary ways in which the Leo-Werke attempted to circumvent *Reichsstelle* guidelines.

The first manifested in a pattern of failure to follow the hierarchies of command, according to which any third-party vendor must gain approval from the state film office, as well as from the local school authorities, before supplying its material to any school under the jurisdiction of those bodies.[44] A letter sent by Kurt Gauger to Leo-Werke in October 1928 (also

---

42. Following the subject index in the second volume of Ewert's compendium of *Rundschreiben* and other texts on *Unterrichtsfilm*, one quickly learns that *Lebende Werkzeuge* played a particularly significant antagonistic role in the RfdU's efforts to maintain the quality and ideological purity of the films it permitted to be shown in German classrooms. Under the rubric "Abwehr unerwünschter Einflüsse auf die Schule," Ewert names two categories of private commercial interference in the *Schulfilmwesen,* referring to 18 passages in the collection. Of these 18, a full nine refer to *Lebende Werkzeuge,* and it is the only film Ewert cites under this category that appears more than once. The Leo-Werke and its film not only crossed paths with the *Reichsstelle*/*Reichsanstalt* during the existence of Nazi Germany: it was the primary private, for-profit antagonist of that institution's attempt to ensure that all classroom film screenings were subject to official preliminary approval. Ewert, *Neue Dokumente,* 2:IV.

43. He recommends two other films in its stead, one of which is *Gesunde Zähne—Glückliche Menschen* (see note 4 of this chapter). Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 20/40 an alle Landesbildstellen," *Neue Dokumente*, 2:521.

44. "222. Unterrichtsfilm und amtliche Bildstellen," *Zentralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichtsverwaltung in Preußen* 76 (1934): 199.

sent in facsimile to the various state film offices) details the company's infractions: publishing promotional pieces about the film in the *Reich Journal of German Educators (Reichszeitung der deutschen Erzieher*) with the objective of raising interest about the film among schoolteachers, and unauthorized deliveries or offers of film material to schools in the Lower Saxon districts of Hanover and Hildesheim.[45] Gauger recreates the topology of one infraction: "Although the state film office of Lower Saxony had informed you that the district president in Hildesheim had not approved the use of the film in instruction, you nevertheless—in fact, in evasion of the state film office*,* the *Kreisbildstelle,* and the order of the district president—delivered the film to the school."[46] The Hildesheim district president, Gauger also notes, had approved the film for screening in venues other than schools; the objection to the film had therefore less to do with its commercial or ideological content and more with its length, format, and other concerns about suitability for classroom use.[47] By listing the authorizing instances that the Leo-Werke ignored, Gauger also lists the political divisions whose authority was compromised by the transaction: the *Kreisbildstelle* for Marienburg, nested within the state film office for Lower Saxony (organizations for which film and image policy constituted the primary responsibility) as well as the district government of Hildesheim, whose authority only touched on film policy among its many other tasks.[48] Furthermore, the Leo-Werke, by attempting to exhibit its film at the school in

45. Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 101/37", *Neue Dokumente*, 1:352.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

the district of Marienburg, not only flouted the dictate of the district president, but invalidated the mandate of the state film office to act as an intermediary and communicate that decision.[49]

If the Leo-Werke were overeager to supply their film in the cases Gauger mentions, their other objectionable behavior had to do with the conditions they placed upon exhibition privileges for official organs that had approved the film. They did so to exercise leverage while attempting to collect data from exhibitors, once again against the *Reichsstelle*'s regulations: "You demanded the return of the 10 silent 16mm film copies that you made available to [the *Landesbildstelle* in Lower Saxony] for November 5 of this year because the *Landesbildstelle* stated they would be unable to meet your request for precise information about the circumstances of each copy's use and the number of spectators."[50] Further data-gathering demands were cited by Gauger in a letter to the Leo-Werke in 1938: "In other promotional material, [Leo-Werke] requested that questionnaires about the state of dental hygiene in the territories of individual film offices or schools be filled out, and that these questionnaires be sent to a publisher in Berlin."[51] These demands ran afoul of a 1935 edict by the *Reich* Ministry for Science, Education, and Culture that regulated subsidiary agencies' permission to offer information on operations to other ministries or to non-governmental parties, with the goal of both avoiding time-consuming inquiries within agencies and of preventing external actors from extrapolating from data collected from local bureaus.[52]

---

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Kurt Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 91/38 an alle Landesbildstellen," in *Neue Dokumente,* 2:473.

52. "571. Bekanntgabe von Geschäftszahlen," *Deutsche Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung* 1 (1935): 470.

The controversy arose from Leo-Werke's tactic of using the film as a trade token, attempting to extract legally privileged information against nominally free collateral. I bring this set of issues up in order to pose the question, once again, of how (if at all) such a value relationship modifies the hygienic economy reflected in both the diegetic world and in the pedagogical and commercial motivations for the film's exhibition. While it was an explicit or implicit premise of all the public health film-related ventures I discuss in this dissertation that information about viewership be collected, collated, and used as the basis for ongoing production and distribution practices, this example more closely literalizes the economic metaphors for the two-way movement of information-carrying media: in one direction, information about dental hygiene and Chlorodont (from the Leo-Werke to regional and local authorities and their constituent schools); in the other direction, information about official implementation of film pedagogy on dental care (from regions and localities to the Leo-Werke). This also amounts to an instance where the official organ polices its monopoly on particular data with respect to the commercial third party: the text of the edict cited explicitly protected the film office's privilege of interpretation over all manner of operational information. In this instance, the data that accounted for the presence of a given individual in a screening, and certainly those that speculate about his dental hygiene, are the province of official organs, not private ones. The Leo-Werke answered by claiming that such numbers were necessary to determine how many film copies would be needed to keep up with demand. Moreover, they validated this claim through the official status of the competing clients: "the most various organizations of the Party, the army and the labor service, the national health offices [*Gesundheitsämter*], the medical and dental

practitioners' organizations…"[53] Indeed, the demand for data was part of how the Leo-Werke cast themselves as an interlocutor of high-level government organs on the topic of public health, a status which sanctioned its demands for information about the scope and impact of its work.

The memorandum sent to the State Film Offices by Gauger on September 2, 1938 exemplified both the recalcitrance of the ongoing conflict with the Leo-Werke and a rather byzantine cross-section of the kinds of archival traces the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* left in its encounters with official educational film policy. The memorandum, the lengthiest regarding this film, consists of four paragraphs of text that frame a copy of a memorandum sent six days earlier, on August 27, to the state film office of East Prussia in Königsberg. Below the subject line of the main memorandum, it lists its predecessor documents: "Following our memoranda No. 17/37 from 28 January 1937, No. 101/37 from 26 October 1937, and No. 112/37 from 18 December 1937."[54] After describing the ongoing issues with the film—both its repeated violations of the *Reichsstelle*'s requests and its bold requests for viewer information from exhibitors—Gauger described the initial remedy as a bureaucratic one, a decision to copy and distribute a piece of writing, before communicating any intention to prevent the film from being shown: "We therefore find ourselves occasioned to bring our statement on the question of the film notes, sent to the state film office of East Prussia on 27 August 1938, to the attention of all state film offices as follows."[55] In so doing, Gauger chooses to make his correspondence with a single entity (and its subsidiaries) within his jurisdiction a national (*Reich*-wide) exchange,

53. Leo-Werke to *Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm,* December 9, 1937, quoted in Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 112/37 an alle Landesbildstellen," *Neue Dokumente,* 1:362.

54. Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 71/38 an alle Landesbildstellen," *Neue Dokumente,* 2:454.

55. Ibid, 2:455.

redoubling his own vested authority to make the local interests and activities pertinent to the national whole.

The memorandum he cites itself began with a listing of earlier writings applicable to the topic. After summarizing the difficulties with the Leo-Werke, the text cited the *Reich* Education Minister's relevant decree, including its date and its page number in the *Reich* Ministry's legal gazette before noting that the violation had already been described in the *Reichsstelle*'s memo from December 18.[56] It then cites the first memorandum circulated on *Lebende Werkzeuge,* from January 1937, noting that the approval conveyed by the latter could, in light of the violations, no longer be considered applicable.[57] It then cites the General Guidelines for the *Reichsstelle,* with the corresponding page number in the *Central Gazette for Educational Administration (Zentralblatt der Unterrichtsverwaltung)* and summarizes the provisions of that rule.[58] This summary outlines the bureaucratic stages that would be necessary to make an exception to that rule: the film would require permission from the highest school governing authority in the state or province, which in turn could only be given after the *Reichsstelle* endorsed such a screening as having "particular pedagogical value." [59] The latter and most anterior condition, he reminded, had not been met:

> Such a certification has never been offered by us for the film 'Lebende Werkzeuge.' We are all the less in a position to offer this certification, as the film—as we have determined through careful viewing and have also already informed the Leo-Werke (cf. Memorandum Nr. 101/37)—cannot be considered

56. Gauger to Landesbildstelle Ostpreußen, August 27, 1938, quoted in Gauger, "Rundschreiben Nr. 71/38 an alle Landesbildstellen," *Neue Dokumente,* 2:455.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

> valuable for school instruction. In neither its form nor its content is the film appropriate for use in school events, since it does not fulfill essential requirements of a film made for the purposes of a school.[60]

The memorandum ends by reiterating that the film is not to be shown in schools.[61]

After quoting the copy of the Königsberg memorandum, Gauger continues to direct the reading of his own quoted words: "We ask that you would understand from the preceding statement that neither the exhbition of the film by the Leo-Werke nor sharing any statistical data, sending completed questionnaires or the like is permissible or compatible with ministerial determinations."[62] He then repeats the point about the film's certification as a *Lehrfilm* from early in the memo in more detail: "Even the recognition of the film as 'popular-educational' [*volksbildend*], *Lehrfilm* and the like, which according to the *Reich* Film Law [*Reichslichtspielgesetz*] is issued by the official film evaluation center [*die amtliche Filmprüfstelle*], does not make the permission of the highest school authorities superfluous and does not confer the right to exhibit a film with such certifications in the schools," with a parenthetical reference to the protocol of the 1938 conference of the heads of the administrative department of the *Reichsstelle*.[63]

Addressing this memorandum, including the reproduction at its center, as one of the longest pieces of continuous writing I have so far been able to find on the film *Lebende Werkzeuge,* I now ask: what are the most pertinent qualities of the film according to this document? The task of glossing the film's content—including nearly every reference to the teeth,

---

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 456.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

the human body, or hygiene—was relegated to a different text via citation. The object's comprehensibility, in general, was framed through citations of texts that circulated in or defined the bureaucratic environment within which the memorandum was both written and read. Any distinction between pedagogical value and hygienic value was occluded. Furthermore, Gauger rhetorically distinguishes the film itself from the actions and events of its lending and exhibition (*Verleih*, *Vorführung*). The event of the screening itself seems to be the most explicitly forbidden thing, and the film itself only secondarily to it.

How, then, did human bodies matter to the *Reichsstelle?* The explicit reasoning for the *Reichsstelle*'s disapproval is not something that can use the human body as the basis for its importance in the way that the material competition between hygienic educators and folk healers (*Kurpfuscher*) was. Unlike the Leo-Werke, the *Reichsstelle* does not have a stake in teeth any more than it does in any other *Kulturfilm* topic. While the Leo-Werke was using film to teach about the teeth, the *Reichsstelle* deliberated on whether it wished to incorporate the teeth, as these are articulated by the Leo-Werke, into the stable of its instructional topics. Unlike the hygienic teaching organizations I discussed in the previous chapter, the *Reichsstelle* did not work in film because of a specific interest in communication techniques for preserving health; instead, it addressed health as a possible pedagogical context for the use of the specific media resources over which it had control. The danger it envisioned was not faulty information about the teeth, but the spread of pedagogical matter in unsanctioned ways. The public for which the *Reichsstelle* worked was not defined by its teeth, but the one for which *Lebende Werkzeuge* was made most clearly was. The teeth of the spectator were, for the *Reichsstelle,* a relatively irrelevant detail posterior to that individual's access to and interest in pedagogical films. For the *Reichsstelle*, the body was somewhere outside the fundamental educational equation. For the Leo-Werke, it was

an essential part of what gave the film, and the viewer, its value: the film was to be seen for the sake of the teeth. For the *Reichsstelle,* a productive citizen is created through propagandistic knowledge work; for the Leo-Werke, by dint of healthy dental anatomy.

It would be a reckless historiographical jump to say that the utilitarian specifics of the encounter "teeth-film-education" in the Third Reich provide any kind of microcosmic glimpse into the ways that National Socialism used, cared for, rationalized, neglected, and destroyed human bodies in more historically familiar and politically fateful contexts like war, totalitarianism, state corporatism, and genocide. Nor are the particular social systems at play—a toothpaste manufacturer, an educational authority—behaving in ways that uniquely embody National Socialist culture in these examples. In this sense, I work in agreement with Peter Zimmermann's historiographic preferences for looking at National Socialist film culture—namely, through a lens that privileges everyday experiences under National Socialism as equally or more important to the ascendancy and normalization of the Nazi state than that state's obvious propagandistic efforts.[64] I should also remind that the film I discuss here is rather atypical for a "hygienic" film culture that was, by now, rather squarely focused on constructing biological validations for Nazi racial politics in films like *The Inheritance (Das Erbe)* of 1935 (dir. J. C. Hartmann). But it shows that the Leo-Werke's leading metaphor of body parts as tools, as things which could being handled impersonally yet were key to their owner's stewardship of his own humanity, was apt, even unintentionally critical. That metaphor is an approximation of what the place of living bodily tissue, and the everyday practices it engendered, was in a consolidating totalitarian merger of industry and state (however fractious that marriage may have been in this

64. Peter Zimmermann, "Faschismus Und Moderne. Perspektivenwechsel in Der Historischen Forschung," in *Geschichte Des Dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland. Band 3, "Drittes Reich" 1933-1945*, ed. Peter Zimmermann and Kay Hoffmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 17-25.

particular instance). At the same time, it shows that the position of media technologies was similarly compromised: that it was not so much the content as the administrative movement of hygienic information that made for an acceptable educational politics. Utopian worlds could be built with teeth or with films, the Leo-Werke and the *Reichsstelle* seem to be in agreement, but only the latter institution believes that the ideological potency of these tools rapidly diminishes when their trajectory to the public is improperly managed. Such a film, even when it seems to pick up on aesthetic and intellectual traditions that long preceded it, does not stand alone as evidence that these traditions were woven into National Socialist film culture—rather, it shows the fine-grained heterogeneities that can inhere in these objects, and how those heterogeneities depended partly upon how public-private collaborations were managed. These collaborations were not historically significant sites of resistance, much less conscientious ones, but they were still sites of ideological short-circuiting that fracture a unary image of National Socialist totalitarianism.

CHAPTER 4

"KILL THE LOUSE, OR IT WILL KILL YOU!": FILMMAKING AMID POSTWAR EPIDEMICS

Dr. Klaus Bloemer, serving as the scientific advisor on the first public-health film to be made after World War II in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, prepared the script for a radio address on Berliner Rundfunk in a document dated April 18, 1946.[1] He appends this comment to a partial listing of the film's cast:

> The most unpleasant role was played, in the film as in the reality of the matter, by our littlest actors—the body lice. In order to keep them in full vitality for the shoots, they had to be fed for several days on the arm of a self-sacrificing colleague, of course only after they were known to be free from typhus bacteria.[2]

These "actors" appear in only one shot of the short film *Fleckfieber droht!* (*Typhus threatens!*, Dirs. Hans Cürlis and Fritz Dick, 1946), in which a louse wriggles slightly against a bright background, surrounded by a dark iris suggesting a microscopic view. The shot rhymes with a similar irised image seconds before of typhus bacilli, which the voiceover calls "tiny murderers." Between these shots, a white-coated doctor is shown in profile, looking down his microscope. On the wall behind him is a poster showing an oversized image of a louse, a human skull, and the words "Typhus! Kill the louse or it will kill you!" (Fleckfieber! Töte die Laus, sonst tötet sie dich!). To create this sequence, the filmmakers violated the biological economy of this poster: they kept the louse alive, but they did not die either.

---

1. Handwritten notes on the document indicate that excerpts of the address were aired on the evenings of May 23 and 24, 1946 in the program "Sie fragen—wir antworten." I do not know whether the passage I cite was among the material broadcast. Klaus Bloemer, "Der erste deutsche Spiel-Kulturfilm nach dem Kriege: 'Fleckfieber droht'," April 18, 1946, BArch DQ 1 (Ministerium für Gesundheitswesen)/550, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, folio 82r (hereafter cited as "Gesundheitswesen").

2. Bloemer, "Der erste deutsche Spiel-Kulturfilm nach dem Kriege," Gesundheitswesen 550, folio 83r.

Fig. 8. Poster from typhus campaign in the Soviet zone, also appearing in the film *Fleckfieber Droht!,* 1946. SOURCE: Gesundheitswesen 1077, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

In his description of the "littlest actors," which he likely intended as a comic aside, Bloemer creates a curious tableau. Including a single shot of a live louse at high magnification in the film was evidently necessary enough to cobble together this assemblage as a transient part of the film studio's production infrastructure. To shoot a live louse, one needs a live louse; to maintain a live louse, one needs the habitat and substrate of a living human body; to protect that human body from the very health problem the film is needed to combat, the louse must first be tested by some individual on set (possible Bloemer himself) with the requisite expertise. The records of the founding period of Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA) list all manner of personnel as working under the auspices of the film studio, but the task of being a louse host was a brief ad hoc addition that goes unrecorded, except for in Bloemer's talk. Still, it is part of the diverse base of labor that permitted the film *Fleckfieber droht!* to be made in circumstances of severe material precarity during the first months of 1946.[3]

Due to material destruction, lack of reliable access to basic resources, and human migration, postwar Germany struggled to contain high rates of several different illnesses. *Fleckfieber droht!,* as well as its sister film *Seuchengefahr* (made around the same time by the same personnel), were made to disseminate information by which postwar subjects could protect themselves, their families, and their neighbors from the menace of infectious disease. Dr. Fritz Dick, the co-director of both films and later the head of medical and hygiene film production at DEFA, writes in 1984 that "under today's conditions, of course, no one can understand that these

3. For a scholarly account of this film that embeds it into a book-length study of postwar everyday visual culture, see Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska and Anna Labentz, *Bilder der Normalisierung. Gesundheit, Ernährung und Haushalt in der visuellen Kultur Deutschlands 1945-1948* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017), 94-96.

films were once, in the truest sense of the word, indispensable to life."[4] In spite of the humble scope and modest quality of these two films, their production can be read, in the tradition of the German *Aufklärungsfilm*, as a bulwark thrown up against the health crises that followed the war. Such a perspective tempts me to fanciful inductions: if these films, as they were made, were indeed "indispensable to life," so were the forms of labor that made those films possible, and among those forms of labor was someone's odd job of nursing typhus-free lice on his or her arm until they could be filmed.[5] The health of the postwar German public, as a whole, may not have hung from such a fine thread, but the rhetoric of hygiene confers a kind of pathos upon the encounters one has at the margins of one's body, just as it does upon the knowledge work of lay instruction that these two films carried out. Hygiene is made up of the many things that the individuals in a population do with the unavoidable porosities of their bodies, how they work within their private spheres of responsibility, managing the comings and goings of intimate plenitudes like food, water, waste, and indeed body lice. But hygiene is equally comprised of its material apparatuses of mediation, whereas knowledge about bodily practices can be articulated, stored, and transmitted. Hygiene happens when you get yourself deloused to keep from catching typhus—but it *also* happens when you allow yourself to be bitten for the purposes of making an educational film.

Immediate postwar Germany is, of course, a place of scarcity for anyone interested in maintaining human life. For the same reason, however, it is also a place of remarkable material

4. Fritz Dick, "Über die Anfänge des Medizinfilms nach 1945," in *Betriebsgeschichte des VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme*, ed. Betriebsparteiorganisation der SED im VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme (Berlin: VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme, 1984), 3:48.

5. The task of louse-feeding (on human legs, using populations of "clean" lice under specially-designed coverings) on a larger scale for the purpose of vaccine manufacture is shown extensively in the film *Kampf dem Fleckfieber* (1942, Oberkommando des Heeres).

plenitude. Where housing stock has become scarce, rubble abounds, begetting the taxonomic neologisms of the *Trümmerfrau* and the *Trümmerfilm*. In the absence of appropriate sanitary infrastructure, an environment appears that is rich with disease-carrying life forms and materials. The dialectic of plenitude and scarcity in the materials of living reproduces itself on a political and ideological level. The material circumstances of postwar Germany are extensively linked, in the rhetoric of authorities and cultural producers in the Soviet-occupied zone, to the absolute evils of the recent war and of National Socialism. The opening sequence of *Seuchengefahr* begins with panoramic shots of the devastated cityscapes, before cutting to a detail view of Albrecht Dürer's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* as a voiceover describes *Seuchen,* plagues or infectious diseases, as among the most pernicious residues of the "*Hitlerkrieg.*" This particular semantic fusion of Nazism and war will repeat itself throughout the public and internal textual bodies of cultural production in the Soviet zone, making the work of rebuilding the city and restoring the health and flourishing of the population not only humanitarian emergencies, but also direct excrescences of the Soviet-led efforts against the Nazis. For my analysis, this intertwining of political and material destruction and rebuilding does not only allow practical, everyday tasks, like health, construction, salvage, and domesticity, to emblematize developments taking place on the level of state ideology, but also sets up the material-political complex of the "Hitlerkrieg" as a kind of ontological horizon, an event with which each material endeavor of the postwar period, in the official imaginary, represents a confrontation.

As I will show, the tasks of hygienic education sort and evaluate the various materials of the postwar landscape about the pragmatic foci of the human body and the didactic work. These are overlapping but pragmatically different views of the same material environment, and in both cases the material resources of the environment also include other human bodies and other

communicative materials. The material work of hygiene, in one sense, is dictated through media by expertise and carried out, for better or for worse, around the lay public body. In another sense, hygiene culture—the government apparatus, institutional structures, and creative organs tasked with proliferating the requisite communication for hygienic education—is only an unruly archive if its products and contents are not examined in light of the moral imperatives that the pleasure and pain, life and death, and sickness and health of the human body make plain.

Responsibility and the Body in Postwar Spaces

In the opening sequence of *Fleckfieber droht!,* a middle-aged man is seen in close-up lying in his bed, sweaty and visibly expressing discomfort: he is the typhus patient at the center of that film's family narrative, which frames a variety of didactic demonstrations of delousing techniques and resources (as well as the brief laboratory sequence with its microscopic views of infected tissue and a live louse). He looks out of the frame, after which a cut reveals a medium close-up of a woman standing over the bed. Similarly, on the other side of the bed, a white-coated doctor completes his examination of the patient. The social space of the sickroom is centered upon the figure of the patient, who serves as both the object of various kinds of procedures (examination, treatment) and the subject of spoken communication as the doctor and the woman discuss the history of the case and the steps that must now be taken. The opening conversation between the doctor and the woman takes place over the supine body, and the patient's own movements work to cement the geometry of the encounter through eyeline matches as he directs his eyes upward and to either side of the frame.

Of the three studio sets in *Fleckfieber droht!* (the other two are the kitchen and the laboratory I mention in the introduction), the bedroom/sickroom is used almost entirely to stage

conversations between the doctor and the woman about the patient, which are often illustrated by physical interaction with the patient's body. In the first sequence the doctor reads the man's temperature from an oral thermometer, which is shown in extreme close-up in his hand. After a flashback sequence in which the woman narrates the beginning of her husband's illness, the patient's body is further manipulated. The doctor raises him to a sitting position in bed and pulls up his nightshirt to reveal a spotty rash on his back (the characteristic *Flecken* that give typhus its German name, *Fleckfieber*) shortly before announcing his diagnosis.

The man's body forms a hygienic workplace, a focal point for productive intervention by both the doctor and the woman, as well as an object lesson in typhus recognition and hygienic vigilance for both the woman and the film's audience, for which she functions as a surrogate. While the man's body anchors the narrative and the conversation as a fixture in the sickroom and functions as a model of both the *Flecken* and the *Fieber* of the titular illness, the real emphasis of the film's didactic work is the *environment* of which that body is a porous part, capable both of catching and spreading contagious illness through the vector of the body louse. Like that of the unnamed "colleague" in the film studio, this man's body is an environment, a *place* that is navigable to lice and which offers them sustenance, and it accordingly creates a radius of contagion that encompasses the small apartment in which much of the films is set, inhabited by the man, the woman and their two children. As such, it creates an ergonomic context for practical instruction, a reason for the woman (and the audience) to learn proper delousing techniques as a preventive measure. The dialogue also implies that this body will be the site of further direct intervention after it is brought to the hospital, an environment in which the porosity of the body can be monitored and exploited for purposes of healing: "only the hospital guarantees proper care."

The sick man's body works more as a sign of illness, as a marker or anchor for the sites in which his still-healthy family will perform hygienic work (the apartment where they will de-louse their clothing, the delousing center where they will report for treatment, the hospital to which they will deliver the patient via ambulance) at the prompting of medical experts. Some version of the phrase "prevention is better than healing" occurs across a wide range of period hygiene films, posters, and other communicative object; the woman is told this, sternly, at the close of *Fleckfieber droht!.* The body may become so sick that the hygienic labors associated with it become the responsibilities of others; when this happens, the individual whose body it is drops away from being the addressee of hygiene instruction and becomes a warning sign or image. The image of the severely ill body is, at this phase, more a symbol or a warning. It becomes yet more abstract in the opening sequence of the film *Seuchengefahr,* where images of drawn faces resting on pillows are cut together rapidly to illustrate three words intoned by the voiceover: "Typhus! Diphtheria! Dysentery!" The final shot in this sequence of four, a close-up in the same scale, portrays not a bedridden patient but rather a young woman with dark circles under her eyes who shouts "Help us!" directly into the camera. These bodies, carrying in their expressions and affect overt, even clichéd markers of illness and distress, are discursively useful not for their representational value—unlike the patient in *Fleckfieber droht!* they are not marked in ways that would be useful for helping lay people to diagnose particular diseases—but for their legibility and emotional tenor.

Rather than being the central focus of *Fleckfieber* and *Seuchengefahr,* the bodies of sick individuals work as framing and marking devices that point up the morality and relevance of the hygienic work undertaken by nominally healthy people depicted alongside the sick, or elsewhere in the film. They serve as affective anchors and visual warnings in a similar way as the images of

sick bodies that Anja Laukötter investigates in early 20th-century *Aufklärungsfilme* made to combat venereal disease. In these films, hyper-realistic wax moulages of diseased sexual organs alternate with didactic sequences involving anatomical diagrams and hygienic demonstrations, using disgust to retain the viewer's attention and underscore the message: "the combination of varying degrees of abstraction in the filmic depictions could, moreover, create irritating and disgust-provoking effects: wax models of infected body parts and hospital scenes with syphilis patients were added in order to bring the audience, through intense disgust, to give up its so-called false shame [*falsche Scham*]."[6] While the films I examine in this chapter do not, by and large, deploy disgust in the same way as those of which Laukötter writes, disgust is nonetheless relevant to *Fleckfieber droht!, Seuchengefahr,* and other *Aufklärungsfilme* of the period, less as a matter of emotional and affective immediacy than as a matter of poetic form. In his 2002 aesthetic theory and history of disgust, Winfried Menninghaus takes the following as a guiding investigative principle: that disgust appears in a wide array of Western approaches to aesthetics as the constitutive exterior of aesthetic judgment, a moral breaking point beyond which judgments of taste can no longer be made by a perceptual apparatus that is overwhelmed and repulsed.[7] The moral structure of disgust, whereby the disgusting qualities of a thing are "not only sets of circumstances, but are always such circumstances as the *should* not be, at least not near the judging observer," translates to the poetic patterns of hygienic education by conscripting

6. Anja Laukötter, "Vom Ekel zur Empathie. Strategien der Wissensvermittlung im Sexualaufklärungsfilm des 20. Jahrhunderts," in *Erkenne Dich selbst!: Strategien der Sichtbarmachung des Körpers im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Sybilla Nikolow (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 311.

7. Winfried Menninghaus, *Ekel: Theorie und Geschichte einer starken Empfindung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 12–13.

the language of bodily suffering, explicitly or implicitly, to make the banalities of hygienic work morally legible and compelling.[8]

Disgust would seem a suitable emotional topos for the scene I explore at the beginning of this chapter, the bodily immediacy and paradox of sustaining live disease vectors for a film that advocates for their eradication. The hair and blood of the body, and the clothes that body wears, are conscripted as part of a process that results in a silhouetted microscopic image of a moving louse, one that matches the detailed painted depiction featured on the A2-sized poster behind the scientist. Each of these images shows the louse as a thing with a body, much as the patient is in *Fleckfieber droht!*—and these bodies are most rhetorically important, most worthy of being closely viewed, for the ways they imprint their immediate environment with the discursive and ergonomic demands of hygiene. As embodied things, the patient and the louse appear on the screen as the centers of particular environments; disgust, as the emotional response that understands the louse and the sick man as things that ought not to be, prepares the viewer to understand the kinds of decisions she must make in the world of things whose relations to disease are less obvious, as that viewer navigates their kitchen, bedroom, or neighborhood.

Similarly, Menninghaus' conception of disgust as an aesthetic limit recalls the ideological function of the *Hitlerkrieg* in Soviet-zone politics. War and fascism, in this narrative, constitute the unthinkable and repugnant void "beyond" the daily business of hygiene, rebuilding, and other restorative activities, that which makes failure in these activities both politically and existentially impermissible. At the same time, the *Hitlerkrieg* is coded as the source of the profound material disorganization that makes the postwar landscape so inhospitable to human life, and so fertile for, among many other pernicious ways in which that landscape is generative, the proliferation of

8. Menninghaus, *Ekel,* 13.

human pathogens and their vectors. Kill the louse, lest it continue the immorality of the *Hitlerkrieg* on your skin.

To work against the *Hitlerkrieg*, then, is to perform the hygienic work of appropriately organizing the environment that surrounds and encompasses one's body. It seems appropriate here to return to Lefebvre's theory of the social production of space, which I referenced in this dissertation's introduction in order to develop my working definition of hygiene. If Lefebvre considers the ways individuals perceive their bodies and surroundings to be manifestations of a spatial practice rooted in the social and historical, a German term emerges from histories of the postwar period that suggest a specific and practical translation of "spatial practice." *Räumung,* which one would most closely translate as "clearing," is what one does with rubble and debris in the postwar task of *Trümmerräumung.* Clearing away, moving off to the side: the word *Beseitigung* crops up in period accounts describing the work that must be done with all kinds of postwar residues, from heaps of stone to National Socialism.[9] If *Räumung*, as a task of removal, is also thought, with some license, as a spatial practice, however, one might think a dialectical counterpart based upon the word's substantive cousin, *Raum* or space: the material practices that include the movement, removal, or repurposing of the ideologically-laden, disorganized material effects of the war can be a positive kind of "space-ing," a production of space against the negative backdrop of the *Hitlerkrieg's* residues. *Räumung* becomes thinkable not only as a tactic applied to domestic spaces, work places, and public areas, but also as a productive engagement with the ambivalence of material plenitudes in work-spaces that also include the body itself, a

9. Christiane Mückenberger and Günter Jordan write of East German cultural politics that "here, the old state and its ideological basis had to be removed [*beseitigt*]. If that which had survived could not be taken back up, then something entirely new should appear." Christiane Mückenberger and Günter Jordan, *Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst—: eine Geschichte der DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949* (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1994), 11.

place with room for lice and bacteria, room which can be defended and recouped for one's own contingent flourishing.

The primary communicative work of *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* could then be read as transmitting practices for consciously inhabiting one's private and public spatial registers, with the hygiene advice dispensed through the films meant to show audience members how they might administrate their own spheres of responsibility against the continual danger of the material disorganization of the *Hitlerkrieg.* In order to produce one's body and environment as hygienic places, one must cultivate a perceptual sensitivity to those constellations of materials that work productively in the service of human health in the specific historical context one inhabits. Different kinds of illnesses have different spatial relations to the human: they may invade the body from outside or grow, like cancer, surreptitiously within; they may be spread into one's social environment through the air, through water, or through biological vectors, or they may merely impair one's ability to function in one's material and social surroundings. Hygiene, this work that takes place at corporeal and social interface points, is not a single technique that can be mastered, but a continually expanding archive of spatial practices that are accumulated through educational encounters like (for just one example) the *Aufklärungsfilm*.

Fleckfieber droht! insists upon two key hygienic tasks: keeping the domestic environment and the bodies within it free of lice, and delivering ill people into the care of doctors and hospitals. Both of these tasks might be seen as practices of clearing things away or moving them to their correct places in space (I could call them forms of *Räumung*), and each of these tasks is comprised of smaller sets of activities that also require attention to and interaction with the resources in a given environment.

Narrated in voiceover by the doctor (who is still, diegetically, addressing the patient's wife as the two sit at the kitchen table), the most methodically didactic segment of the film demonstrates delousing as a form of work practiced in different spaces by varying methods and practitioners, using different material resources. After a shot of a store-window display of commercial delousing powders (featuring the "Töte die Laus" poster) is shown, a sequence begins that demonstrates the practices in use at one of the delousing facilities run by the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* (Central Committee for Health Affairs). The doctor notes that these facilities use the most effective method to decontaminate clothing, namely by treating them with hot air. Two uniformed men are shown in the delousing chamber: one hangs clothing on racks while the other manipulates a small furnace in the foreground. After a cut, the camera tracks forward from a door labeled "Shower" [*Brausebad*], which opens onto a scene of nude men using a communal shower; they are viewed from behind and spread a dark substance onto their bodies that they take from dispensers on the tiled wall. The doctor, meanwhile, informs the woman that such delousing facilities are now available in many different parts of the city, and that they are particularly easy to find in areas where there are large populations of ethnic German expellees (*Umsiedler*) from Eastern Europe.

The delousing facility is a space apart from the home in which the narrative takes place; it is, indeed, a public facility that is administered by the government and the medical establishment, part of the world that the doctor represents in the diegetic private space of the patient's home. Through the intervention of the doctor's monologue, the female character (and, with, her, the film audience) is asked to recognize such facilities as resources that are available within their personal spheres of responsibility; the choice to submit oneself to thorough

delousing becomes, through this didactic intervention, a moral responsibility given emotional weight by the film's images of the suffering patient and his distressed wife.

But the footage of the delousing facility makes further, finer distinctions in one's understanding of typhus hygiene as a set of spatial practices. One example is the visual lesson, foreshadowed in an earlier sequence in which the woman discovers lice in her husband's laundry, that the danger of lice and typhus somewhat changes one's relationship to one's clothing, and that both clothing and human bodies must undergo the process of delousing if the risk is to be mitigated. Even before nudity enters the equation, the separation of body and clothing requires a rearrangement of the interfaces between private and public space. The footage shows that, during institutional delousing, one's clothing—which is one way of drawing a provisional boundary about one's body—changes from a set of private objects to a set of public ones, mingled with the clothing of others and manipulated anonymously by a technician. The clothing rack that forms the background of this shot makes a large environment out of hundreds of markers of intimate space, makes out of clothing a workplace for the men who labor there, allows their work to be transmitted back to the private spaces of ordinary individuals in the form of louse-free garments.

After the image of the bathing men, the setting changes to the kitchen of the family apartment. In these didactic sequences, it is shot from a different angle than it is during shots of the conversation between the woman and the doctor; the appliances and domestic equipment in the kitchen are more visible and the space seems larger and brighter. The woman is at work here with her daughter, who is seen here for the first time. Here, as in the delousing facility, clothing and bodies must be treated separately. First, she boils a pot of water on the stove in which to delouse clothing; then, she scrubs the naked girl in a large basin on the kitchen floor. In doing so,

she uses what the voiceover identifies, emphasizing its commonplace nature, as "sand. Yes, sand! Simple scouring sand," going on to explain that this amount of abrasion is enough to kill lice. Finally, a cut replaces the tub with an ironing board, and a close-up shows the woman using an iron she has heated on her stove to press the seams of a dark piece of clothing, a process, according to the voiceover, that kills lice that would otherwise be hard to reach. Finally, the woman's daughter, now clothed, is shown sprinkling delousing powder, like that shown in the shop window at the beginning of the instructional sequence, onto the seams of leather shoes.

As the sequence at the delousing facility was meant to expose the availability and workings of public hygiene infrastructure, the kitchen sequence reframes ordinary household objects and materials as private hygiene infrastructure. Much as clothing, in a time of louse infestation, can be dangerous if it is not made the site of certain forms of labor, these materials—a pot, a stove, an iron, a tub, a bit of sand—do not reveal their typhus-specific hygienic value until they are brought into certain configurations with the body. Scouring sand might usually be used to clean a cooking pot, but the film points out an inversion particular to the needs of the historical moment: put the sand on your body, and your clothes in the pot, and you are performing the work of hygiene. Ironing clothes might seem an activity that has little to do with mitigating the risk of illness, but when understood and performed in a certain way, it becomes hygienic work. The components of hygienic infrastructure are present in the environment; the film takes this as a precondition. The individual's responsibility is to understand how to arrange them into productive configurations with his or her body.

In that these films take the presence of certain materials in their diegetic world as a given, however, raises a different set of problems. Addressing a broader spectrum of infectious diseases, *Seuchengefahr* re-uses many segments of the delousing footage from *Fleckfieber*

droht!, including the shots from the delousing facility and certain shots from the kitchen sequence. Here, the woman is also shown boiling water on the stove in order to delouse clothing—but rather than cutting away to the next task, the camera tilts down as she reaches for a piece of firewood from a container on the floor beside the stove. The voiceover (no longer coded as a doctor, the narrator of *Seuchengefahr* has a more genial tone) notes that the task of boiling water may, in fact, be a challenge in the circumstances of the present. The woman is then shown calling out of a window to her daughter, who appears below after a cut, searching for scraps of firewood in a pile of rubble in the street.

Recall that *Seuchengefahr,* in a different manner than *Fleckfieber droht!,* uses both its image track and its narration to connect the health problems at its center with the specificities of the historical moment. It begins, as I noted, with an image of ruins and an invocation of the *Hitlerkrieg*; it also contains typical images of *Trümmerfrauen,* and a voiceover passage near the end that insists that "every human life must become precious again" and that "only the little children are fully innocent" with respect to the recent past. This image of the girl rooting through the pile of rubble, however, is the only segment of the film that directly links the war damage with the preconditions of a hygienic activity: damaged postwar infrastructure is not only the reason it is difficult to perform simple household tasks like boiling water, but also the source of the fuel that will ultimately be used to do so. The rubble is an ambivalent plenitude: its *Räumung* takes place simultaneously with the *Beseitigung* of the Nazi past through the building of the new state, but it must be sifted through, transformed, and repurposed rather than simply removed. It is a place where the hygienic problems of the postwar period can be both perpetuated and combated, depending on how people choose to interact with it.

In this respect, the ambivalent plenitudes of the postwar city recall those of the human body. Indeed, the pile of rubble is matched with a pile of household garbage across a cut, beginning a sequence on the sanitary disposal of the various kinds of waste a human being generates. Here, a young woman and her elderly male neighbor engage in friendly banter. The man first reminds the woman to burn her garbage, then that the contents of outhouse cesspits are to be covered daily with soil or lime. The woman protests slightly at the second recommendation: "but that's undignified!" The man laughs and waves his finger as he prepares to shut himself in his own outhouse: "The flies don't ask about that, and neither do the bacteria!" The sequence ends as the man narrowly prevents his neighbor from sipping from a glass of water, reminding her that water must be boiled before it is drunk (no mention, this time, of the difficulties of procuring fuel).

A central theme of the history of disgust, as Menninghaus elaborates it, is the unbearable plenitude: the cloying taste or odor, the presence of decaying matter, baroque detail, the tactile surplus of softness and moistness. While the connection between these themes and the segments of *Seuchengefahr* that deal with garbage, feces, and stagnant water is fairly obvious, it is only part of the relevance of disgust to my investigation of hygiene. Menninghaus goes on to refer to sources of disgust and taboo that appear around aesthetic appraisals of representations of the human body: "the interior of the body, the internal organs as well as all processes of absorption and excretion remain, when one is exclusively focused upon the beautiful facade, not only invisible; they also fall, *a fortiori,* into the category of...the features, that are to be studiously avoided."[10] When I have suggested that hygiene is a labor that takes place in the place that are pertinent to disgust, it is the porosity of the human body, and the personal environment, that I

10. Menninghaus, *Ekel*, 82.

mean. Where Menninghaus refers to classicist aesthetic revulsion at the "disgusting depths and openings of the body," I find leave to consider the fact that hygiene becomes, in the sequence just described, a process of confronting the things that come in and out through the openings of the body and the sphere of responsibility, either literally in the form of food, water, or excrement, or more figuratively, in the form of ensuring one's clothes are not invaded by lice and that one's private activities are influenced by the information one has gleaned from the posters, films, and leaflets one encounters in one's world.[11] *Seuchengefahr* makes the political stakes of the body clear: failing to perform hygienic work on the frontiers of disgust risks the incomplete abolition of a far more repulsive aesthetic exterior, the *Hitlerkrieg* and its many dangerous residues.

Hygienic Rebuilding in the Media Object

The first half of this chapter was devoted to investigating a particular historical framing of the phenomenon of "hygiene," in the form practiced and propounded in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany immediately after World War II, as sets of material practices taking place in and around human bodies to deal with the vulnerability of those bodies to infectious disease. In so doing, I examined representations of such bodies and practices as they emerged in media objects, particularly films, which were made to promote public awareness of hygienic risks, practices, and resources. A structure of mutual illumination arose that is familiar from my previous chapters: in their didactic function, the films and other media objects conveyed a rhetoric designed to make practices and objects recognizable as hygienic or unhygienic, whereas the suffering and thriving of portrayed bodies lent an affective, moral, and political urgency to the social and spatial practices of hygiene; the body gave the diverse tasks and materials of hygienic labor a moral and pragmatic center about which to coalesce.

11. Ibid.

I return briefly to the set of spatial practices I have worked up around the concept of hygiene and have labeled with the historically determined notion of *Räumung.* This has been, so far, a way of thinking about certain kinds of labor and resources as coming into relevance or crisis in a contingently bounded *place,* the human body, that forms the venue for the type of hygienic production that focuses on the *product* of the healthy body; both the *place* and the *product* necessarily open out onto environmental conditions that are also subject to labor and discourse that move around the epicenter of the body. What does it mean to think of a hygienic document, such as the film *Fleckfieber droht!*, as a similar place for labor, productivity, and the convergence of resources, as a site of *Räumung*? It means, firstly, to think of the film itself as a group of material artifacts in history, rolls of nitrate film of a length between 300 and 400 meters, exposed and developed in a certain place under certain circumstances, with certain individuals in attendance and certain discursive needs and pressures, transmitted through multiple bureaucratic apparatuses, guiding and modifying the productive process. Each set of activities on this list, a form of labor or discourse that took place within the sphere of responsibility that produced the film, can (or, when the materials are not available today, could at some point have been) be traced into an archival hinterland that preserves or records the patterns of influence upon that process of production. And this hinterland also preserves multiple pragmatic ways of thinking about the film as an object, multiple ways of placing it within provisional boundaries. The snaking communicative and material pathways that link the document's ostensive purpose as a didactic public object in the service of hygiene and the various ways it has been recognized as an object or place provide multifarious ways of thinking hygiene by linking bodies, materials, and social institutions or discourse in various productive

configuration. In this chapter, I will explore a few of these pathways, those that strike me as most curious when viewed in light of hygiene as labor centered about the body.

As the body of the patient is a material thing that, through the patterns of attention that constitute hygiene, organizes a rich environment about itself, the films *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* are relevant not only for the characteristics of their imagery and rhetoric but for the locations they occupy in the internal taxonomies and communications of the Soviet zone's public-health and filmmaking organs. As I have noted earlier, both *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* feature posters published by the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* as visual elements of the diegetic world, and (especially in the latter film) as objects with which characters interact. In the hygienic work that is enacted in *Seuchengefahr,* the information conveyed by such objects is appropriated, recalled, and spread in various social contexts by individuals exemplifying sufficient or deficient hygienic practice. The posters are things that are available for use in the work that takes place on and around the body.

In the historical record of early East German health policy and propaganda and film production, these films also appear, named or described in different ways in a range of different documents. I turn to these documents, which describe, measure, or prescribe activities and processes taking place in governmental and quasi-governmental institutions, for a set of conditions in which these films, as provisionally bounded things, are represented as subsidiary components of various other discursive or institutional complexes. One finds these films differently circumscribed, for example, in official documents prepared at the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*, which contracted to have the films made, and by DEFA, which was responsible for their production (*Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* were in fact shot before

DEFA received its charter in May 1946, when the organization was still a unit of the *Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung* called "Filmaktiv").

In a work plan written for the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*'s "Unit for Public Hygiene Education" ("Referat Hygienische Volksbildung") in February 1946, Klaus Bloemer lists film propaganda as one of the unit's four mass-media strategies for fighting infectious diseases, alongside "press," "broadcast," and still images in the form of "posters, leaflets, cinema slides," while noting that *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* are in production at Filmaktiv.[12] The films reappear in an the document's appendix, which lists figures for the completed and planned productions of various media objects. These are sorted by the kinds of illnesses they provide information about: "General Epidemic Control," "Typhus Control," "Diphtheria Control," and "Control of Sexually-Transmitted Diseases." This document thus uses different varieties of infectious diseases to group diverse categories of media materials, all of which are quantified in some way with respect to their material support. "Typhus Control," for example, lists 200,000 A2-sized posters, 200,000 A3-sized leaflets, and 2,000 diapositive slides to be projected in film theaters as having been published already, and 300 meters of film as being in progress.[13]

Tracing the mentions of the two films from the body of the document to its appendix, we can conceive of two different ways of thinking about what a health-propaganda document is. The prose of the body of the document separates the unit's infectious disease control efforts into various media forms, which are produced and distributed using different strategies: the "film"

12. Bloemer, "Arbeitsplan des Referates Hygienische Volksbildung (I/3) der Deutschen Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone," February 1, 1946, Gesundheitswesen 957, folio 85r.

13. Bloemer, "Anhang: Seuchenbekämpfung und Bekämpfung von Volkskrankheiten durch propagandistische Mittel (in Zahlen)," February 2, 1946, Gesundheitswesen 957, folio 91r.

section describes not only the partnership with Filmaktiv for the making of these films, but also a film on diphtheria to be acquired from the "Berliner Filmarbeitsgemeinschaft," consultations for health-related subjects for Zone's new *Augenzeuge* newsreels, and the "viewing and reworking of old material."[14] The two films are thus described here in terms of their bureaucratic genesis, as an interaction between two of the Soviet Zone's *Zentralverwaltungen.* In the paragraph on film propaganda, they share space with other such bureaucratic contacts, as well as the work of salvaging material dating to before or during the war.

By contrast, in the appendix, the films are described not as social transactions, but as quantities of material that have been set aside or used for the purpose. Unlike the figures attached to posters and other still images, the numbers associated with the films do not mark numbers of copies, but rather correlate to the approximate duration of the finished films. The numbers of posters, leaflets, and the like correlates directly to the potential each media resource has for penetration into the East German population, but the film figure does no such thing. Furthermore, the figures for printed matter also describe sets of resources that were consumed, such as 200,000 sheets of A2 paper for the "Töte die Laus" posters. The film figure seems to describe the minimum raw material needed for shooting a negative for each film without taking into account the striking of distribution prints.[15]

The tables in the work plan's appendix thus provide a plane for comparison between the material and social realities of practicing public hygiene education using different media

---

14 Bloemer, "Arbeitsplan des Referates Hygienische Volksbildung (I/3)," Gesundheitswesen 957, folio 85r.

15. The extant 35mm prints of *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv are listed as being 250 meters and 359 meters in length, respectively. "Bundesarchiv - Recherche - Benutzungsmedien Film Online," accessed March 19, 2018, http://www.bundesarchiv.de/benutzungsmedien/filme.

practices. The numbers on the page, especially when cross-referenced with their corresponding entries in the body of the work plan, are simple signifiers for complex pragmatic undertakings; the various social, technological, and material resources required for each accordingly constitute the environment in which public hygiene education took place, the hinterland of the provisionally bounded object, like the film or the poster, that ought, in turn, to become something useful in the private and public environments of individuals practicing the spatial, hygienic work of maintaining healthy bodies.

I opened this chapter with Bloemer's louse anecdote, which provides a startling account of the diversity of material labor required in a particular instance of enacting public hygiene education in filmic form. The work plan, also a text written by Bloemer in February 1946, makes assertions that have a similar effect, and does so in a different poetic mode. The sequence of *Fleckfieber droht!* in which the louse appears also contains an image of the "Töte die Laus" poster; in addition to the work of maintaining live lice, the work of creating this poster was necessary to the making of the sequence as it appears. Bloemer describes that work in the following way: "A poster (Din A2) is currently being distributed to the state and province health bureaus [*Landesgesundheitsämter*]."[16] This sentence described two spatial venues in which the didactic work of hygiene takes place: a sheet of paper of standardized dimensions (420 by 594 millimeters) and the system of local health bureaus subordinated to the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*, the centralized authority responsible for moving the poster outward from the administrative centers of the Soviet zone, throughout Berlin and into the East German states and provinces.

The louse poster had to be propagated and multiplied in the bureaucratic and technical apparatus of and around the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* in order to appear in

16. Bloemer, "Arbeitsplan des Referates," Gesundheitswesen 957, folio 86r.

the laboratory sequence in *Fleckfieber droht!* As the magnified image of the louse conceals the idiosyncratic form of filmmaking labor that helped to produce its subject, the poster, as a piece of décor, provides a document within the filmic document, an place in the text of the film that opens onto corollary processes of productive labor. In addition to the name of the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*, the margins of the poster itself contain records of three other productive processes that come to bear upon the graphical object: the authorship and date of the original image, signed "Oehlschlägel 1945;" a second locus of bureaucratic responsibility, the Center for Damage Control, with its Berlin address; and the printer, C.G. Röder of Leipzig. Bloemer's affirmation, then, that the poster "is being distributed" summarizes at least the constellated efforts of these organizations and individuals, and the movement of 200,000 A2-sized posters from Leipzig to Berlin before they could be transported back outward from the Soviet *Zentralen* and *Zentralverwaltungen*, to the various local health authorities. These facts still obscure the varied and improvisatory forms of work that were surely involved in completing such tasks of fabrication and distribution using the depleted infrastructure of postwar Germany.

The list of figures for typhus-control media in the appendix begins with posters and ends with film, which is to say that it lists a visual precondition for the film's final form along with the film itself, describing both as material objects that have measurable dimensions and can be conceived of as taking up space, or as places where processes of communication happen. This list is both a catalogue of communicative documents and a communicative document in itself, intended to supply the bureaucratic superstructure of the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* with accounts of Bloemer's group's activities. Each of these three objects—public poster, public film, internal institutional memory—is a thing organized by a

communicative logic, a particular narrative about conditions and interactions in a described environment; each object is a thing with an "outside" and an "inside" that can be provisionally distinguished, if not rigorously isolated.

The poster, as I have suggested, is a text that introduces a quid-pro-quo economy of hygiene with respect to body lice: kill it, or it will kill you. The film *Fleckfieber droht!* creates an expanded version of a similar argument: lice carry typhus, which can kill human beings; therefore, ensure you and your family are protected from lice in *this* way, by killing lice using materials already at hand in your home or that are easily purchased, or by taking advantage of a new network of delousing facilities; finally, should you fall ill after being bitten by lice, confound the simple economy of the poster by seeking prompt professional medical attention. (In fact, if you work in a film studio and volunteer to use your arm as a habitat for one of the "littlest actors," you can work with the scientific advisor on staff to suspend the *quid pro quo* arrangement.) Finally, the internal records and reports of the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* have different arguments to make with reference to the same materials; in the work plan, the necessity of hygiene education is a foregone conclusion (in fact, its relevance is, in the bureaucratic epistemology, durably guaranteed by virtue of the fact that there is a "Unit for Public Hygiene Education" at all), as is the pertinence of various forms of media to the task. The document does not engaged in the tortured debates over, for example, the relationship between film and hygiene that characterized the early decades of the 20th century in Germany, and neither does it engage in the post-fascist soul-searching of many DEFA practitioners as they worked to differentiate socialist film poetics from Nazi ones. Rather, it tersely describes instances of production in qualitative and quantitative manners. As the film takes up the poster to both publicize its message beyond the approximately 200,000 vertical surfaces on which it hung in the

Soviet zone and to exceed its message by instructing individuals to work together to cheat its binary, the report takes up the poster and the film to demonstrate that the unit's titular "Public Hygiene Education" is indeed taking place, and at what material cost. The format of the quantitative appendix makes clear that these are objects which can be grouped and aggregated, and that can nest within one another: the film *Fleckfieber droht!* has its relevance to the project exhausted with an announcement that it is being produced and the length of film stock to be shot entered under the appropriate disease rubric. The document both obscures and encompasses the places, materials, and means of provenance for what is listed: from examining the objects it mentions, one learns that this report would not read the same way without work that took place in a printer's shop in Leipzig, in Filmaktiv's half-ruined studio in Berlin-Johannisthal, and even on the arm of a "self-sacrificing co-worker."

My interest here is not specifically in the concealment of labor that necessarily attends any process of reporting on production, but rather in cultivating an approach to looking and thinking about historical artifacts as collages of materials and forms of work, some of which can be startling or at least unexpected. This method of looking, in turn, honors the porosity and interdependence of texts and products. Finally, this porosity and interdependence, I argue, is intrinsic to hygiene as a set of practices for working in provisionally bounded space, and allows political, administrative, creative, and industrial work processes to come into contact with the moral center of the human body, with its propensities for flourishing, suffering, and death. Accordingly, thinking in terms of porosity and interdependence permits the reverse trajectory, whereby the everyday activities of working on and around the body inherit the moral weights of politics, socialist ideology, and the recent National Socialist past. All of these processes of production are carried out using materials and structures that are only available because they

survived the war—labeled the *Hitlerkrieg*—or because they are the products of salvaged materials, occupying institutions, or, usually, both.

I have so far thought of the films *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* as either representational objects that instantiate certain spatial configurations in which hygiene is practiced, such as bodies, domestic spaces, and public space, or as communicative elements or components, themselves complex in provenance, of diverse didactic campaigns that operate under the bureaucratic sign of hygiene. In both cases, the work serves as a communicative substrate for a kind of hygienic education, a site at which materialities of hygiene can be recorded and then dispatched to a mass audience; my analysis has thus amounted to an investigation and critique of public-hygiene pedagogy. What remains outstanding, then, is sustained attention to the poetics of media production—how and of what these films were made, how these materials, places, and processes were historically specific, and how such a vantage illuminates other processes of production, of other media objects, of institutional distinctions, of healthy bodies and useful environments.

The historical record as written by practitioners and witnesses at DEFA, comprising both published and archival sources, mentions the early *Aufklärungsfilme* rarely, particularly when compared with early feature productions like Wolfgang Staudte's *Mörder sind unter uns* (1946). When it does, one or more of three related kinds of significance tends to be appended to the reference: the nationalist pathos of the *Fleckfieber droht!* shoots as, in the 1984 words of co-director Fritz Dick, "the first clapboard after the war;" the notion that I mentioned earlier, that the content of these films was crucial for addressing public health crises; or a kind of metonymic

connection to a primitive DEFA pre-history, as products and reflections of precarious working conditions.[17]

The latter of these three associations, the connection of the *Aufklärungsfilme* to the material circumstances of early postwar film production, is the topic that I will explore in the remainder of this chapter. I have already proposed that the shifting contours of documents like films, images, and records mirror the permeable boundaries of the human body in their tendency to mark spaces where productive work, of bodily care or of meaning-making, takes place, exploiting, vulnerable to, and influencing webs of material and informational influences that traverse it.

Of the sheaf of departmental reports filed at the beginning of 1947 and documenting the activities of the previous year, two mention *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* by name. The first is Albert Saalborn's yearly report on the production of *Kulturfilme,* which describes the three initial films by Hans Cürlis' work group (comprising these two films and the short

17. If, indeed, *Fleckfieber droht!* was the first *anything* after the war, it would have been the first studio footage shot by a German crew in the Soviet zone. Klaus Bloemer distinguishes it from the newsreels made by Filmaktiv's *Augenzeuge* division as "the first little *Spielfilm* that was made in Germany after the war" (Bloemer, "Der erste deutsche Spiel-Kulturfilm nach dem Kriege," Gesundheitswesen 550, folio 83r). Indeed, the newsreel division had already begun shooting on either the 13th or the 15th of January 1946 ("Bericht über den Monat Januar der Wochenschau 'Der Augenzeuge,'" p. 1, BArch DY 30 [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands]/85049, folio 24r; "Jahresbericht der Wochenschau 'Der Augenzeuge,'" 1, BArch DY 30 [Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands]/85049, folio 32r). Furthermore, a report in the *Deutsche Volkszeitung* on January 13th describes location research led by Wolfgang Staudte in ruined S-Bahn tunnels near the Spree River and the Friedrichstraße station for a feature film on the Berlin transit authority, and publishes a quote from Staudte stating that these projects (which did not yet involve shooting) have been in progress since late December 1945; the *Berliner Zeitung* refers to the film, which was evidently never completed, as the "first major German *Spielfilm* after the end of hostilities" (U. Schmitz, "Es tut sich was im S-Bahn-Schacht," *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, January 13, 1946, 4; H.B., "Chaos im Jupiterlicht," *Berliner Zeitung*, January 19, 1946). Finally, some secondary histories sidestep both abortive early projects like Staudte's transit film and ephemera like the *Aufklärungsfilme*, beginning East German production history with *Mörder sind unter uns* (see Gerd Dietrich, *Politik und Kultur in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands (SBZ) 1945-1949* and Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Vor dem Vorhang: das geistige Berlin 1945-1948* [München: Hanser, 1995].).

gardening film *Vitamine an der Straße*) as examples of a low cost-to-benefit ratio, which in turn bespeaks the environment in which they were made. This document combines aesthetic with material and administrative concerns in its assessments of the film, the infrastructure and the period. The second is Hinrich Röbke's report on the year's activities at the Johannisthal studio, with its focus on material procurement and rebuilding.

Saalborn's text gives a relatively fulsome account of the non-newsreel documentary filmmaking activities that were undertaken in the year 1946 while already relegating the early Filmaktiv period to DEFA's prehistory. The DEFA working group *Kulturfilm-Produktion*, under that name and under Saalborn's leadership, only came into being in summer 1946; before that, documentary films were undertaken by the *Kulturabteilung* of Filmaktiv. He begins the first section of his yearly report by referencing the document he filed just before DEFA's incorporation in May 1946, titled "Proposal for the rebuilding of the German *Kulturfilm* Production at DEFA." In the latter document, Saalborn sets forth an ambitious aesthetic, technological, and economic agenda: he argues that German *Kulturfilm,* in the past, brought about technological revolutions in filmmaking while being unfairly relegated to the position of the unprofitable "stepchild of the film economy," and that the re-establishment of *Kulturfilm* production at DEFA represented an opportunity for documentary filmmakers to return to their "pioneering activities" with a new degree of economic independence.[18] It is thus unsurprising that his assessment of the early Filmaktiv *Aufklärungsfilme* consists largely of a negative assessment of the manner and circumstances of their production:

> The first *Kulturfilm* projects of DEFA were undertaken as early as Spring 1946 by the work group of Dr. Cürlis, with the films "Fleckfieber," "Seuchengefahr," and

18. Albert Saalborn, "Entwurf für den Neuaufbau der Deutschen Kulturfilm-Produktion der DEFA—Deutsche Film Aktiengesellschaft, Berlin," 3 May 1946, BArch DR 117 (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft)/21850, Bundesarchiv, Berlin (hereafter cited as "DEFA").

> "Vitamin [*sic*] an der Strasse", which would be better described as *Aufklärungsfilme.*
>
> Dr. Cürlis' group confronted towering production difficulties with only scarce personnel, which was made much easier by the kind of monthly contract they had with DEFA. Even so, the production of these films went on for an unusually long time, the production costs are relatively high, and the quality leaves something to be desired.[19]

He goes on to note that the Cürlis group, currently making *Kulturfilme* on different topics, is still stymied in its work by "the still-faltering work intensity, even after a new contract; a condition that continues because of the generally worsened living and work conditions of the current winter."[20] Although the tone of Saalborn's statements seems to intimate persistent personal disagreements within the production unit, it also takes pains to relate the aesthetic qualities (however vaguely defined) of media products with the conditions under which their makers worked and lived.

This may not be an adventurous claim, but it approaches one of the central structures of my argument: that the work of hygiene regulates *both* the production conditions for human bodies and media objects. While Saalborn leaves the mediocre "quality" of the films unelaborated, nothing in his yearly report suggests that his criteria have changed from that set forth in his May proposal: that a "good-quality" film would attest to a high degree of filmmaking expertise and competence and the influence of high-quality materials. In its technical quality, a film can thus bear the imprint of various deficiencies and obstacles in the material and social environment in which it is made; the quoted comments indicate that these factors may be physical (the cold of winter in a time of shortages of everyday resources; the number of available personnel) or based on structures of communication and administration (the nature of contractual

19. Albert Saalborn, "Jahresbericht der Kulturfilm-Produktion," 1947, 4, BArch DY 30 (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands)/85049, Bundesarchiv, Berlin, folio 37r (hereafter cited as "SED").

20. Ibid.

agreements, or the style of management). Nonetheless, Saalborn makes an unofficial generic distinction between *Kulturfilme* proper and *Aufklärungsfilme* under which he subsumes *Fleckfieber, Seuchengefahr*, and *Vitamine,* leaving open the possibility that these three films might be subject to somewhat different structures of appraisal than the criteria of "quality" he himself applies.

According to Saalborn, then, *Fleckfieber* and *Seuchengefahr* serve as records of sets of material, technological, and social conditions as these took place in and around the Johannisthal studio and within the administrative apparatus of Filmaktiv and/or DEFA. This is to say that looking at these films is, for Saalborn, also a process of looking into the hinterland of human and material resources from which the film arose. Saalborn's view traces what might be broadly called the hygienic problems of Cürlis' team—he indicates that films' quality can be contingent upon the immediate living and working environments of personnel, including the "worsened living conditions" of winter. The film is a porous thing, susceptible to the condition of the human body, which is also a porous thing, susceptible to the conditions of its environment.

By making the distinction that these are *Aufklärungsfilme,* Saalborn both recalls our attention to the fact that he is appraising communicative work that can be understood as hygienic, as contributing to the ways human bodies are produced in historical space, and to the fact that different technocratic frameworks than his own are available for assessing the films. Accordingly, an observer who describes the hostility of the studio's material environment in a more detailed and dramatic fashion, as the physician Fritz Dick does when he writes of "no camera...no film stock...the studios bombed out, no storeroom, not even boards or nails with which to improvise something—and hunger," may nonetheless find no occasion to remark upon the influence these factors had upon the finished product; considerations like Saalborn's would

seem foreign to Dick's account, which has already made its judgment that the films are "indispensable to life."[21] Similarly, Bloemer, the scientific advisor from the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*, writes of both the experiences of "gather[ing] around a potbelly stove" in the middle of the studio with the rest of the Cürlis group and, confidently, that the film will serve as a meaningful contribution to "a wide *Aufklärung* and propaganda effort among the population" that he already credits with lowering the number of typhus cases from 1945 to 1946.[22]

Two histories thus intersect in the Cürlis films. Understanding these films foremost as objects for public hygiene education submits them to a different set of evaluations than does recording them among the founding productions of a filmmaking concern aspiring not just to technological proficiency and generic versatility, but to becoming an international vehicle for the aesthetics and discourses of a new Soviet satellite state and its official politics. In each case, referring to the film also refers to a set of labor processes and material conditions. However, documents that circulate in different institutional contexts—compare Saalborn's "Yearly Report on Kulturfilm Production," written and circulated at DEFA, with Bloemer's "Work Plan for the Unit for Public Hygiene Education," written and circulated at the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen* —may refer to the same objects and processes, but embed them within different spheres of responsibility. The hygiene film as an object produced in disorganized material and social circumstances bears up differently when it is asked, as Saalborn asks, to represent the technical development of a filmmaking unit, than when it is asked, as Bloemer asks it, to expand the educational offerings and contexts of a public-health apparatus. As specific

21. Dick, "Über die Anfänge des Medizinfilms nach 1945," *Betriebsgeschichte*, 3:46–47.

22. Bloemer, "Der erste deutsche Spiel-Kulturfilm nach dem Kriege," Gesundheitswesen 550, folio 83r.

materials and practices that may be used to work on the body only work as "hygienic" within specific contexts—grocery shopping is only appropriate when one's purchases can be kept away from animals on the way home—specific materials and practices used to work in the film studio may only appear adequate or productive when the completed film is understood as a lesson in hygiene rather than as a demonstration of technical potential.

The year-end report filed by Hinrich Röbke is neither concerned with a specific didactic task, as was the *Zentralverwaltung für das Gesundheitswesen*'s work plan, nor with a generic distinction in film production, as does Saalborn's report. Instead, it is a facilities-management report and focuses upon the environment of the film studio as a site of two simultaneously productive tasks: the making of early Filmaktiv and DEFA productions and the rebuilding of the studio facilities as places that are both habitable and functional. It begins with a listing of the various operations that reported to Röbke's leadership: not only "studio workers," "decorators," and "lighting technicians," but also "heating engineers," "mechanics," and "firefighters."[23]

Röbke mentions the *Aufklärungsfilme* twice by name. In both cases, references to the shooting work for these films seems to mark out a liminal period of the studio's functionality as a space for work and habitation. Röbke begins the chronology of 1946 in the Johannisthal studio thusly:

> At the beginning of the year 1946, the studios 2, 4, 5, and 7 were not yet usable for film production. Only studios 6 and 7 had been set up, in a makeshift way, for music recording and for shooting for the films 'Fleckfieber' and 'Seuchengefahr.' The heating was provided by temporary stoves. In order to make all the studios available as functional shooting sets, the damages cause by the effects of the war had to be, as much as was possible, removed [*beseitigt*].[24]

23. Hinrich Röbke, "Jahresbericht Atelierbetriebe Johannisthal," 1947, 1, SED 85049, folio 60r.

24. Ibid.

The second reference to the *Aufklärungsfilme* in Röbke's report that "after completion of the films 'Seuchengefahr' and 'Fleckfieber,' construction began on sets for the film 'Irgendwo in Berlin' [Dir. Gerhard Lamprecht, 1946], and this film was finished at the beginning of August in the studios."[25] The *Aufklärungsfilme,* then, index processes of labor that took place in "makeshift" [*behelfsmäßig*] conditions, films that were being made in a studio building that could *barely* be used for its intended purpose (for the purpose to which it was used by Tobis before and during the war); their completion would seem to correlate with the studio's, and the organization's, turn to functional maturity with the making of full-length feature films.

However, the report does not have a linear chronology, nor did the inception of more demanding feature-length productions at Johannisthal only occur after the studio facilities were completely restored. Rather, Röbke's report is a patchwork of tasks, events, and resources. Film projects are among these tasks, but are recorded not as creative endeavors or even business transactions, but as temporary constellations of materials and activities that take place, that take up and transform space in a material environment that changes fluidly around them. Röbke's most detailed prose is reserved not for the studio's official products, but for the products of parallel processes of production on site, the production of sites and means of production. Moreover, the report takes into account that the productivity of the Johannisthal studio is contingent upon its human habitability—the care of the bodies of the electricians, carpenters, cleaning ladies, and yes, actors and directors of DEFA. The central, if intermittent, drama of the report's first section involves preparations for heating in the winter of 1946/1947 (one may recall Saalborn's dissatisfaction with the result): a coal-fired boiler system was unearthed from a ruined building in distant Berlin-Mitte, installed in the Johannisthal studio, and fed by hand when it was

25. Ibid., 3, folio 62r.

discovered that its auger was incompatible with the grade of coal that had been delivered; in addition, 8 employees were sent to a forest in central Brandenburg to fell firewood for the private use of their fellow personnel.[26] (We recall that, according to Saalborn, the results were still insufficient.) The Johannisthal studio produced not only films, but also refurbished filmmaking equipment: "In the course of the year, from scrap pieces of the destroyed lighting pool," 68 spotlights, 14 work lights, and 30 tripods "were built to new specifications."[27] Components of the electrical system were rebuilt onsite to weather the frequent outages caused by Berlin's insufficient municipal electricity generation and potatoes were planted in patches of ground from which rubble had been cleared by "most of the personnel...[working] four hours weekly."[28] The image of the film studio that emerges from this report is of numerous labor processes running in parallel, of a piecemeal process of material organization and repurposing that resists being reduced to the maintenance of filmmaking infrastructure, but is nonetheless inextricably intertwined with the first DEFA productions.

Recalling the appeals I made to Menninghaus and Lefebvre around the body—how the body serves as a site for the work of organizing space, and for the status of hygiene as unflinching work with the body's porosity and productivity—I think of Röbke's report of the studio as a body-like thing. *Not* a body, but a thing with manifold and dynamic articulations; something that takes up resources and puts out products. It is also a place *for* human bodies, a place where workers produce not only films and infrastructure but their own bodies, warmed by a rickety boiler and nourished by produce grown in bombed-out spaces. *Fleckfieber droht!* and *Seuchengefahr* circulated in postwar cinema programs to bring information about hygienic labor

26. Ibid, 2-4, folio 61r-63r.

27. Ibid., 5, folio 64r.

28. Ibid., 2 and 4, folio 61r and 63r.

closer to members of the public; the poetic labor required to make these images and messages was also the labor of producing and sustaining things in space.

CONCLUSION

When I began gathering together the key themes of this dissertation in early 2017, and when I centered the keyword "hygiene" among them, I could not have anticipated how urgent that topos would have become by the time I completed my dissertation in mid-2020. I left Chicago for my final research trip to Germany two days before the first identified case of COVID-19 was found in the United States; while I was there, evidence appeared of community transmission of the disease in a few cities in northern Italy; five weeks after my return, the American federal government banned travelers from Continental Europe, causing dangerous congestion, and almost certainly rampant virus transmission, at the airport immigration checkpoints I had crossed without issue. Since then, more than 140,000 American lives have been lost to COVID-19, and Germany has become a key point of international contrast to the United States in approach and results. Alongside countries like South Korea and New Zealand, Germany has emerged as a nation in which public trust in government, and government trust in scientific expertise, was sufficient to permit an informed, concerted, and sustained approach to fighting the pandemic. As much as my work with the many faces of "hygiene" in Germany has made me wary of saying so categorically, German hygienic culture, in this particular respect, has becoming something to be admired, envied, and emulated.

To put it mildly, the United States have not had the same resources of political culture to draw upon. As I write, Americans have become polarized on whether or not to wear face coverings in public to slow transmission, and the President has threatened to withhold federal funding from schools that do not restore in-person instruction by this autumn in an attempt to blackmail school authorities into ignoring the guidance of our country's top public health authority, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At the same time, the landscape of

social media, the news, and advertising has become flooded with references (explicit or tacit) to the hygienic measures, particularly quarantines, lockdowns, and social distancing, that are have reshaped middle- to upper-class life throughout the Western world. Unrelated practices and trends have become shorthand for American bourgeois hygienic retreat: the Netflix miniseries *Tiger King,* say, or the suddenly ubiquitous practice of baking (and Instagramming) sourdough bread. And attempting to reshape, undermine, and mock hygienic practices by Twitter decree has become one of the American president's preferred themes for light authoritarianism and scripted violence, in increasingly desperate attempts to refashion the dire public health situation into an affirmation of his strength, intelligence, and power.

In other words, the first half of 2020 has confirmed, for me, something about hygiene that first became clear to me through readings in science and technology studies and hours in screening rooms at German archives, but could have become clear to me studying the material culture of health in other national contexts, periods, or media: that the things people do to preserve their health, those things that become most visible during public health crises and in other venues where media discourse is dedicated to human health, can attach themselves to almost anything. Yet in the final analysis, they manifest as hybridized forms of greater or lesser deference to a scientific or pseudoscientific basis for the preservation of physical health combined with the particular resources and demands of home, work, and other environments we interact with intimately. It is the way we knit public health into the spaces for which we have responsibility—even if those spaces are as large enough to encompass entire countries, and our feelings of responsibility for them as stunted as the self-dealing of a Donald Trump or a Jair Bolsonaro. And the distortions and conflations that appear in the ways people think hygienically—from the National Socialists' choice to exterminate populations of people to the

bizarre but repeated figuring, by politicians and commentators on the American right, of stay-at-home orders as something akin to the Holocaust—are themselves instructive. They show the both the extraordinary and the mundane orders of magnitude, at which hygienic systems manifest human hopes and fears—and the equally broad spectrum of reasons that people can find a given hygienic regime unconscionable.

An article in the *New York Times* on May 20, 2020 stated that the vast majority of the 65,307 American coronavirus deaths reported by that date would have been prevented if social distancing measures had begun mere weeks earlier.[1] The impetus for earlier decisive action would have been given by a prompt and adequate testing regimen, something the U.S. plainly lacked. The tests would have furnished the CDC and other responsible organizations with the data necessary to appropriately mobilize resources and issue guidance to insure that protective measures were implemented rapidly and uniformly—ultimately, performing *hygienische Volksbelehrung* by furnishing individual Americans with the information they would need to keep themselves safer. The Trump administration's failure was and is, in one crucial respect, a failure to collect, move, and dispense information about the public health situation in the ways that were necessary. Instead, it chose to practice an alternate hygiene focused upon perpetuating its obsessive project of making the borders of the country less penetrable to various scapegoat groups: Chinese citizens, then Europeans, then (as always) immigrants crossing the southern border. What had hygienic value within the epistemology of the first hygiene—procuring numbers, acquiring resources, creating guidance based upon scientific expertise—had little, none, or even less in the context of the second "hygiene", whose measures of national health

1. James Glanz and Campbell Robertson, "Lockdown Delays Cost at Least 36,000 Lives, Data Show," *The New York Times,* May 20, 2020.

were based on a different set of numbers, those of the stock market and of presidential approval ratings.

Whether they are caused by incompetence, malevolence, or both, failures to sustain and direct the movement of public health information are matters of life and death; this is a ready-to-hand confirmation for my framing of hygienic information as an essential resource that I'd rather not have had. But the formulation of the previous sentence should also make us uneasy—public health data and admonishments to wash hands are not, after all, *a priori* flowing things, like Heidegger's Rhine, whose course should be respected by human craft if catastrophes are to be avoided. They are, as theorists from Foucault to Daston and Galison will remind us, constructed, tendentious, and continually remade. They are created by fleeting collections of actors, often working in barely coordinated self-interest: a factory for nasopharyngeal swabs here, a reagent supplier there, an epidemiologist here, a politician there.

If one is thus to find the moral sense of hygiene—either in a time where it seems patently obvious that the advice of medical experts must be followed over the vanity of politicians, or in a time, like the time period of this dissertation, where medical experts, to varying degrees, endorsed what became the murderous state science of racial hygiene—one must, I argue, interrogate the utopias that a given hygiene relies upon for its moral force. For whom do those utopias fail to account—whom does it, in Arendt's terms, render superfluous? Or in Carl Reclam's terms, from my first chapter, who "deserves to live in bad air?"[2]

Those who are outside of hygiene are not necessarily those with poor hygiene, nor even the skeptics of a given hygienic scheme, but those who have no place in a hygienic social system. Arendt writes that the mark of social superfluity, as it is practiced in the establishment of

2. Carl Reclam, *Das Buch der vernünftigen Lebensweise,* 142.

totalitarianism, is not necessarily that one is "deprived of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, or of equality before the law and freedom of opinion—formulas which were designed to solve problems *within* given communities—but that [one] no longer belong[s] to any community whatsoever."[3] When an epistemology or a method understands represents itself, explicitly or implicitly, as a hygiene, it understands its domain of responsibility as an collection of impersonal resources and practices, even when the places where those resources and practices intersect, tangle, and change are human beings (or anthropomorphized flies). This stands in contrast to the profoundly embodied moral ballast of hygiene—that such and such must be done because it is something like a matter of life and death, or of a good life and a good death. In ordering, purifying, propagating, destroying and shaping those resources and materials according to that hygiene's implicit utopian ideal, it sheds those intersections that it cannot fit to its purposes. This is not to imply that the impulse that does so is objective, impartial, or itself impersonal—rather, it functions more along the lines of an anxious man's perseverations, and is as useful or harmful as his fears are constructively applicable to the world he shares with others.

Who, or what, are the outlaws and superfluous residues of the films I have studied here? In *Majanka,* the candidate is easy to find, as it has been given a set of character roles—the flies, with the exception of the title character. Since they, like Majanka, are anthropomorphic, their fate can be read as the retribution for a political choice made by their population—namely, not following Majanka down the path of reform and reconciliation with the townspeople. Majanka herself—like Malchen, from the 1921 film—is an example of a reformable character, one whose hygienic value is mutable and who can thus join the hygienic project. Each of these characters,

3. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), pp. 295–96.

after receiving an education, rids herself of her hygienic debts and preserves those qualities that comport with the utopian aesthetics of the system. Majanka swears off the outhouse and, through her partnership with the doctor, creates the fly-free future of the town. Malchen leaves her pig manure behind and steps into a marriage with the technical skills to be a homemaker and mother. There is not a place for the other flies to land in the first narrative, and not a place for the manure in the second—nor for the superstitions of country folk medicine.

Fig. 9. Emblem of *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung des Kurpfuschertums* (German Society for Combating the *Kurpfuscher*). SOURCE: *Merkbuch für den deutschen Arzt zur Bekämpfung der Kurpfuscherei und des Geheimmittelwesens* (Berlin: Mosse, 1929), Preußischer Kultusministerium Vc Sekt. 1 XI Nr. 84 Teil 1, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

The specter of charlatan medicine (*Kurpfuscherei*)—a diffuse domain of practices, activities, materials, and people represented emblematically as a slain dragon in the logo of the German Society for Combating the *Kurpfuscher* (*Deutsche Gemeinschaft zur Bekämpfung des Kurpfuschertums*) and in aged feminine embodiment in *Lebende Werkzeuge* —has woven its way across these chapters as something to be banished. In some cases it can be effectively separated from its bearer. Superstitious people, like Malchen or the the

country people subject to professional hygienic education in the travel narrative of the color film proposal, can be educated and can improve their own hygienic value by changing their minds. In others, the bearer is mortified along with the belief; consider the abuse that H. von Kameke, in my third chapter, heaps upon the *Kurpfuscherin* in *Lebende Werkzeuge.*

Kurpfuscherei is an ostensibly obsolete body of techniques that must be shed in the name of hygienic progress, but untimely or improper incursions of media technologies are to be similarly shunned. In the cases of the proposed color film from my second chapter, and the film *Lebende Werkzeuge* from my third, a government bureaucracy declares a proposed or actual technological project—the costly proposal for a color film on rural hygiene, the toothpaste eulogy that refused administrative constraints—to be superfluous to its hygienic project (in the case of *Lebende Werkzeuge* and the *Reichsstelle,* the central project was broadly pedagogical—but that organization effectively declared that, were it to involve itself in a hygienic project, it would not do so using this film). In question was not whether color film in the countryside would make people ill, nor whether *Lebende Werkzeuge* was of itself inimical to National Socialist hygiene conventions—it was instead merely the decision that the project in question could not be assimilated into the system with the power to program hygienic film screenings, whether that system cited financial constraints or administrative umbrage as a reason for that decision.

In my fourth chapter, the nascent socialist order demonstratively washes its hands of Nazism as it rids itself of lice, but the resources that circulated in the despised order—from critical infrastructure to director Hans Cürlis himself—were necessary to the project. In the Western allied zones and the *Bundesrepublik,* too, rebuilding and denazification were effectively an extended practice of who and what had been irretrievably compromised by either the "Third

Reich" or the World War (for the Soviet Zone and East Germany, of course, these two were conveniently equivalent).

In describing hygienes in this way, I have woven back and forth between ways in which hygienes make things or ideas superfluous and in which they make people superfluous, and this cannot go without further comment. The conclusion of such an exercise is not to equate the ethical import of canceling a film project with that of taking human life. To suggest anything similar would be obscene. It is instead to show that hygienes cannot differentiate between things and people; that they demand and apply to a broad variety of activities that may seem as unrelated as filmmaking and flypaper; that they make the prosecution of their core utopian projects a moral necessity and the prosecution of any competing such projects morally reprehensible; and that the ruthlessness of their reasoning is *both* why hygienic thinking is a humanitarian necessary in some cases (such as the present pandemic) and a humanitarian disaster in others (providing cover for the crimes of the T4 euthanasia project). I do not care about the hygienic othering of color film or *Lebende Werkzeuge* because I consider either of those to be as important as the life of a single one of the differently abled individuals shown in the euthanasia-propaganda film *Victims of the Past* (*Opfer der Vergangenheit*, 1936-37, dir. Gernot Bock-Stieber). I care about it because making judgments about technologies involves making judgments about ways in which people interact with their immediate environments, and such judgments are also a key factor in hygienic choices that can save or cost human life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives:

Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde
Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
Landesarchiv Berlin
Landesarchiv Thüringen – Hauptstaatsarchiv, Weimar
Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hannover/Pattensen
Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden
Staatsarchiv Hamburg
Stadtarchiv München

Primary Sources:

"571. Bekanntgabe von Geschäftszahlen." *Deutsche Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung* 1 (1935): 470.

Adam, Carl. "Der Tuberkulosefilm 'Die weiße Seuche.'" *Zeitschrift für ärztliche Fortbildung* 19, no. 6 (1922): 187–88.

Adam, Carl, ed. *Die Reichsgesundheitswoche 1926. Spezieller Teil. Verlauf der Reichsgesundheitswoche in den einzelnen Ländern.* Leipzig: Vogel, 1927.

———. *Die Reichsgesundheitswoche 1926. Allgemeiner Teil.* Leipzig: Vogel, 1928.

Dick, Fritz. "Über die Anfänge des Medizinfilms nach 1945." In *Betriebsgeschichte des VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme*, edited by Betriebsparteiorganisation der SED im VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme, 3:45–55. Berlin: VEB DEFA Studio für Spielfilme, 1984.

Ewert, Malte, ed. *Neue Dokumente zur Schulfilmbewegung in Deutschland II. Die Rundschreiben der Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfdU) und späteren Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (RWU) 1934-1945.* Studien zur Zeitgeschichte 35. 2 vols. Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 2003.

Gauger, Kurt. "Rundschreiben Nr. 101/37 an sämtliche Landesbildstellen." In Ewert, *Neue Dokumente*, 1: 351-53.

———. "Rundschreiben Nr. 112/37 an alle Landesbildstellen." In Ewert, *Neue Dokumente,* 1: 361-62.

———. "Rundschreiben Nr. 71/38 an alle Landesbildstellen." In Ewert, *Neue Dokumente,* 2: 454-56.

———. “Rundschreiben Nr. 91/38 an alle Landesbildstellen.” In Ewert, *Neue Dokumente,* 2: 472-73.

———. “Rundschreiben Nr. 20/40 an alle Landesbildstellen.” In Ewert, *Neue Dokumente,* 2: 521.

“Der Gebissverfall als Ausdruck einer unorganischen Lebensordnung.” *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus. Zeitschrift für die Methodik der Gesundheitserziehung* 8, no. 3 (Dec. 1939): 59-62.

Gottstein, Adolf, A. Schlossmann, and L. Teleky. Foreword to Gottstein, Schlossmann, and Teleky, *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge,* 1: V-VII.

H.B. “Chaos im Jupiterlicht.” *Berliner Zeitung*. January 19, 1946.

Gottstein, Adolf, A. Schlossmann, and L. Teleky, eds. *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge*. 6 vols. Berlin: Springer, 1925.

Hölscher, Eberhard. “Herbert Bayer.” *Gebrauchsgraphik* 15, no. 6 (Jun. 1938), 5.

Hufeland, Christoph Wilhelm. *Makrobiotik oder die Kunst das menschliche Leben zu verlängern*. 8th ed. Berlin: Reimer, 1860.

Just, Adolf. *Kehrt zur Natur zurück!* Blankenburg/Harz: Heilerde-Gesellschaft Luvos, 1922.

von Kameke, H. “Lebende Werkzeuge.” *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus. Zeitschrift für die Methodik der Gesundheitserziehung* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): 94-96.

Bornstein, Karl. “Hygienische Volksbelehrung in Wort und Bild!” *Ärztliches Vereinsblatt für Deutschland. Organ des Deutschen Ärztevereinsbundes* 51, no. 1257 (1922): 156–59.

Kaufmann, Nicholas. “10 Jahre Kulturfilm-Arbeit.” *Ufa-Feuilleton*, no. 25 (June 20, 1929): 5–7.

“Die medizinischen Volksbelehrungsfilme der Kulturabteilung der Universum-Film-Aktiengesellschaft, Berlin.” *Schleswig-holsteinische Wohlfahrtspfleger* 5, no. 7 (1922): 92–93.

Oesterlen, Friedrich. *Der Mensch und seine physische Erhaltung. Hygienische Briefe für weitere Leserkreise*. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1859.

Pettenkofer, Max von. *Beziehungen der Luft zu Kleidung, Wohnung und Boden. Drei populäre Vorlesungen gehalten im Albert-Verein zu Dresden am 21., 23. und 25. März 1872*. Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1872.

Pettenkofer, Max von, ed. *Handbuch der Hygiene und der Gewerbekrankheiten*. 3rd ed. Leipzig: Vogel, 1886.

Reclam, Carl. *Das Buch der vernünftigen Lebensweise. Für das Volk zur Erhaltung der Gesundheit und Arbeitsfähigkeit. Eine populäre Hygieine*. Leipzig: Winter'sche, 1863.

Rikli, Arnold. *"Es werde Licht" und Es wird Licht! oder Die atmosphärische Cur. Ein Beitrag zur natürlichen Gesundheitslehre*. 4th ed. Leipzig: Fernau, 1894.

Schmitz, U. "Es tut sich was im S-Bahn-Schacht." *Deutsche Volkszeitung*. January 13, 1946.

"Die schönste Geschichte und der beste Vergleich. Eine Preisfrage." *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 2, no. 1 (Aug. 1933): 8-9.

Sichler, W. "Holzschnitte und Radierungen." *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 1 (Aug. 1936): 18-19.

Sonderegger, Jakob Laurenz. *Vorposten der Gesundheitspflege*. 5th ed. Berlin: Springer, 1901.

Thomalla, Curt. "Hygiene und soziale Medizin im Volksbelehrungsfilm." *Zeitschrift für Medizinal-Beamte und Krankenhausärzte* 35 (1922): 589–610.

Vogel, Martin. "Hygienische Volksbildung." In Gottstein, Schlossmann, and Teleky, *Handbuch der sozialen Hygiene und Gesundheitsfürsorge,* 1:303–90.

"Wie viele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?" *Praktische Gesundheitspflege* 5, no. 1 (Aug. 1936): 15.

Wiegand, A. "Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des menschlichen Gebisses." *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): 91-93.

"Wieviele Einwohner in der Provinz Sachsen und im Lande Anhalt haben eigene Zahnbürsten?," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 3 (Dec. 1936): 62-66

"Der Zahn—ein wunderfeiner Organismus," advertisement in *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 4/5 (Feb./Apr. 1937): back cover.

"Zahnpflege-Hilfswerk für die Schulkinder," *Praktische Gesundheitspflege in Schule und Haus* 5, no. 1 (Aug. 1936): 20.

Secondary Sources

Applegate, Celia. *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.

Baxmann, Inge. "Der Körper der Nation." In *Nation und Emotion: Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Etienne François, Hannes Siegrist, and Jakob Vogel, 353–65. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995.

Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope*. Translated by Neville Plaice. 2 vols. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

Bonah, Christian, and Anja Laukötter. "Introduction: Screening Diseases. Films on Sex Hygiene in Germany and France in the First Half of the 20th Century." *Gesnerus: Swiss Journal of the History of Medicine and Sciences* 72, no. 1 (2015): 5–14.

Bonah, Christian, and Anja Laukötter. "Moving Pictures and Medicine in the First Half of the 20th Century: Some Notes on International Historical Developments and the Potential of Medical Film Research." *Gesnerus: Swiss Journal of the History of Medicine and Sciences* 66 (2009): 121–46.

Bonah, Christian, and Vincent Lowy. "D'Erbkrank (1934-36) à Opfer der Vergangenheit (1937): les représentations du handicap mental dans le cinéma de propagande nazi." In *Normes et normalisation en travail social: pour une posture critique entre responsabilité, résistance et créativité*, ed. Vincent Meyer, 35–49. Bordeaux: Les Études hospitalières, 2010.

Canguilhem, Georges. *The Normal and the Pathological*. Trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett and Robert S. Cohen. New York: Zone, 1989.

Christian, Margareta Ingrid. "*Aer, Aurae, Venti*: Philology and Physiology in Aby Warburg's Dissertation on Botticelli." *PMLA* 129, no. 3 (May 2014): 399–418.

Confino, Alon. *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Curtis, Scott. *The Shape of Spectatorship: Art, Science, and Early Cinema in Germany*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Dietrich, Gerd. *Politik und Kultur in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands (SBZ) 1945-1949: mit einem Dokumentenanhang*. Bern: Lang, 1993.

Eigler, Friederika. "Critical Approaches to Heimat and the 'Spatial Turn.'" *New German Critique* 115 (Winter 2012): 27–48.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage, 1994.

Gertiser, Anita. *Falsche Scham: Strategien der Überzeugung in Aufklärungsfilmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten (1918 - 1935)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015.

Glanz, James, and Campbell Robertson, "Lockdown Delays Cost at Least 36,000 Lives, Data Show," *The New York Times,* May 20, 2020.

Gottweis, Herbert, Wolfgang Hable, Barbara Preinsack, and Doris Wydra. *Verwaltete Körper: Strategien Der Gesundheitspolitik Im Internationalen Vergleich*. Wien: Böhlau, 2004.

Gruman, Gerald J. "The Rise and Fall of Prolongevity Hygiene 1558-1873." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 35, no. 3 (1961): 221–29.

Haug, Wolfgang Fritz. *Kritik der Warenästhetik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971.

Heidegger, Martin. "Die Frage nach der Technik." In *Gesamtausgabe*, 7:5–36. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000.

Herrn, Rainer. "Die Darstellung des Arztes in zwei frühen Sexualaufklärungsfilmen." In *Frankensteins Kinder. Film und Medizin*, edited by Jutta Phillips-Krug and Cecilia Hausheer, 55–65. Stuttgart: Cantz, 1997.

Heyll, Uwe. *Wasser, Fasten, Luft Und Licht: Die Geschichte Der Naturheilkunde in Deutschland*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006.

Hüntelmann, Axel C. *Hygiene im Namen des Staates. Das Reichsgesundheitsamt 1876-1933.* Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008.

Laukötter, Anja. "'Anarchie der Zellen.' Geschichte und Medien der Krebsaufklärung in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts." *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 7 (2010): 55–74.

Laukötter, Anja. "(Film-) Bilder und medizinische Aufklärung im beginnenden 20. Jahrhundert: Evidenz und Emotionen." *AugenBlick* 50 (2011): 24–38.

Laukötter, Anja. "Medien der Sexualaufklärung. Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven." *NTM. Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 20 (2012): 225–32.

Laukötter, Anja. "Vom Ekel zur Empathie. Strategien der Wissensvermittlung im Sexualaufklärungsfilm des 20. Jahrhunderts." In *Erkenne Dich selbst!: Strategien der Sichtbarmachung des Körpers im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Sybilla Nikolow, 305–19. Köln: Böhlau, 2015.

Laukötter, Anja. “Wissen als Animation. Zur Transformation der Anschaulichkeit im Gesundheitsaufklärungsfilm.” *Montage A/V. Zeitschrift für Theorie und Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation* 2 (2013): 79–96.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.

Lovitt, William. Introduction to Heidegger, Martin, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. xiii–xxxix. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

Menninghaus, Winfried. *Ekel: Theorie und Geschichte einer starken Empfindung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002.

von Moltke, Johannes. *No Place like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Mückenberger, Christiane, and Günter Jordan. *Sie sehen selbst, Sie hören selbst—: eine Geschichte der DEFA von ihren Anfängen bis 1949*. Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1994.

Osten, Philipp. “Emotion, Medizin und Volksbelehrung: die Entstehung des «deutschen Kulturfilms».” *Gesnerus: Swiss Journal of the History of Medicine and Sciences* 66, no. 3 (2009): 67–102.

Peters, John Durham. *The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Rabinbach, Anson. *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*. New York: Basic, 1990.

Reichert, Ramón. *Im Kino Der Humanwissenschaften: Studien Zur Medialisierung Wissenschaftlichen Wissens*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007.

Rost, Karl Ludwig. *Sterilisation und Euthanasie im Film des “Dritten Reiches”: nationalsozialistische Propaganda in ihrer Beziehung zu rassenhygienischen Maßnahmen des NS-Staates*. Husum: Matthiesen, 1987.

Roth, Karl-Heinz. “Filmpropaganda für die Vernichtung der Geisteskranken und Behinderten im ‘Dritten Reich.’” In *Reform und Gewissen: “Euthanasie” im Dienst des Fortschritts*, ed. Götz Aly, 125–93. Berlin: Rotbuch, 1989.

Sarasin, Philipp. “The Body as Medium: Nineteenth-Century European Hygiene Discourse.” Trans. Brian Hanrahan. *Grey Room* 29 (2007): 48–65.

Saryusz-Wolska, Magdalena, and Anna Labentz. *Bilder der Normalisierung: Gesundheit, Ernährung und Haushalt in der visuellen Kultur Deutschlands 1945-1948*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2017.

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *Vor dem Vorhang: das geistige Berlin 1945-1948*. München: Hanser, 1995.

Schmidt, Ulf. *Medical Films, Ethics, and Euthanasia in Nazi Germany: The History of Medical Research and Teaching Films of the Reich Office for Educational Films—Reich Institute for Films in Science and Education, 1933-1945*. Husum: Matthiesen, 2002.

Schmidt, Ulf. "Sozialhygienische Filme und Propaganda in der Weimarer Republik." In *Gesundheitskommunikation*, ed. Dietman Jazbinsek, 53–82. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher, 2000.

Skvirsky, Salomé Aguilera. *The Process Genre: Cinema and the Aesthetic of Labor*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

Sloterdijk, Peter. "Der gesprengte Behälter. Notiz über die Krise des Heimatbegriffs in der globalisierten Welt." *Spiegel Spezial*, no. 6 (1999): 24–29.

Spitzer, Leo. "Milieu and Ambiance: An Essay in Historical Semantics." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3, no. 1 (September 1942): 1.

Star, Susan Leigh, and James R. Griesemer. "Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39." *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (1989): 387–420.

Stiegler, Bernard. *Technics and Time*. Trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. 3 vols. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies*. Trans. Stephen Conway, Erica Carter, and Chris Turner. 2 vols. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

von Uexküll, Jakob. "Einleitung." In Jakob von Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen. Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten*, 23-30. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956.

Vismann, Cornelia. *Akten: Medientechnik und Recht*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2001.

Weber, Max. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen: Mohr, 1922.

Weinert, Sebastian. "Vorreiter des Public Campaigning im Deutschen Reich? Die Reichsgesundheitswoche von 1926," *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte* 18 (2016), pp. 111-128.

Wellbery, David. Foreword to Friedrich A Kittler. *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

Weyer-von Schoultz, Martin. *Max von Pettenkofer (1818-1901): die Entstehung der modernen Hygiene aus den empirischen Studien menschlicher Lebensgrundlagen*. Frankfurt: Lang, 2006.

Yumibe, Joshua. *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism*. Techniques of the Moving Image. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012.

Zimmermann, Peter. "Faschismus und Moderne. Perspektivenwechsel in der Historischen Forschung," in *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland. Band 3, "Drittes Reich" 1933-1945*, eds. Peter Zimmermann and Kay Hoffmann (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005), 17-25.