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***Biology, Morality and Gender: East  
and West German Sex Education in  
Films, 1945-70***

Submitted for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

by

**Anita Winkler**

Durham University  
School of Medicine, Pharmacy and Health

April 2014

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores East and West German sex education films between 1945 and 1970. Sex education films are rich historical sources that allow insights into cultural, social and political understandings of sexualised bodies, sexual moral norms and gender roles of the time. Sex education films mediate sexual knowledge as well as social norms. They sought to transform the sexual realities and behaviour of young people and thus reflect contemporary notions of what was perceived as sexual problems. Moreover, sex education films bring to the surface ideological projections of what was imagined to be an ideal society at that time. Sex education films are therefore firmly linked to contemporary sexual politics.

This study explores the biopolitical agendas of such films. A biopolitical approach takes into account concurrent and reverse dynamics that unfold in sex education films, revealing the many normative layers with which these films responded to social issues. This approach allows analysing questions related to the effects of the self-governance of the body the individual has to take responsibility for. From this perspective, my thesis will investigate the similarities and differences between East and West German sexual politics. This comparative approach introduces a new perspective to the historiography of German sexuality after 1945. By strengthening the comparative aspect and focusing on the biopolitical dimensions of sex education films, my thesis challenges current understandings of a so-called sexual liberalisation in West Germany. Instead, my study claims that in both German states sex education films were part of biopolitical strategies that increasingly relied on the self-management of the body as core value for the personal well-being. Thus, my thesis offers a different and more nuanced understanding of the apparent changes in sexual morality and behaviour in both German states that does not rely on a value loaded concept of 'liberalisation' to explain such changes.

## Acknowledgements

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I also want to thank my department the School for Medicine, Pharmacy and Health, especially Sharyn Maxwell, for making me feel so welcome. Especially, in my role as a student representative I experienced openness and much support towards the raised concerns. I am also grateful for the financial support of my department to finalise my thesis. I would like to thank the German History Society which provided me with a travel bursary for the attendance of the German History Society conference in 2010. I also want to thank Gudrun Löhner and Christian Bonah for their interest in my research; and who invited me to workshops in Berlin and Strasbourg respectively.

The search for films and related materials led me to a number of archives and special libraries; the German *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin (Lichterfelde and

Fehrbellinger Platz) and Koblenz, the *Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv* (Saxony public record office) and the hygiene museum in Dresden, the *Bibliothek für bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung* (Library for the Research of the History of Education), which maintains a pertinent archive of literary material; the *Staatsbibliothek* (Berlin national library) providing rich collections of historical journals and newspapers; the *Deutsche Kinemathek* holding comprehensive materials related to film and film history, and the *Senatsverwaltung* that has adopted a huge collection of East German teaching material and related sources only recently; all of which are in Berlin. Many thanks to the staff of these institutions that was very supportive and without them some of the material I would not have been able to detect. On this occasion, I would like to personally thank Uta Schwarz (BZgA), Marion Schneider (Hygiene Museum Dresden), Elke Hauschildt (Bundesarchiv Koblenz) and Ursula von Keitz.

A big thank you to my colleagues and friends of the CHMD: Sebastian Pranghofer, Daniel Becker, Eduardo Díaz-Amado and Cheryl Lancaster, with whom I could share the joys and troubles in the life of a PhD student and sit over a beer together. I also thank Gabór Szegedi for sharing ideas during his visiting fellowship at the CHMD. Thanks to my flatmate who was forbearing with me when I neglected my household duties in the last couples of weeks of finishing up my thesis.

I am most grateful to my family and friends for their moral support. Finally, I would like to give my very special thanks to my partner, to whom this work is dedicated.

## List of Abbreviations

BA	Bundesarchiv (Federal Archive)
BZgA	Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Federal Centre for Health Education, West Germany)
CDU/CSU	Christlich-Demokratische Union/Christlich Soziale Union (Christian conservative party)
DEFA	Deutsche Filmaktien-Gesellschaft
DIPF	Deutsches Institut für Pädagogische Forschung, Berlin (German Institute for Pedagogical Research)
DPZI	Deutsches Pädagogisches Zentralinstitut (East German Pedagogic Institute)
DZL	Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel (East German Institute for Teaching Aids)
ERP	European Recovery Programme
FA	Filmarchive
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)
FWU	Institut für Film in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (Institute for Film in Science and Education)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSK	Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle (Voluntary Self-Control)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HV Film	Hauptverwaltung Film
HV Lehrmittel	Hauptverwaltung Lehrmittel
IMDb	International Movie Database
IWF	Institut für den wissenschaftlichen Film, Göttingen (Institute for the Scientific Film)
LAGG	Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten und für Geschlechtserziehung (Federal State Association for Combating Venereal Diseases and Sex Education)
NÖS	Neues Ökonomisches System der Planung und Leitung (New Economic System)
RfdU	Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm
RWU	Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht
SAPMO	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party)

SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democrat Party)
SPIO	Spitzenorganisation
UFA	Universum Film AG
VEB	Volkseigener Betrieb
VD	Venereal Diseases

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# 1. Introduction

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'*Why are our films boring?*' asked the documentary filmmaker Götz Oelschlägel in 1961. Oelschlägel articulated this sentiment in an article in the East German film magazine *Deutsche Filmkunst* (German Film Art), after a short-film festival in Prague where no East German film had won an award. Although the films entered had apparently been rated as 'most valuable' by the East German film studio's committee, it seemed they could not compete with international filmmaking trends. The best films, as far as Oelschlägel was concerned, came from France, Hungary, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and the United States. In an attempt to identify factors contributing to the weakness of East German film, Oelschlägel, who was also a member of the DEFA film studio's editorial board, blamed a rigid aesthetic form that did not allow for engaging narrative.<sup>1</sup>

This criticism is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), where free speech had been replaced by a system of censorship that oversaw any kind of publicity, one would have thought such openly voiced dismissal impossible. Yet, that Oelschlägel's article was just one example of critical contributions to the monthly film journal *Deutsche Filmkunst* at that time seems to suggest otherwise. The internationally acclaimed Czechoslovakian film critic, Pavel Branko, in a similar vein, argued that films would have more value for secondary education if the boundaries between subjects such as literature, art and music were softened in favour of a broader approach of an aesthetic culture in which constituents were interdependent,

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<sup>1</sup> Götz Oelschlägel, 'Warum sind unsere Filme langweilig?', *Deutsche Filmkunst* 7 (1961), pp. 247-249.

rather than competing for supremacy.<sup>2</sup> This indicates that certain aspects of the GDR were more multifaceted, diverse and controversial than were assumed of an autocratic dictatorship that had been in existence for over forty years.<sup>3</sup> This occurred at the same time, the GDR started socio economic experiments. New economic models, such as the New Economic System (Neues Ökonomisches System der Planung und Leitung, NÖS) were introduced in 1963 by head of state Walter Ulbricht, in an attempt to decentralise parts of the state-led economy.<sup>4</sup> What is important for the context of this thesis is that the cooperation of literati, filmmakers and social experts, albeit who were in pursuit of increased social standing, was sought as part of a functioning socialist state. Oelschlägel's article was part of this integrative cultural climate in which artists, writers and filmmakers were co-opted as part of the socialist project. Adhering to the motto 'Grab your pen, buddy!' (Greif zur Feder, Kumpel!), that had emerged from the 1959 Bitterfeld Conference, artists became actively involved in an ideology forming process.

Secondly, by claiming that GDR films did not have the desired impact on their audience, Oelschlägel emphasised the importance of an artistic idea that could bridge the gap between the content displayed and the message conveyed. He noted that '[w]ithout an artistic idea, the popular scientific film won't have any

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<sup>2</sup> Pavel Branko, 'Schule, ästhetische Erziehung und Film', *Deutsche Filmkunst* 2 (1962), pp. 106-108.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Fulbrook, 'Rethorising "state" and "society" in the German Democratic Republic', in Patrick Major, Jonathan Osmond (eds.), *The Workers' and the Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-71* (Manchester UP: Manchester, New York 2002), pp. 280-298; Mary Fulbrook, 'Approaches to German contemporary history since 1945: Politics and paradigms', *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, Online edition, 1, No 1 (2004), section 11, URL: <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Fulbrook-1-2004> (last accessed in January 2014); Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (Arnold: London 2002); See also Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Grieder, 'The Leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany under Ulbricht', in Patrick Major, Jonathan Osmond (eds.), *The Workers' and the Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971* (Manchester UP: Manchester, New York 2002), p. 28.

persuasive power'.<sup>5</sup> What is particularly significant here is that, as a result of the changing cultural climate, in which artists and social experts had become involved in shaping the official project of socialism, Oelschlägel's call for renewal was closely linked to a call for a need to revisit film. Working for the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films, Oelschlägel, in particular, was concerned with a reform of educational films. As part of his educational agenda, he demanded that films should no longer connect to their audience with authoritative filmic demonstration, but that understanding had to be induced by filmic narrative and style.<sup>6</sup> True to his words, from 1963 to 1965, Oelschlägel directed a series of sex education films called *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* (Relationships between Boys and Girls) which were in every respect distinct from earlier examples.<sup>7</sup> Abandoning the instructive mode of authoritative and scientific mediation, he created drama by employing a film noir style and utilising low key lighting and direct cinema effects. These techniques were clearly inspired by international 'new wave' cinema that was fashionable at the time.<sup>8</sup>

In liberal democratic West Germany, at around the same time, a similar tendency to draw on fictional film emerged regarding sex education film production. In the midst of the so called 'sex wave' of the 1960s, almost every media channel, from advertising and journal articles to films, commoditised sex and voyeurism.<sup>9</sup> Thus, sex education films had to keep pace with more popular formats such as the widely circulated youth magazine *Bravo*, which offered sex advice in columns by

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<sup>5</sup> All the translations are my own otherwise stated. *Original*: 'Ohne künstlerische Idee wird ein populärwissenschaftlicher Film keine Überzeugungskraft haben.' Oelschlägel, 'Warum sind unsere Filme', p. 247.

<sup>6</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Warum sind unsere Filme', p. 247.

<sup>7</sup> Götz Oelschlägel, *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* 1-4, (1963-1965).

<sup>8</sup> For a brief overview of filmic styles used in 'new wave' cinema, see David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill: New York 2010, third edition), pp. 403-432. Oelschlägel's emphasis on the artistic idea found its wider implications in film theory of that time, giving rise to the 'auteur theory' (idea of authorship) which was particularly debated in the European art cinema from the mid-1940s onwards. For a brief overview of film theorists contributing to this debate, see also here Bordwell, Thompson, *Film History*, pp. 381-402.

<sup>9</sup> Dagmar Herzog, 'Sexual Morality in 1960s West Germany', *German History* 23, No 3 (2005), pp. 376.

Dr Christoph Vollmer.<sup>10</sup> To this end, the Federal Minister of Health, Käte Strobel (1966-69), set herself the task of promoting an up-to-date sex education programme. The commissioning of the film *Helga: Vom Werden menschlichen Lebens* (Helga: On the Origins of Human Life, 1967), directed by Erich F. Bender, marks the turning point of her programme.<sup>11</sup> With the intention of making it successful, this first state-sponsored sex education film bore many features of mainstream cinema, and was also released for national and international screening.<sup>12</sup> Just as Oelschlägel regarded international influence important to appeal to a young GDR audience, similarly in West Germany, as exemplified in *Helga*, sex education drew on the aesthetics of popular cinema to engage viewers. In both states, film became an important medium for presenting sex education in an appealing manner.

This thesis sets out to understand the role of such films in a historical context, and is a comparative study of sex education films for young people in East and West Germany. Focusing on a time frame of 1945 to 1970, it considers a period that saw profound changes in attitudes toward sexual morality and behaviour, with an increased circulation of (semi-)nude images in media coverage, advertising and films. In East Germany, journals, particularly *Das Magazin* (The Magazine), featured a nude photograph in every issue.<sup>13</sup> Illustrated articles and films often claimed to deliver sex education, sometimes exploiting the term to launch (soft) sex formats. This was the case with the infamous West German film

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<sup>10</sup> Dr Christoph Vollmer was a pseudonym under which the writer Marie Louise Fischer offered sex advice. See Lutz Sauerteig, “‘Wie soll ich es nur anstellen, ohne etwas falsch zu machen?’ Der Rat der Bravo in Sachen Sex in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren”, in Peter-Paul Bänziger, Stefanie Duttweiler, Philipp Sarasin, and Annika Wellmann (eds.), *Fragen Sie Dr. Sex! – Ratgeberkommunikation und die mediale Konstruktion des Sexuellen* (Suhrkamp: Berlin 2010), p. 128.

<sup>11</sup> Bender, *Helga: Vom Werden menschlichen Lebens* (1967).

<sup>12</sup> Uta Schwarz, ‘Helga (1967): West German Sex education and the Cinema in the 1960s’, in Lutz Sauerteig, Roger Davidson (eds.), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (Routledge: London, New York 2009), p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> Josie McLellan, “‘Even Under Socialism, We Don’t Want to Do Without Love’: East German Erotica”, in David Crowley and Susan Reid (eds.), *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Northwestern UP: Evanston 2010), pp. 218-237.

*Schulmädchen Report: Was Eltern nicht für möglich halten* (School Girl Report Part 1: What Parents Don't Think Is Possible, 1970) directed by Ernst Hofbauer, which in the following decade, became a thirteen part series.<sup>14</sup> The discussion around formal sex education for young people was likely a consequence of this sexually charged atmosphere, in which sexuality appeared not only in the private, but, increasingly, as an influence upon the public sphere.

Sex education became mandatory in schools in this period, and guidelines for it were issued. These changes, in both East and West Germany, were accompanied by increased production of sex education films. Given this emphasis on sex education films in the 1960s, as seen in Oelschlägel and Strobel, a closer look into the dynamics of change in two ideologically and politically different states with a shared history is required to answer the question which normative concepts sex education films employed and how these related to the respective contexts.

This thesis investigates how the changing emphasis with regard to sexuality had a bearing on the content of sex education films in East and West Germany. Moving images, narratives and techniques seem to have been central to the approaches of Oelschlägel and Strobel. The core of the thesis is thus film analysis, considering the mediation of biological knowledge, sexual morality, and social and gender roles as part of a broader cultural climate. Sexuality in these films took shape around normative assumptions about the body. In addition, they provided 'sexual scripts', by offering templates of what was conceived of as appropriate sexual conduct.<sup>15</sup> Sex education films are therefore part of a

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<sup>14</sup> Hofbauer, *Schulmädchen Report: Was Eltern nicht für möglich halten* (1970). In the UK the film was released under the title *Confessions of a Sixth Form Girl*. For a detailed study on the *School Girl Report*-series see Annette Miersch, *Schulmädchen-Report: Der deutsche Sexfilm der 70er Jahre* (Bertiz Verlag: Berlin 2003).

<sup>15</sup> The concept of 'sexual scripts' has been developed by the sociologists John H. Simon and William Gagnon. It highlights the idea that the notion of sexuality is shaped by culture rather than

particular cultural and historical context, reflecting a dominant perception of sexuality and contributing to the maintenance of societal sexual norms. In this context, sex education films reveal much about both contemporary normative notions of sexuality and sex education in East and West Germany, and their maintenance through teaching techniques of self-control.

In this regard, sex education films tried to connect Michel Foucault's two axes of power that define sexuality. For Foucault,

On the one hand it [sexuality] was tied to the disciplines of the body: the harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies. On the other hand, it was applied to the regulation of populations, through all the far-reaching effects of its activity.<sup>16</sup>

As much as sexuality became the 'stamp of individuality', it became 'the theme of political operations, economic interventions (through incitements to or curbs on procreation), and ideological campaigns for raising standards of morality and responsibility'.<sup>17</sup> Foucault regards sexuality as a crucial domain which was 'put forward as the index of a society's strength'.<sup>18</sup> Following these assumptions, it could be argued that mediated sexual knowledge in sex education films reflected sovereign power and its disciplinary measures and represented the interests of the state apparatus. Yet, I argue that the sexual ideals in these films represented multi-layered and mutual power relations that took into account mechanisms lying beyond mere sovereign power and were thus shaped by individuals, peers and interest groups.<sup>19</sup> This notion of mutual influence is crucial in order to understand

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being an innate, biological norm. John H. Gagnon, William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (Aldine: Chicago 1973).

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge*, translated by Robert Hurley (first published in French 1976, Penguin Books: London 1998), p. 145. The first English translation was published in 1978 with Allen Lane and appeared under the title *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*.

<sup>17</sup> Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, p. 146.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> See in particular Michel Foucault, 'Body/Power: Interview with Michel Foucault', in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon (Harvester Press: Brighton 1980), p. 60.

how changes with regard to sexuality, sexual morality and related gender assumptions take place. The context of biopolitics, here understood as a referential network of discourses and practices directed at the governance of the body and sexuality, forms the contextual framework for film analysis (see chapter 2). In pursuit of agendas sex education films helped normalise a certain understanding about sexuality and the body. By means of sexual knowledge and 'sexual scripts' they created a normative link or power relation that connected the broader interests of society with techniques of individual control of the body. As such, sex education films were a normative part of a biopolitical agenda. Sex education films mediate sexual knowledge as well as social norms. They sought to transform the sexual realities and behaviour of young people and thus reflect contemporary notions of what was perceived as sexual problems. Moreover, sex education films bring to the surface ideological projections of what was imagined to be an ideal society at that time. Three themes are central to the discussion of sex education films; biology (chapter 3), sexual morality (chapter 4) and gender (chapter 5). This thesis aims at a comparative mapping of the themes of biology, sexual morality and gender that characterised East and West German sex education films. With reference to a variety of sex education films, I will analyse which body knowledge sex education films mediated. I will particularly pay attention to the filmic means used to impart that knowledge and create power relations; and how this mediated knowledge related to biopolitical interests. I will discuss how the films instilled self-control of the body in two states that differed so much in their political understanding of individual participation and citizenship.

This thesis has diverse strands. It will contribute to a history of sexuality in East and West Germany, and, from the perspective of sex education for the young, give a fresh angle to the growing German historiography of sexuality, thereby strengthening its comparative aspect. How this research relates to a comparative

history of sexuality will be discussed in the following subchapter. In addition, I will challenge a post-World War II German historiography embedded in debates of liberalisation, which often results in positivist evaluations of the 1960s and early 1970s. The aim of the thesis is to provide a research perspective that enables a discussion of the 1960s as a decade of transformation in sexuality and dealings with the body rather than one of sexual liberalisation. While it can be argued that sexuality increasingly became a matter of private concern and more individual choice, I will take into account the consequences of this supposed increase in sexual freedom. By considering normative expectations and peer pressure towards individual responsibility that resulted from greater personal choice in the management of and dealings with ones' own body, I will substantiate my argument using Foucault's concept of biopolitics, which refers to a historical and relational process 'within which "life" emerges as the "object" of political strategies'.<sup>20</sup> Closely connected with the idea of biopolitics is 'governmentality'. Following Foucault, governmentality describes the interplay between the technologies of domination of others and the technologies of the self. Technology of the self being concerned with the internalisation and embodiment of moral principles by individuals.<sup>21</sup>

Drawing on the analytical framework of biopolitics, I will demonstrate how sex education films can serve as an object of comparative study for the analysis of how sex education was envisaged in two ideologically contrasting political systems. In this regard, the thesis also intersects with the history of biopolitics and governmentality.

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Lemke, 'Beyond Foucault: From Biopolitics to the Government of Life', in Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann, Thomas Lemke (eds.), *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges* (Routledge: New York, London 2011), p. 165.

<sup>21</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self', in Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst 1988), p. 19.

Additionally, I aim to make a contribution to the emerging field of historical film studies. By proposing a method drawing particular attention to filmic methods I show these as partly shaping the history of sexuality. Filmic strategies such as editing and mise-en-scène were central elements to the construction of filmic sexual bodies and reveal much about power-relations and how engagement with a visualised sexual body should appear. Finally, my thesis contributes to the history of youth culture. Sex education illustrates how authoritative institutions, including youth journals and magazines, tried to shape juvenile and adolescent sexuality. By offering sexual norms, sex education can be seen as a reaction to prevailing sexual practice. The following subchapter will discuss in more detail how this thesis contributes to the above fields.

### **1.1. History of Sexuality in East and West Germany**

In the past three to four decades, the literature on twentieth century history of sexuality in Germany has grown quickly.<sup>22</sup> A major factor in this expansion came in 1976 with Foucault's *The Will to Knowledge*, the first volume of his trilogy on *The History of Sexuality*. It laid out a radical theory that influenced generations of historians of sexualities. Foucault did not understand sexuality as a 'natural' force repressed by societies, but as something that society created and designed. Sexuality was thus not only de-naturalised but also historicised. Historically speaking, for Foucault, the late eighteenth century marked a turning point insofar as sexuality became a productive reference point for the (secular) state rather than solely for the church. Since then sexuality has had inferences for pedagogy, medicine, and demography, 'to be more exact, sex became a matter that

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Fenimore, 'The Recent Historiography of Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Germany', *Historical Journal* 52, No 3 (2009), pp. 763-779; Edward R. Dickinson, Richard R. Wetzell, 'The Historiography of Sexuality in Modern Germany', *German History* 23, No 3 (2005), pp. 291-305; Dagmar Herzog, 'Syncopated Sex: Transforming European Sexual Cultures', *American Historical Review* 114, No 5 (2009), pp. 1287-1308.

required the social body as a whole'.<sup>23</sup> This understanding of sexuality formed by discourse and practise has offered new fields of investigation. Subsequent research into the history of sexuality has particularly discussed sexuality as a point of amalgamation between broader orders of power relations. As Dickinson and Wetzell point out, 'Foucault gave sexuality a new centrality to political, social, and cultural history'.<sup>24</sup>

For reasons of practicality and brevity I am going to outline some of the historiography of the period from 1945 to 1970. Much of the literature is indebted to the so-called 'sexual revolution' of the late 1960s in West Germany and has yielded manifold explanations, challenged traditional perspectives and offered new interpretations of this period. To explain the significance of West Germany's 'sexual revolution' one strand is concerned with aspects of the politicisation of sexuality. It has taken into account the contributions of the West German New Left movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which sought to transform society by 'liberating' sexuality from its social constraints.<sup>25</sup> Another strand has focused on the commercial side of sexuality, addressing the popularisation and commodification of sexuality through media, and the changing attitudes to sexual morality since the late 1950s.<sup>26</sup> In another perspective, that of marriage

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<sup>23</sup> Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, p. 116.

<sup>24</sup> Dickinson, Wetzell, 'Historiography of Sexuality', p. 292; On the impact of Foucault in the German historiography of sexuality see also Scott Spector, 'Introduction: After The History of Sexuality? Periodicities, Subjectivities, Ethics', in Scott Spector, Helmut Puff, Dagmar Herzog (eds.), *After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies with and beyond Foucault* (Berghahn: New York, Oxford 2012), pp. 1-14.

<sup>25</sup> Massimo Perinelli, 'Longing, Lust, Violence, Liberation: Discourses on Sexuality on the Radical Left in West Germany, 1969-1972', in Scott Spector, Helmut Puff, Dagmar Herzog (eds.), *After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies with and beyond Foucault* (Berghahn: New York, Oxford 2012), pp. 248-281; Uta Poiger, 'Imperialism and Consumption: Two Tropes in West German Radicalism', in Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2006), pp. 161-172.

<sup>26</sup> Sybille Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex nach Deutschland kam: Der Kampf um Sittlichkeit und Anstand in der frühen Bundesrepublik* (Siedler Verlag: München 2011); Steinbacher's study addresses attitudes towards sexuality as a history of morality (Sittengeschichte); Elizabeth Heinemann, *Before Porn was Legal: The Erotica Empire of Beate Uhse* (Chicago UP: Chicago, London 2011); Elizabeth Heinemann, 'The Economic Miracle in the Bedroom: Big Business and Sexual Consumer Culture in Reconstruction West Germany', *Journal of Modern History* 78, No 4

counselling and venereal diseases, Annette Timm, for instance, has been interested in how authoritative institutions tried to police the sexuality of its citizens in East and West Germany. She argues that official sexual politics in tandem with actual sexual behaviour form part of what she assumes as population policy (Bevölkerungspolitik).<sup>27</sup> Abortion and contraception are additional areas, emphasising the changing role of female sexuality as part of a social history of sexuality.<sup>28</sup> Franz X. Eder, Lutz Sauerteig and Annette Miersch have investigated the dissemination of sexual knowledge by researching popular media such as sex advice manuals, youth journals and soft-sex films.<sup>29</sup>

Generational conflict and youth culture is a further area enriching discussions on the history of sexuality. This strand investigates tensions of sexual morality as a

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(2006), pp. 846-877; Franz X. Eder, 'The National Socialists' Healthy Sensuality Succeeded by the American Influence: Sexuality and Media from National Socialism to the Sexual Revolution', *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 15 (2007), pp. 102-130; Dagmar Herzog, "'Sexy Sixties'": Die sexuelle Liberalisierung der Bundesrepublik zwischen Säkularisierung und Vergangenheitsbewältigung', in Christina von Hodenberg, Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Wo "1968" liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2006), pp. 79-112; Herzog, 'Sexual Morality', pp. 371-384.

<sup>27</sup> Annette F. Timm, *Politics of Fertility in Twentieth Century Berlin* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, New York, Melbourne et al. 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Donna Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion in East Germany, 1950-70', *The American Historical Review* 102, No 1(1997), pp. 53-84; Lykke Aresin, 'Schwangerschaftsabbruch in der DDR', in Gisela Staupe (ed.), *Unter anderen Umständen: Zur Geschichte der Abtreibung* (Argon: Berlin 1993), pp. 86-95; Henry P. David, Robert J. McIntyre, *Reproductive Behavior: Central and Eastern European Experience* (Springer: New York 1981); Eva-Maria Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last: Die Pille als weibliche Generationserfahrung in der Bundesrepublik, 1960-1980* (Wallenstein Verlag: Göttingen 2010); Gisela Staupe, Lisa Vieth (eds.), *Die Pille: Von der Lust und von der Liebe* (Berlin: Rowohlt 1996); Robert Jütte, *Contraception: A History* (Polity Press: Cambridge, Malden 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Franz X. Eder, 'Ideale Vergattung – Populärwissenschaftlicher Sexualdiskurs und Bildtechniken der Selbstführung (1910er bis 1960er Jahre)', in: Reiner Keller, Michael Meuser (eds), *Körperwissen* (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden 2011), pp. 129-192; Franz X. Eder, 'Das Sexuelle beschreiben, zeigen und aufführen: Mediale Strategien im deutschsprachigen Sexualdiskurs von 1945 bis Anfang der Siebziger Jahre', Peter-Paul Bänziger, Stefanie Duttweiler, Philipp Sarasin, and Annika Wellmann (eds), *Fragen Sie Dr. Sex! – Ratgeberkommunikation und die mediale Konstruktion des Sexuellen* (Suhrkamp: Berlin 2010), pp. 94-122; Miersch, *Schulmädchen-Report*; Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 123-158; Lutz Sauerteig, 'Junge oder Mädchen – Frau oder Mann? Der heterosexuelle Körper und die Herstellung visueller Selbstverständlichkeiten in der Sexualaufklärung im 20. Jahrhundert', *Werkstatt Geschichte* 47 (2008), pp. 40-60; Lutz Sauerteig, 'Die Herstellung des sexuellen und erotischen Körpers in der westdeutschen Jugendzeitschrift BRAVO in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren', *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 42 (2007), pp. 142-179.

result of the generational divide.<sup>30</sup> Taking the perspective of nudity and pornography, Josie McLellan has demonstrated that in East Germany, the boundary between prohibition and acceptance was somewhat fluid.<sup>31</sup>

In the following section, Dagmar Herzog, Elizabeth Heinemann, Annette Timm, Ulrich Herbert and Josie McLellan's assessments of the post-1945 transformation of East and West Germany's sexual culture will be discussed. While Heinemann and Herbert focus on West Germany, McLellan and Timm suggest an analytical perspective tracing changing attitudes towards sexuality in East Germany. By assessing the potential and limit of these analytical frameworks, I will discuss their suitability for comparative study and suggest a conceptual expansion to biopolitics in order to fully grasp the process of transformation in sex education films in both states.

Herzog opened up a new discussion on the historiography of post-1945 German sexuality. In her 2005 book *Sex after Fascism* she interprets the West German students' movement of 1968 as a failure, especially regarding sexual liberalisation, as it did not bring about political revolution. She also calls for a reinterpretation of the 1950s and the Nazi past as she observes that during the 1950s, conservatives accused the Nazi regime of sexual licentiousness.

However, a decade later, Nazism, together with the 1950s, was portrayed as

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<sup>30</sup> Uta Poiger, 'A New "Western" Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950s', in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2001), pp. 412-427; Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (University of California Press: Berkeley, et al. 2000); Detlef Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen 2006); Detlef Siegfried, "'Don't trust anyone older than 30?'" Voices of Conflict and Consensus between Generations in 1960s West Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, No 4 (2005), pp. 727-744; Dorothee Wierling, 'Generations and Generational Conflicts in East and West Germany', in Christoph Klessmann (ed): *The Divided Past: Rewriting Postwar German History* (Berg Publishers: Oxford, New York 2001), pp. 69-89.

<sup>31</sup> McLellan, 'Even Under Socialism', pp. 218-237; Josie McLellan, 'Visual Dangers and Delights: Nude Photography in East Germany', *Past and Present* 205, No 1 (2009), pp. 143-174; Ina Merkel, 'Die Nackten und die Roten: Zum Verhältnis von Nacktheit und Öffentlichkeit in der DDR', *Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung MKF* 36 (1995), pp. 80-108; Jennifer Evans, 'Seeing Subjectivity: Erotic Photography and the Optics of Desire', in *American Historical Review* 118, No 2 (2013), pp. 430-462.

repressive and prudish. These contrary stances on sexual morality provide the core argument of Herzog's book, reflecting the 'recurrent reconstructions of the memory and meanings of Nazism.'<sup>32</sup> The return to Christian conservative values in the 1950s, Herzog suggests, was a counter-reaction to the secular Nazi state and not its continuity portrayed by the New Left.

Herzog also questions the notion that the sexual liberalisation was a product of the student movement of the 1960s. She suggests that '[...] Nazi policy and practice, for those broad sectors of the populace that were not persecuted, was anything but sexually repressive.'<sup>33</sup> In the midst of multi-layered, complicated, and often contradictory sexual politics, Herzog concludes that 'sexually liberalizing tendencies', i.e. the encouragement of pleasurable sex, were part of Nazi sexual politics.<sup>34</sup>

Fenemore criticises Herzog for 'binary coding' that implies that pro-sex campaigning is associated with a liberal stance, while anti-sex attitudes form part of sexual conservatism. For Fenemore, this reductionist liberal/progressive conservative/repressive classification is simplistic. Instead, he calls for a clearer definition of 'sexual liberalisation', stressing the importance of a complex and contradictory history, as liberal and conservative sexual attitudes co-existed, forming a complicated relationship within sexual politics.<sup>35</sup>

Herzog's idea of sexual liberalisation, characterised by a pro-sex attitude, appears to be based more on a moral position than political understanding. She traces its continuity through Nazi Germany, the GDR and the FRG (Federal

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<sup>32</sup> Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2005), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5; Similarly to Herzog, Franz X. Eder suggests that what has become known as the 'sexual revolution' in the 1960s had its precursors in the pronatalistic orientation of Nazi ideology that had offered all sorts of enticement for pleasurable sex at least to those who were part of the people's community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Eder, 'The National Socialists', pp. 102-130.

<sup>35</sup> Fenemore, 'Recent Historiography of Sexuality', pp. 763-779.

Republic of Germany. The radical nature of her book lies in her attempt to unravel the conventional periodicity in the historiography of twentieth-century Germany, which has tended to highlight the years 1918, 1933, 1945, 1968 and 1989. However, Herzog's categorization of a pro-sex attitude as essentially progressive is problematic as she tends to romanticise sexual morality, particularly in the self-promotion of the GDR, which highlighted the link between sexuality and the progressive nature of Marxism-Leninism.

Recently the historian Elizabeth Heinemann traced West German's sexual liberalisation (1948-1973) through the lens of consumer history. Using the entrepreneur of erotica Beate Rothermund, Heinemann demonstrates how, in the social-Christian conservative climate of the 1950s, it was possible to establish a booming erotica enterprise.<sup>36</sup> Like Herzog, Heinemann questions the established interpretation of sexual liberalisation as only being a phenomenon of the 1960s. However, unlike Herzog, she dismantles conservative and liberal concepts from competing party ideologies. As in Fenemore, Heinemann demonstrates that some conservatives held liberal views and considers diverse facets of liberalism that took shape in the conservative climate of the 1950s.<sup>37</sup> Heinemann understands sexuality as a crucial site for 'learning liberalism' with roots in eighteenth-century bourgeois notions of citizenship.<sup>38</sup> Following Ulrich Herbert's concept of 'liberalism as a learning process', Heinemann suggests that

[...] emotional liberty required not just the political institutions of liberalism but also a population that has internalized notions of pluralism among self-determining individuals. To "learn liberalism" was thus to learn not only new rules of political interaction, but also new rules of social interaction.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Heinemann, *Before Porn*.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-46.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Heinemann provides a nuanced analysis of multi-layered and often opposing factors, all of which (including conservative and progressive ideas) formed part of a gradual process of sexual liberalism in the decades following World War II.

Heinemann's, and indeed Herbert's, assumption of 'learning liberalism' poses a problem for a comparative study of East Germany insofar as their idea of liberalisation and liberal citizenship is exclusively linked to the notion of bourgeois Western democracies. Hence, liberalisation is first and foremost a political idea that assumes a certain degree of autonomy of the citizen as defined by law as well as a form of government that acts as a guarantor rather than a repressor of civil rights. Using an ideological concept such as Heinemann and Herbert's is problematic for comparative study as it is only valid in liberal-democratic countries. As many of these democratic features were absent in the GDR, 'liberalisation as a learning process', as proposed by Herbert, could not take root in East Germany.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, the history of sexuality in East Germany is characterised by equally profound transformation processes.<sup>41</sup> McLellan demonstrates how the SED regime in the GDR shifted from rigid state control to permissive pragmatic sexual politics.<sup>42</sup> This was a result of a change in leadership style, but also, more importantly, by the attitudes of citizens. Like in West Germany, sexual politics in the GDR is best understood, if the agency of citizens is considered to explain changes in style and contents. On the topic of nudism, for instance, McLellan shows how in the 1950s the intent of the SED to ban nudism was opposed by citizens, local

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<sup>40</sup> Ulrich Herbert, 'Liberalisierung als Lernprozeß: Die Bundesrepublik in der deutschen Geschichte – eine Skizze', in Ulrich Herbert (ed.), *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung, 1945-1980* (Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen 2002), p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge UP: Cambridge, New York, Melbourne et al. 2011); Mark Fenimore, *Sex, Thugs, and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2007); See also Poiger, *Jazz*.

<sup>42</sup> McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, pp. 11-12, 208; Paul Betts, *Within Walls: Private Life in the German Democratic Republic* (Oxford UP: Oxford, New York 2010), p. 12.

communities and state authorities, and the ban was ineffective. A decade later, nude swimming had become a fashionable recreational activity, and, by the 1980s there were disproportionately high numbers of nude swimmers compared with other countries.<sup>43</sup> Despite the absence of basic liberal democratic rights, transformation in sexual politics in the GDR was characterised by a dynamic that came 'from below', leading to more autonomy and private choice in sexual matters.<sup>44</sup> Such an assessment not only shows that countries of the former Eastern bloc were far from uniform and their populations not forced into line but, more importantly for the context of the thesis, it hints at the fact that changing attitudes towards sexuality also in the GDR needed to a certain degree the agency and compliance of the populace.

When McLellan asks whether there was a 'sexual revolution' in the GDR, she hints at a dynamic between populace and state leadership that led to a gradual transformation.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to Herzog, McLellan stresses the agency of populace which, she convincingly argues, was a key factor in sexual political change. For her, an East German 'sexual revolution' is a dual process that takes into account citizens' dissatisfaction with, or ignorance of, sexual politics, and the state's response.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Timm highlights the mutual relationship between sex and population policies and personal reproductive choices of individuals. In her view, sexuality represented the 'key battleground between state power and individual rights'.<sup>47</sup> The transformation in sexual politics can thus only be understood within a context of the mutual dependency of populace and policy makers. By asking what these changes consisted of and, more importantly, how they were brought about, one must be careful to avoid generalised assumptions

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<sup>43</sup> Josie McLellan, 'State Socialist Bodies: East German Nudism from Ban to Boom', *Journal of Modern History* 79, No 1 (2007), pp. 48-79.

<sup>44</sup> McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, pp. 208-210.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>47</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, p. 13.

about sexual liberalisation. Consequently the term needs to be understood in an East and West German context.

My thesis, therefore, suggests taking a different angle from a biopolitical perspective to fully grasp changing attitudes towards sexuality and sexual politics in East and West Germany. In order to understand the transformation of East and West German sex education, it is crucial to bear in mind national peculiarities under which it was achieved.<sup>48</sup>

## 1.2. The Framework of Biopolitics

McLellan and Timm provide a useful starting point for tackling this transformation. They appreciate the dependency between society and state that explains transformation. This is similar to Foucault's idea of governmentality representing the effects of a multitude of power-relations, including the forces 'from below' emanating from individuals and sectors of society, rather than being the result of a particular system of government.<sup>49</sup> The state's response to these mutual power-relations is described as biopolitics. Thinking of biopolitics as a relational power-system, Thomas Lemke noted that 'the concept of norm plays a key role', representing 'a relative logic of calculation, measuring, and comparing'.<sup>50</sup> Lemke

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<sup>48</sup> Herzog and McLellan stress the importance for comparative and transnational studies as to better understand the complexity of differences and similarities in the history of sexuality. McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, p. 3; Herzog, 'Syncopated Sex', p. 1295; Dagmar Herzog, 'Sexuality in the Postwar West', *Journal of Modern History* 78, No 1 (2006), pp. 144-171.

<sup>49</sup> Foucault, 'Body/Power', p. 60; Michel Foucault, 'Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity' (Interview with Michel Foucault), in Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984; Vol 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, translated by Robert Hurley and others (edited by Paul Rabinow, first published in French in *Dits et écrits* in 1994, (Allen Lane: London 1997), p. 167; Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago UP: Chicago 1991), pp. 87-104.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York UP: New York, London 2011), pp. 38-39.

uses the term 'normalizing society' to stress that 'the "right" is more and more displaced by the "norm"'.<sup>51</sup>

Drawing on Foucault, Edward Ross Dickinson offers the term 'biopolitics' to describe state measures for policing the wellbeing of its citizens. Biomedical sciences in particular became a defining feature for the model of biopolitics. The 'biologisation of the social' became a fruitful analysis of connections between Darwinist evolutionary theory, eugenics and social welfare as a means of understanding the racist Nazi social engineering project.<sup>52</sup> By questioning the thesis of the German *Sonderweg* (special path), Dickinson suggests that the link between eugenics and totalitarian politics is unconvincing, since it occurred in other countries such as the USA.<sup>53</sup> Dickinson draws an important conclusion for comparative biopolitics in East and West Germany by asserting that

The destructive dynamic of Nazism was a product not so much of a particular modern set of ideas as of a particular modern political structure, one that could realize the disastrous potential of those ideas.<sup>54</sup>

Biopolitics thus becomes a concept describing the interplay between social welfare, demography and sexual politics. For the GDR, Konrad Jarausch makes the case that it was a 'welfare dictatorship'.<sup>55</sup> He uses the term 'welfare dictatorship' to underline the frictions between emancipatory 'welfare state aspirations' and prescriptive 'illiberal paternalist practices' by the SED and calls for a subtle analysis that enables to capture the complexities and contradictions.<sup>56</sup> In a Foucauldian sense, biopolitics shapes the matrix for an

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>52</sup> Edward R. Dickinson, 'Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about "Modernity"', *Central European History* 37, No 1 (2004), p. 3; The sociologist Thomas Lemke resumes a similar argument, see Lemke, *Biopolitics*, pp. 9-15.

<sup>53</sup> Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', pp. 3-20.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> Konrad H. Jarausch, 'Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship', in Konrad H. Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Social-Cultural History of the GDR* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 1999), pp. 47-69.

<sup>56</sup> Jarausch, 'Care and Coercion' (1999), p. 64.

understanding of governmentality, rather than being the product of a particular form of dictatorial government.<sup>57</sup> This approach is thus useful for my thesis as it allows shifts in sexual politics to be explored as multifaceted power regimes rather than as a concerted, unidirectional policy.

In this regard researching sex education films is particularly rewarding as they give rich insights into East and West German sexual cultures and normative notions. Sex education films were located at the interface of a state educational agenda that sought to transform the sexual realities and behaviour of young people. They reveal how self-government was conceived and thus lay open the relationship between the state and individual, reflecting the dynamic process of sexual normalisation.

In the light of biopolitics, sex education represented an instance of mediation reflecting the state's ambitions to persuade people to act appropriately. In doing so, they suggested sexual self-governance. This was not, as philosopher Gilles Deleuze has suggested, unique to post-war Western societies, but also present in East Germany.<sup>58</sup> Sex education films thus functioned as instruments for persuasion and consensus in order to make self-governance effective. The modern belief in achievability, as Dickinson has pointed out, constitutes sex education films as biopolitical instruments of governmentality that connected governmental interests with techniques of self-control.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, sex education

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<sup>57</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979*, edited by Michel Senellart, first published in French 2004 (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke 2010), p. 84; Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics' (1997), pp. 73-74; Michel Foucault, 'The Birth of Biopolitics', in Michel Foucault, *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984; Vol 1: Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow, first published in French in *Dits et écrits* in 1994 (Allen Lane: London 1997), pp. 73-79.

<sup>58</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, translated by Martin Joughin (Columbia UP: New York, Chichester 1995), pp. 177-178; See also Lemke, *Biopolitics*, p. 68; Barry Hindess, 'Liberalism, socialism and democracy: variations on a governmental theme', in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, Nikolas Rose (eds.), *Foucault and political reason: Liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (UCL Press: London 1996), pp. 65-80.

<sup>59</sup> Dickinson asserts that modern social welfare states are shaped by two belief systems. Firstly, it was commonly believed that 'things are doable, anything can be done' which accounted for the

was understood as an instrument for instruction and as a medium for the dissemination of knowledge of the (sexual) body. It functioned as an authoritative instance of mediation, addressing those who were assumed to be in need of sexual knowledge. Changes in sex education can thus only be understood in context.

Film was a key medium in the changes in sexual politics for two reasons; firstly, because film contributed to the so-called 'sex wave'; secondly, because it was influential in the transmission of scientific discourse. In relation to mediated body knowledge, we can understand how biopolitical perceptions manifested themselves in films and what the sources of these considerations were. Taking into account how films mediated sexual knowledge to impart self-technologies, this thesis compares and contrasts the filmic governmentality of body knowledge in East and West Germany.<sup>60</sup> By asking what sex education films reveal about the relationship between the state and the individual, I suggest reading films as social technologies that offered 'sexual scripts' advising young people on their sexuality and bodies. As such, they contributed to a normalisation of sex and sexuality crucial to modern understanding of biopolitics.

### **1.3. Sex Education Films in Context**

Given that the historiography of health films is a relatively new field of enquiry for historians of medicine and sexualities, few systematic approaches are

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many social engineering projects undertaken in areas such as urban planning, public health, social welfare and educational reform. Secondly, modern (sexual) politics predominantly perceived modernity as a force that threatened to destabilize established social norms. The oscillation between these two extremes – 'optimism and the belief in progress, coupled with a sense of profound threat', arguably characterized state population policies in many countries. Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> With regard to malaria and tuberculosis films Gudrun Loehrer has introduced the concept of 'cinematic governmentality' so as to understand how these films induced desires of integrity for underprivileged audiences. Gudrun Loehrer, *Cinematic Governmentality: A Cultural History of Tuberculosis and Malaria Health Films in the United States of the 1940s* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of East London 2009).

available.<sup>61</sup> Robert Eberwein's late 1990's monograph *Sex Ed* can be seen as a pioneering contribution. In an attempt to classify US films on venereal diseases (VD) from 1914 to the early 1980s, he addresses various analytic methods. Whilst the research of the impact of films is one option, the entanglement between medicine, entertainment, technology and governmental authority is another option to understand how films helped shape a particular cultural (historical) gaze.<sup>62</sup> A third concern central to Eberwein's study is how VD films constructed gender roles.<sup>63</sup> The synthesis of these approaches is the location of film within a complex ideological framework.<sup>64</sup> A second important contribution to science films is Timothy Boon's monograph *Films of Fact*. Alongside case-studies of British productions, Boon considers a genealogy of scientific films and television from 1900 to the mid-1960s.<sup>65</sup> It is not merely film and television that is of interest to him but the 'particular historical conditions' under which moving images emerged.<sup>66</sup> For him, science films are 'vehicles of scientific communication'.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Christian Bonah, 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 Films', *Gesnerus* 66 (2009), p. 122; Kelly Loughlin, 'The History of Health and Medicine in Contemporary Britain: Reflections on the Role of Audio-Visual Sources', *Social History of Medicine* 13, No 1 (2000), p. 131; Eric Schaefer, "*Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!*" *A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959* (Duke University UP: Durham, London 1999), p. 9; Timothy Boon, *Films of Fact: A History of Science in Documentary Films and Television* (Wallflower Press: London, New York 2000), p. 1; Uta Schwarz, 'Vom Jahrmarktsspektakel zum Aufklärungsinstrument: Gesundheitsfilme in Deutschland und der historische Filmbestand des Deutschen Hygiene-Museums Dresden', in Susanne Roeßiger, Uta Schwarz (eds.), *Kamera! Licht! Aktion! Filme über Körper und Gesundheit 1915-1990* (Sandstein Verlag: Dresden 2011), p. 12; Anja Laukötter, 'Medien der Sexualaufklärung: Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven', *NTM Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik und Medizin* 20, Vol 3 (2012), p. 226.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Eberwein, *Sex Ed: Film, Video, and the Framework of Desire* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, London 1999), pp. 6-8. On the latter aspect see also Marita Sturken, Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford UP: Oxford, New York et al. 2001); Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, Minnesota 1995).

<sup>63</sup> Eberwein, *Sex Ed*, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Boon, *Films of Fact*, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

For the German context, the edited volume *Kamera! Licht! Aktion!* by Susanne Roeßiger and Uta Schwarz is a compilation of the history of health films produced by the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden from 1915-1990.<sup>68</sup> It gives a long-term overview of a wide range of films, including sex education, produced by one public health institution. Significantly, it contains films produced after 1945 and prepares the ground for ensuing studies. A different picture emerges with regard to the first half of the twentieth century. Scholarly articles by Christian Bonah, Anja Laukötter and Kelly Loughlin (for the British context) have laid out different possibilities for health film inquiry.<sup>69</sup> The 2008 themed issue of *Gesnerus*, edited by Iris Ritzmann, Hans-Konrad Schmutz and Eberhard Wolff has contributions on the topic of “Moving Images: Film in Medicine and Science – Medicine and Science in Film”. The topic of these studies is how, and to what ends, film was instrumentalised in disease prevention and health campaigning. The connection between the German *Kulturfilm* of the Universum Film AG (UFA) and social hygiene institutions such as *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung von Geschlechtskrankheiten* (German Society for the Control of Venereal Diseases) and the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden has raised questions about the entanglement of film and medicine pre and post Weimar Germany (1919-33).<sup>70</sup> In

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<sup>68</sup> Susanne Roeßiger, Uta Schwarz (eds.), *Kamera! Licht! Aktion! Filme über Körper und Gesundheit, 1915-1990* (Sandstein Verlag: Dresden 2011).

<sup>69</sup> Bonah, Laukötter, ‘Moving Pictures and Medicine’, pp. 121-146; Loughlin, ‘History of Health’, pp. 131-145.

<sup>70</sup> Philipp Osten, ‘Emotion, Medizin und Volksbelehrung: die Entstehung des “deutschen Kulturfilms”’, *Gesnerus* 66 (2009), pp. 67-102; Jakob Tanner, ‘Populäre Wissenschaft: Metamorphosen des Wissens im Medium des Films’, *Gesnerus* 66 (2009), pp. 15-39; See also Ulf Schmidt, ‘Sozialhygienische Filme und Propaganda in der Weimarer Republik’, in Dietmar Jazbinsek (ed.), *Gesundheitskommunikation Medieninhalte und Mediennutzung aus der Sicht der Public Health-Forschung* (Westdeutscher Verlag: Wiesbaden 2000), pp. 53-81; Reiner Herr, Christina Brinckmann, ‘Von Ratten und Männern: Der Steinach-Film’, in *montage/av: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation* (themed issue: Gebrauchsfilm 1, 2005), pp. 78-100; Bonah, Laukötter, ‘Moving Pictures and Medicine’, p. 129; Anja Laukötter, ‘“Anarchie der Zellen”: Geschichte und Medien der Krebsaufklärung in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts’, *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 7, No 1 (2010), online edition, <http://www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Laukoetter-1-2010> (last accessed in September 2013); Anita Gertiser, ‘Der Schrecken wohnt im Schönen: Darstellung devianter Sexualität in den Aufklärungsfilmen zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten der

this context, film has been analysed either from an institutional perspective or as the interface between pedagogy, medicine and entertainment. The institutional perspective emphasises the role of film in the popularisation of medical knowledge, whilst the second perspective stresses that films were released in varying formats and editions to attract diverse audiences.<sup>71</sup> Together, all these studies argue that films were not detached from historical context but shaped and were shaped by it. Building upon these studies, my research discusses film as a disseminator of cultural scripts and techniques of self-regulation.

In addition this thesis draws on cultural studies, which emphasise the constitutive character of images within a cultural context. With the 'visual turn', a term associated with the art historian William Mitchell, the status of images (re)gained their status as a valuable historical and cultural source, enriching post-1990s academic debate.<sup>72</sup> Since then historians of medicine, sexualities, science and culture have increasingly considered images as shaping understanding and perception of epistemological knowledge. Academic enquiry has gathered momentum, especially in the field of medical imaging. The objective status of scientific images has been challenged in pursuit of questions on the cultural impact of images and technologies, and perceptions and understanding of the

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1920er-Jahre' (2008), *zeitenblicke* 7, No 3 (2008), online edition, [http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2008/3/gertiser/index\\_html](http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2008/3/gertiser/index_html) (last accessed in September 2013).

<sup>71</sup> Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant-Garde' (1986), in Robert Stam, Toby Miller (eds.), *Film and Theory: An Anthology* (Blackwell Publishers: Malden, Oxford 2000), pp. 229-235; Anita Gertiser, 'Domestizierung des bewegten Bildes: Vom dokumentarischen Film zum Lehrmedium', *montage/av: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation* 15, No 1 (2006), pp. 58-73; Christian Bonah, Alexis Zimmer, "'Le Calvaire du Steinach-Film" (1922-23): Representations du Médecin dans le Film de Recherche et d'Enseignement', *Sociétés & Représentations* 2, No 28 (2009), pp. 87-105; Martin S. Pernick, 'More than Illustrations: Early Twentieth-Century Health Films as Contributors to the Histories of Medicine and of Motion Pictures', in Leslie J. Reagan, Nancy Tomes, Paula A. Treichler (eds), *Medicine's Moving Pictures: Medicine, Health, and Bodies in American Film and Television* (Rochester UP: Rochester 2008), pp. 19-35; Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909-1925* (Routledge: London, New York 1988); Ramón Reichert, *Im Kino der Humanwissenschaften: Studien zur Medialisierung wissenschaftlichen Wissens* (Transcript: Bielefeld 2007); Loehrer, *Cinematic Governmentality*.

<sup>72</sup> William J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago UP: Chicago 1994); Hans-Georg Hofer, Lutz Sauerteig, 'Perspektiven einer Kulturgeschichte der Medizin', *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 41 (2007), p. 127; Laukötter, 'Medien der Sexualaufklärung', p. 225.

body.<sup>73</sup> More importantly, images have been approached from an interactive, inter-medial and contextual perspective, stressing their role in shaping (sexual) knowledge.<sup>74</sup> In this respect, works by historians Lutz Sauerteig and Franz X. Eder are illuminating. In analysing post-war West German and Austrian sex advice literature, they demonstrate that images are powerful devices rather than merely static representations.<sup>75</sup> In highlighting the normalising appeal of sex education images, Eder and Sauerteig show how they communicate meanings of sexuality, reading them as illustrative 'manuals' of assumptions of optimal sexual performance. Using a graphic depiction of orgasm from early to mid-twentieth-century sex education manuals, Eder shows how, alongside changing graphic styles, expectations of male and female orgasms have changed. For him, depictions not only carry changing epistemological knowledge but also act as 'sexual scripts', offering options and interpretations for dealing with sexuality and

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<sup>73</sup> Regula Valerie Burri, *Doing Images: Zur Praxis medizinischer Bilder* (Transcript: Bielefeld 2008); Cartwright, *Screening the Body*; Jose van Dijck, *The Transparent Body: A Cultural Analysis of Medical Imaging* (University of Washington Press: Seattle, London 2005); David Gugerli, 'Soziotechnische Evidenzen: Der 'pictural turn' als Chance für die Geschichtswissenschaft', *Traverse* 18, No 3 (1999), pp. 131-159; Ludmilla Jordanova, 'Medicine and Visual Culture', *Social History of Medicine* 3 (1990), pp. 89-99; Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Beacon Press: Boston 2001); Gugerli, Orland (eds.), *David Gugerli, Barbara Orland (eds.), Ganz Normale Bilder. Historische Beiträge zur visuellen Herstellung von Selbstverständlichkeit* (Chronos Verlag: Zürich 2002); Paula Treichler, Lisa Cartwright, Constance Penley (eds.), *The Visible Woman: Imaging Technologies, Gender, and Science* (New York UP: New York, London 1998); Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (Zone Books: Brooklyn 2007).

<sup>74</sup> Amongst the fast growing corpus of literature on this subject, the following examples are selected according to their particular reference to the (East and West) German context after 1945. Laukötter, 'Medien der Sexualaufklärung', p. 225; Sauerteig, Davidson (eds.), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (Routledge: London, New York 2009), pp. 71-90; Peter-Paul Bänziger, Stefanie Duttweiler, Philipp Sarasin, Annika Wellmann (eds.), *Fragen Sie Dr. Sex! – Ratgeberkommunikation und die mediale Konstruktion des Sexuellen* (Suhrkamp: Berlin 2010); Roeßiger, Schwarz (eds.), *Kamera! Licht! Aktion!*; Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*; Eder, 'The National Socialists', pp. 102-130.

<sup>75</sup> Eder, 'Ideale Vergattung', pp. 129-192; Eder, 'Das Sexuelle beschreiben', pp. 94-122; Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 123-158 Lutz Sauerteig, 'Representations of Pregnancy and Childbirth in West German Sex Education Books, 1900s-1970s', in Lutz Sauerteig, Roger Davidson (eds.), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (Routledge: London, New York 2009), pp. 129-160; Sauerteig, 'Junge oder Mädchen', pp. 40-60; Sauerteig, 'Die Herstellung des sexuellen und erotischen Körpers', pp. 142-179. See in addition William A. Gamson et al., 'Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality', *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992), pp. 373-393.

bodies.<sup>76</sup> For Sauerteig, the performative character of images is central to their understanding. It allows the analysis of images as social technologies conveying expectations and attitudes towards body performances.<sup>77</sup> Eder and Sauerteig provide a fertile approach for the historical study of images, since they not only offer a historical contextualisation of images but consider them as forming and constituting part of sex education discourse.

An inter-medial and inter-discursive approach to films has potential. Films, like images, are not mere illustrations but constitute knowledge and, are closely related to the cultural environment in which they are produced, consumed and circulated. Films and images modify, regulate and normalise sexuality. With this in mind, I will argue that sex education films are instruments of governmentality of sexuality and the body and, as such, not only shape contemporary biopolitics but embody techniques of governmentality. In order to understand the specifics of film in context, a biopolitical framework will be expanded within a filmic analysis.

#### **1.4. Film Analysis**

The approach of US media scholars David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson is a useful starting point for film analysis. Their focus is on the identification of film structure.<sup>78</sup> Bordwell and Thompson are primarily concerned with how film style communicates ideas and themes. Considering lighting, camera angles, sound, mise-en-scène and editing, their neo-formalist film theory analyses how a specific style and message is created in order to effect viewers. Their method is the identification of principles that make a set of recorded moving images into a film.

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<sup>76</sup> Eder, 'Ideale Vergattung', p. 130; Eder, 'Das Sexuelle beschreiben', pp. 94-122.

<sup>77</sup> See particularly Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 123-158; Sauerteig, 'Representations' (2009), pp. 129-160; Sauerteig, 'Junge oder Mädchen', pp. 40-60; Sauerteig, 'Die Herstellung des sexuellen und erotischen Körpers', pp. 142-179.

<sup>78</sup> David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (McGraw-Hill, New York 2001).

Bordwell and Thompson provide a set of analytical tools that are suitable for historical film studies. A weakness in historical film studies is its concentration on production relations, institutions involved in education film realisation, and occasionally, reception,<sup>79</sup> however, Bordwell's and Thompson's approach has the potential to take the broader meaning of film and its filmic means stronger into account. They see film not as a random collection of elements but assume that underlying patterns allow viewers to perceive it as a whole from beginning to end, as, if this was not the case, they would not care if they missed parts of it. Their approach is to identify formal patterns that govern the relation between single parts of the film and engage viewers. Bordwell and Thompson call these patterns the film form.<sup>80</sup> The viewer in their analytical model is considered to be an 'implied reader'<sup>81</sup> whose engagement occurs on different levels of the creation of meaning.<sup>82</sup> Bordwell and Thompson's conceptualisation of the viewer has been criticised for its rejection of individual perception, reception and interpretation.<sup>83</sup> However, it is a worthy starting point given the difficulties in analysing subjective filmic perception due to a lack of individual statements and ego-documents addressing film experience. There is barely any evidence on how students perceived sex education films. Occasionally, correspondence and case studies of

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<sup>79</sup> See for instance Eberwein, *Sex Ed*; Ondine Godtschalk, 'A Picture of Health? New Zealand-made Health Education Films 1952-1962', *Social History of Medicine* 25, No 1 (2012), pp. 122-138; Loehrer, *Cinematic Governmentality*; Schaefer, *Bold! Daring!*; Schwarz, 'Helga', pp. 197-213.

<sup>80</sup> Bordwell, Thompson, *Film Art*, pp. 38-57.

<sup>81</sup> The idea of the implied reader was developed by Wolfgang Iser in an attempt to substitute the real reader. The implied reader designates an imaginary recipient, the author has in mind while writing. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Johns Hopkins UP: Baltimore 1974).

<sup>82</sup> Bordwell and Thompson distinguish between four types of meanings the viewer would engage in his/her interpretation of a film: the referential meaning (within a film), the explicit meaning (verbal indication), the implicit meaning (themes that are not verbally or diegetically expressed) and repressed/symptomatic meaning (describes meanings which are assumed to be at odds with the other three types of meanings). See David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 1989), pp. 8-9; Kristin Thompson, 'Neoformalistische Filmanalyse', in Franz-Josef Albersmeier (ed.), *Texte zur Theorie des Films* (Reclam: Stuttgart [1979] 2001), pp. 414-417.

<sup>83</sup> For a theoretical consideration on how to overcome the gap between filmic meaning and individual reception, see Eef Masson, *Watch and Learn: Rhetorical Devices in Classroom Films after 1940* (Amsterdam UP: Amsterdam 2012).

educators experiences of using sex education films, or questionnaires distributed after the screening can be retrieved. However, such source material is rare.

My research therefore neither addresses the extent to which sex education films affected young viewers, nor whether they triggered changes in their sexual behaviour. Thus, how the sexual scripts offered were individually received, modified and adapted cannot be answered. Having said that, it is assumed that the sexual scripts represented powerful norms, insofar as ignoring them had social consequences.<sup>84</sup>

My thesis looks at filmic strategies employed in order to evoke desired learning effects. Educational films, in contrast to feature films, aim at optimal impact to trigger normalising effects. Therefore filmic devices are used to maximise understanding. In doing so, the filmic form is understood as carrying and connecting biopolitical discourses and prerequisites that determined sex education. As such, filmic means can be read as part of a broader cultural setting, aiming at guiding sexual norms that were deemed important at the time.

Content and style, including techniques of mediation, connect to larger discourses. The encoded filmic body knowledge is hence informed by an interaction of popular and specialised medical, didactical, biological and legal approaches.<sup>85</sup> Film advisors, directors, medical experts, pedagogues, educators and public health institutions are social actors who inform sex education films. The representation of the body is thus not passive or given, but a result of negotiation over image meaning and production. Therefore, moving images are

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<sup>84</sup> Sauerteig, 'Die Herstellung des sexuellen und erotischen Körpers', p. 148.

<sup>85</sup> Reiner Keller, 'Analysing Discourse: An Approach from Sociology of Knowledge', *Forum Qualitative Social Research/Qualitative Sozialforschung* 6, No 3 (2005), online edition, <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs> (last accessed in Jan 2012); Reiner Keller, *Wissenssoziologische Diskursanalyse: Grundlegung eines Forschungsprogrammes* (Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, 2005), pp. 224-247.

not neutral but reflect the power and the point of view of negotiators.<sup>86</sup> My approach therefore is to read films and their filmic means as part of a meaningful process intertwined with the creation of normative body knowledge and techniques of self-control, to demonstrate how they shaped part of the biopolitical agendas in East and West Germany.

## **1.5. Outline**

This introduction set out the theoretical and methodological foundations for a comparative study of sex education films. Building on the concept of biopolitics, chapter 2 will provide an overview of institutional and social contexts. The main discursive strands and historic events that shaped the biopolitics in East and West Germany between 1945 and 1970 and their changing emphasis will be considered. By comparing the shifts in sexual politics in East and West Germany, I will argue that despite decisive differences in policing the sexual body, common features can be derived, especially with regard to self-determination of the private sexual sphere. In addition, I will demonstrate how educationalists adapted recurring biopolitical themes and utilised them to promote sex education. Subsequently I will scrutinise how, through the support of a number of medical and pedagogical experts, the core themes of biology, sexual morality and gender were represented.

The remaining three chapters take biology, sexual morality and gender and their application to filmic means as a starting point for film analysis. I will discuss in chapters 3 to 5 how biological, moral and gendered knowledge was imparted, what types of filmic techniques were employed and which ideas of self-regulation emerged. The three strands will be discussed separately, each in a single

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<sup>86</sup> In relation to images see Gamson et al., 'Media Images', p. 374.

chapter. This separation serves structural and analytical purposes. Within the films themselves, however, they are usually intertwined.

In chapter 3, focusing on biological body knowledge I will show how bio-medical ideas were translated into sexual norms and the extent to which scientific knowledge about bodily processes rendered social knowledge. By tracing the genealogy of the relationship between film and scientific practice, the normative function of biological body images can be understood.

Chapter 4 will discuss how events in the 1960s in East and West Germany affected sexual morality. An in-depth analysis of two sex education films, the East German film *Partner* (1965)<sup>87</sup> and the West German film *Helga* (1967)<sup>88</sup>, will demonstrate how they sought to negotiate moral boundaries. The special position these films hold is evident in the way they responded to the changing environment of the 1960s by introducing protagonists as autonomous and self-guided individuals.

Chapter 5 will re-address biological and moral issues. With regard to how gendered knowledge was presented, several strategies will be discussed. Biological knowledge was aimed at concealing gendered assumptions in favour of highlighting the nature of sexual difference, and morality was closely intertwined with guidance on social roles of sexual conduct. In addition, this chapter will exemplify how strands of body knowledge were mutually dependent and created distinct views of gender roles in East and West Germany.

Finally, in the conclusion, I will summarise the similarities and differences between East and West German approaches and how these relate to the understanding of biopolitics.

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<sup>87</sup> Götz Oelschlägel, *Partner* (1965).

<sup>88</sup> Erich F. Bender, *Helga: Vom Werden menschlichen Lebens* (1967).

## 1.6. Sources, Gaps and Methodological Challenges

Ephemeral films such as sex education films were produced for non-commercial purposes and thus are not part of mainstream cinema. They are often referred to as 'orphan films', meaning that they have not received much attention from research communities.<sup>89</sup> Whether this is the result of the marginalised academic interest, or the fact that they have not been archived systematically, the identification and retrieval of relevant films is reliant on several sources. Historic and contemporary filmographies (including online databases) registering contemporary sex education films for the research period are scarce and incomplete, although it seems that in recent years interest has grown. For instance, the online database filmarchives-online (<http://www.filmarchives-online.eu>) was the result of the European MIDAS project (Moving Images Database for Access and Re-use of European Film Collections), a project that was carried out between 2006 and 2009 by eighteen European institutions and film archives under the leadership of the German Film Institute (Deutsches Filminstitut) in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden. It catalogues film archives across Europe with a focus on non-fictional films such as newsreels, advertising, documentary, educational, scientific, industrial, sport, and experimental and animation films. Film productions of institutions such as the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden (Deutsches Hygienemuseum, DHM) and the Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, BZgA) are catalogued and most copies preserved. This is most likely due to the fact that national health and educational institutions are interested in the preservation of their own history. However, sex education films were not always part of institutional campaigns, which is why only little is known about the production contexts of some, including directors and cast. What is relatively well

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<sup>89</sup> Masson, *Watch and Learn*, p. 14.

documented, however, is the involvement of medical, scientific and pedagogic professionals in their production.

Current *Landesbildstellen*, local film distribution services for educational purposes, sometimes store historical films, mostly available in 16 and 35mm. Cost cutting in recent years, however, has resulted in the merging of *Landesbildstellen* and forced them to dispose of outdated films due to lack of space. Likewise, the FWU (Institut für Film in Wissenschaft und Unterricht) handed their archival material over to the national *Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv* in Berlin, where it is in the process of being catalogued and not yet fully accessible. These initiatives reflect a growing interest in the preservation of these types of film. It can thus be expected that, with improved availability, the research on ephemeral movies will increase.

Having said that, sex education films are such utility films. Given the accumulation of varying features; i.e. variation in duration, topics, film aesthetics and visual techniques, sex education films are not a film genre as such. Their purpose of use is their common feature. In search of relevant sex education films, I considered films produced for the purpose of school sex education and targeted a young audience. The production of these films usually occurred on educational mandate and it was clear from the beginning of the production process that the films were meant to be used in schools. Films that pedagogues deemed of important educational value form a further category in the identification of sex education films. Recommendations by educators of additional films reveal shortcomings in school sex education at that time and also give indications as to how changing concepts about sex education necessitated different kinds of films. Hence, the context of sexual pedagogy is a crucial site for the discussion of sex education films in an East and West German context. This focus on sex education films automatically excluded a number of other films that also could

have been considered.<sup>90</sup> Medical films, for instance, used to train an expert audience are not part of the thesis, unless their circulation went beyond scientific training, formed part of the school curriculum. Also popular sex and sex education films, the boundaries between sex and education films are somewhat fluid, have been marginalised to the extent that many of such feature films targeted an adult audience only.

Since no complete compilations of films are available, the consultation of various sources was indispensable. The identification of sex education films between 1945 and 1970 mostly relies on online-databases, as mentioned above, but also recommendations published in pedagogic journals, informing teachers about their availability, this being a time when sex education became a mandatory school subject. Luckily, these recommendations contain titles produced in prior decades which continued to be distributed in the 1960s and thus give insights into which films continued in circulation for decades. Further invaluable historical sources are school curricula. Some of them annotate film titles on the specific subject areas they should be used. Production plans of film studios and film distribution lists of local film distribution services form a further category to identify relevant sex education films.

Although I cannot guarantee to provide a complete list of films that were available in East and West Germany, my filmography gives a representational overview of topics and themes, styles and contents that allow the identification of key themes. I have identified some forty films. The majority of them deal with biological aspects of sexuality, while emotional accounts during puberty, the discussion of

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<sup>90</sup> For popular film productions, the following publications provide useful tools for the identification of film titles. Peter Pleyer, *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm, 1946-1948* (Verlag C. J. Fahle: Münster 1965), pp. 428-476; Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde (ed.), *Katalog der deutschen Kultur- und Dokumentarfilme, 1945-1952*, Vol 1 – Vol 2 (Wiesbaden 1953-1954); Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, DEFA-Stiftung (eds.), *Ausländische Spiel- und abendfüllende Dokumentarfilme in den Kinos der SBZ/DDR, 1945-1966* (Berlin 2001), pp. 330-372; Alfred Bauer, *Deutscher Spielfilm-Almanach, 1929-1950* (Winterberg: Berlin 1950).

teenage pregnancy and partner choice are some examples that characterises the variety of sex education themes. Furthermore, the filmography lists some additional films which I use for contextualisation.

The difficulties in retrieving films and related materials have led to various changes and adaptations until I settled with my final structure. Initially, I intended to get hold of as many film copies as possible in order to discuss the variety of sex education films that were available at that time. The acquisition of digitised film copies of 15mm and 30mm films, yet, posed a challenge with films not fully restored, films missing and copyright issues not clarified. Hence, my choice of films for the analysis was determined by their availability on the one hand and by analytical decisions on the other. Among the titles retrieved three major themes prominently feature in sex education: biology, morality and gender. Biological knowledge about the body, forming the biggest share of films, came along with guidance on sexual moral behaviour and social roles of manhood and womanhood. Alongside these three themes, I discuss representative films for each of the strands by looking at how sex education films enacted technologies of the self and how these formed part of a sex education discourse. Apart from the films, archival material covering the production context has been considered. Primary sources include booklets which were intended to guide teachers on film use. These give an insight into contemporary views on usability and reflect didactic film concepts. Production orders, notes of authorisation, film scripts, and correspondence between film directors, advisory boards and commissioning institutions frame the environment from which the films emerged. These are valuable materials which, in particular, are used for tracing how the creation of cinematographic body images was negotiated during preliminary stages. Contemporary pedagogic, cinematographic, and youth journals as well as sex education books for young people form a further category of relevant sources.

These materials allow an assessment of films within the broader cultural context of sex and sex education. Contemporary pedagogic literature and school curricula are immensely valuable sources to retrieve relevant film titles. It was uncommon for schools to annotate syllabi with recommended teaching tools. However, some contained titles and therefore give indications on the specific subject area where films were available. Historical pedagogic literature sometimes list sex education media, and more importantly, include descriptions of plots and evaluation and occasionally give pedagogical advice. These sources are therefore immensely important for contextualisation.

Given that there are numerous possibilities of how sex education films in their historical contexts can be approached, a limit to scope and focus is inevitable. As a result films dealing with sexual abuse and paedophilia such as *Augen auf, Peter* (Watch out, Peter, before 1968)<sup>91</sup> and *Der Mann mit den Bonbons* (Man with Sweets, 1967)<sup>92</sup> have been excluded, since East German sex education in this time period seems silent on these issues. My focus on films, over others which might equally be claimed to have shaped contemporary biopolitical interests, is primarily due to their availability which allowed for multiple viewings. In addition, their overlapping themes enabled a comparison of how East and West German films negotiated the same issues.

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<sup>91</sup> Herbert M. Franck, *Augen auf, Peter: Warnung von Kindern vor Sittlichkeitsverbrechen* (before 1968).

<sup>92</sup> Mario Reinhardt, *Der Mann mit den Bonbons* (1967).

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## 2. Historical Context: Sexuality, Sex Education and Films in East and West Germany, 1945-70

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An analysis of the social application of sex education films will inevitably fall short if not considered within a broader social context. This is all the more true for this study as it investigates sex education films in two distinctive political systems.

Sex education films, like most ephemeral films,<sup>1</sup> hardly claim high artistic aspirations but are instruments for regulating sexuality. They instruct on how to remedy perceived shortcomings in sexual manners and how sexual knowledge was meant to be applied in order to attain broader goals of sexual politics. Films therefore reveal the trajectories of what was perceived as an ideal society at the time.

Yet, as Timm and McLellan have demonstrated, sexual politics needed the compliance of the populace and the agency of the populace that bring about change in sexual politics.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, sexual politics has to be understood as an adjustment in reaction to sexual practices and alignment towards ideals of the state. Sexual politics is characterised by an entanglement of concurrency of traditional norms and political visions and sexual practices. In consideration of this mutual entanglement, sex education films, although firmly posited at the side of political visions, are understood as a reaction to contemporary sexual issues. In this way, sex education films were biopolitical instruments, representing the normative aspects within a contradictory field between social realities, political ideas and popular sentiments. In order to position sex education films in context it

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<sup>1</sup> Ephemeral movies describe non-fictional films usually produced for made for educational, industrial, or promotional purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*.

is therefore necessary to explore the main trajectories in East and West German sexual politics between 1945 and 1970.

Historiography on sexuality widely agrees that during the 1960s a shift in public dealings with sexuality can be discerned. The interpretation of these events, however, is much less clear. Where some consider a radical sexual revolution, others stress the continuity of changing attitudes resulting from increased consumerism. The scholarship which regarded the 1960s as a political reaction interpret the 'the long 1950s' corresponding with the leadership of Christian conservative chancellor Konrad Adenauer (1949-1963) as a decade that saw the restoration of Christian morality and family values. The mid to the late 1960s, in this interpretations is primarily thought of a political reaction to old sexual mores and values which led to the 'sexual revolution'.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars working from a perspective of consumer culture such as Hanna Schissler and Christina von Hodenberg, however, have made a case for the continuities of 1950s and 1960s.<sup>4</sup> By highlighting a gradual build-up of consumerism and popular media dissemination, in this interpretation the emphasis for sexual liberalisation is laid on 'the long 1960s'. This strand takes the 1950s economic growth (Wirtschaftswunder) as laying the foundations for the growing availability of popular journals, fashion and films as well as sex toys and contraceptives, which facilitated West Germany's sexual liberalisation.<sup>5</sup> Both

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert, 'Liberalisierung', pp. 7-49; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*; Herzog, 'Sexual Morality', pp. 371-384; Lammers, Schildt, Siegfried (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten*; See also Massimo Perinelli on sexuality and the left-wing movement in West Germany. Perinelli, 'Longing', pp. 248-281.

<sup>4</sup> Christina von Hodenberg, 'Mass Media and the Generation of Conflict: West Germany's Long Sixties and the Formation of a Critical Public Sphere', *Contemporary European History* 15, No 3 (2006), pp. 367-395; Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years*; Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Wo "1968" liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: Göttingen 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Eder, 'The National Socialists', pp. 102-130; Heinemann, *Before Porn*; Hodenberg, 'Mass Media', pp. 367-395; Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years*; Mathias Frese, Julia Paulus, 'Geschwindigkeiten und Faktoren des Wandels – die 1960er Jahre in der Bundesrepublik', in Mathias Frese, Julia Paulus, Karl Teppe (eds.), *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch: Die sechziger Jahre als Wendezeit der Bundesrepublik* (Ferdinand Schöningh: Paderborn 2003),

interpretations accept the 1960s as a watershed in the history of the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany). This period, with its changing attitudes to sexuality, is sometimes considered as the 'second founding' of the Federal Republic.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, historiography on sexuality in the GDR between 1945 and 1970 provides different interpretations to explain a shifting emphasis in sexual politics. Mark Fenemore links the appearance of increased discussions about youth sexuality to political circumstances, stressing that the 'period of thaw' (Taufwetterperiode), especially in 1956 and between 1961 and 1965, allowed for more liberal ideas in matters of sexuality, while at the same time young people came to be seen as a threat to socialist society, and were accused of Western behaviour.<sup>7</sup> To him, liberal attitudes came along with prescriptive measures by the SED in attempt to suppress supposedly 'imperialist' influences on the young.<sup>8</sup> The historian Alan McDougall, for example, uses the term 'liberal' to describe the GDR's brief flirtation with a partly decentralised market economy during the phase of the new economic policy (1963-1965). To him, official discussions on how to make the GDR an attractive proposition to young people coincided with the economic reform in an attempt to overcome the lasting economic effects of

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pp. 1-23; With reference to West German culture more generally, Axel Schildt and Detlef Siegfried distinguished two phases during 'the long 1960s': a dynamic era spanning from 1957/58 to 1965 and an era of transformation from 1966 to 1973. Compare Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, *Deutsche Kulturgeschichte: Die Bundesrepublik 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Carl Hanser Verlag: Bonn 2000); Detlef Siegfried, 'Weite Räume, schneller Wandel: Neuere Literatur zur Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte der 60er Jahre in Westdeutschland', *Historische Literatur* 1, No 1 (2003), pp. 7-34.

<sup>6</sup> Hodenberg, 'Mass Media', pp. 367-368; see also Herzog, 'Sexual Morality', pp. 375-376.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Fenemore, 'The Growing Pains of Sex Education in the GDR, 1945-69', in Lutz Sauerteig, Roger Davidson (eds.), *Shaping Sexual Knowledge: A Cultural History of Sex Education in Twentieth Century Europe* (Routledge: London, New York 2009), pp. 71-90.

<sup>8</sup> Fenemore, 'Recent Historiography of Sexuality', pp. 763-779; see also, Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, pp. 142-152; Poiger, *Jazz*; Michael Rauhut, 'DDR-Beatmusik zwischen Engagement und Repression', in Günter Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965* (Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag: Berlin 1991), pp. 52-63.

mass emigration.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, McLellan proposes that 'sexual evolution from above needs to be understood alongside the revolution from below'.<sup>10</sup>

This overview shows that historiography on East and West Germany identifies a turning point around the 1960s, insofar as in both societies changes became visible with regard to attitudes towards sexuality. In addition to the question as to the factors that lay behind this shift, this chronological correspondence raises the question given the diverse interpretations as to whether the changes can be compared in these different political and ideological systems. I propose that understanding the processes of transformation as primarily 'liberal', runs the risk of missing out the manifold concurrent and reverse processes that shaped sexual politics. What is needed for comparison is a common analytical ground. As outlined in chapter 1, I suggest using biopolitics as a comparative tool, allowing an assessment of East and West German sexual politics during the 1960s as a strategic adjustment to actual sexual behaviour. Contrary to the historiographical assessment of this period, which understood the 1960s as a decisive breach with preceding sexual value systems, the continuity of modern biopolitical principles remained valid for both German states.<sup>11</sup> The entanglement of demography, reproduction and the economisation of the population continued to function as valid coordinates to measure a 'society's strength'.<sup>12</sup> The 1960s therefore saw a strategic adjustment in sexual politics characterised by an increasing reliance on

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<sup>9</sup> Alan McDougall, *Youth Politics in East Germany: The Free German Youth Movement, 1946-1968* (Clarendon Press: Oxford 2004), p. 11; On the aspect of mass exodus, see Patrick Major, 'Going West: The Open Border and the problem of *Republikflucht*', in Patrick Major, Jonathan Osmond (ed.), *The Workers' and the Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945-1971* (Manchester UP: Manchester, New York 2002), pp. 190-208; Corey Ross, 'Before the Wall: East Germans, Communist Authority, and the Mass Exodus to the West', *The Historical Journal* 45, No 2 (2002), pp. 459-480.

<sup>10</sup> McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', pp. 1-4; Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasemann, Thomas Lemke, 'From Foucault's Lectures at the Collège de France to Studies of Governmentality: An Introduction', in Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasemann, Thomas Lemke (eds.), *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges* (Routledge: New York, London 2011), p. 7; Hindess, 'Liberalism, socialism', pp. 65-80; Timm, *Politics of Fertility*.

<sup>12</sup> Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, p. 146; See also Hindess, 'Liberalism, socialism', pp. 65-80.

technologies of the self.<sup>13</sup> Thus, sexual politics emphasised self-control over state control. It took shape in the form of persuasion rather than coercion, which made compliance necessary.

In the first subchapter, I will scrutinise similarities and differences in East and West German sexual politics. By comparing maternity protection, abortion law and access to contraception, I will discuss how East and West Germany tried to police their citizens. I will demonstrate how the relationship between state and individual was re-defined in favour of increased self-control. According to Dickinson, this biopolitical shift towards an inclusion of private choice was,

a matter of increasing importance whether the average person was more or less educated and informed, more or less moral and self-disciplined, more or less healthy and physically capable, more or less socially competent.<sup>14</sup>

Sex education provided Dickinson's implied guidance, as it mediated sexual knowledge and established a normative framework for young people. However, more individual choice in sexual matters did not mean that young people were free to do as they pleased. Rather the demand to take responsibility for themselves brought with it new norms. This becomes apparent with regard to sex education. In the second subchapter I will scrutinise how sex educators targeted young people with normative concepts of sexuality, so as to regulate sexual conduct and promote stable family structures. In the third subchapter, the production context of films will be considered in order to demonstrate how they were embedded in state structures and thus can be understood as biopolitical tools.

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<sup>13</sup> Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self', pp. 16-49.

<sup>14</sup> Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', p. 46.

## 2.1. State, Society and Sexuality, 1945-70

World War II left Germany with hunger, scattered families, a surplus of women, and high rates of VD. Sexual politics in the post-war years were characterised by measures to reduce sexually transmitted diseases, promote an equal ratio of men and women and raise fertility rates.<sup>15</sup> Policymakers believed that high fertility rates were crucial for population policy (*Bevölkerungspolitik*).<sup>16</sup> However, these measures were carefully set so as to be distinct from those of the Nazi regime.<sup>17</sup> Although the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei) tried to assert its power in what Jürgen Kocka and Alf Lüdtke have described as a ‘thoroughly dominated society’ (*durchherrschte Gesellschaft*)<sup>18</sup>, the means by which biopolitics sought to increase birth rates, were not that dissimilar from other (Western) European countries, including West Germany.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> This trend is not restricted to the East and West German context but reflected across Europe and also in Soviet Russia at that time. See Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge UP: Cambridge, New York, Melbourne et al. 2011), pp. 100-101.

<sup>16</sup> Historians, amongst them Detlef Peukert, Cornelia Usborne, Atina Grossmann and Dickinson emphasise the connection of welfare, family and abortion policies between Weimar and Nazi Germany, by highlighting the states’ *modern* aspirations as the connecting factor. An opposing view, however, is presented by Michelle Mouton. To her, Weimar family policy came to a halt with the seizure of Nazi power in 1933. From then, family policy became an instrument for racial politics with new discussions and discourses emerging. For references see: Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (Penguin: London 1993); Cornelia Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties* (Macmillan: London 1992); Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform, 1920-1950* (Oxford UP: Oxford, New York et al. 1995); Michelle Mouton, *From nurturing the nation to purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi family policy* (Cambridge UP: Cambridge, New York et al. 2007).

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough discussion of population policy in Germany in post-1945 see specially the conclusion in Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 319-331.

<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Kocka, ‘Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft’, in Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart 1994), pp. 547-553; Alf Lüdtke, ‘“Helden der Arbeit” – Mühen beim Arbeiten: Zur mißmutigen Loyalität von Industriearbeitern in der DDR’, Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart 1994), p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2007), pp. 153-154.

### 2.1.1. Sexual Politics during the 1950s

As Timm has demonstrated, in the 1950s, a number of pieces of legislation were directed at promoting the health of mothers.<sup>20</sup> In 1950, the East German *Law for the Protection of Mother and Child and the Rights of Women* (Gesetz über den Mutter- und Kinderschutz und die Rechte der Frau) was passed guaranteeing child allowances, access to health centres, and maternity leave. In 1952, in West Germany the *Law for the Protection of Mothers* (Mutterschutzgesetz) introduced regulations to protect working women. They were guaranteed maternity leave before and after childbirth, and employers were not allowed to dismiss them up to four months after giving birth. In addition, the law prohibited heavy physical labour as well as night and contract work during pregnancy.<sup>21</sup> Both laws were concerned with the health of pregnant women and included incentives to encourage women to have children.

These incentives, however, came alongside with more restrictive measures concerning abortion and contraceptives. In East Germany, discussing family planning and contraception consultation with medical experts in counselling clinics was necessary to obtain contraceptives.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the uneven availability of contraceptives such as condoms, diaphragms and spermicides contributed to, as Harsch put it, a “negative” pronatalism’ which ‘was less expensive than positive incentives’.<sup>23</sup> The absence of public discussion on

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<sup>20</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 257-318.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed discussion about the lengthy debates of the *Law for the Protection of Mothers* see chapter 5 in Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (California UP: Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1993), pp. 142-179.

<sup>22</sup> On the development of marriage counselling services see Lykke Aresin, ‘Ehe- und Sexualberatungsstellen und Familienplanung in der DDR’, in Joachim S. Hohmann (ed.), *Sexuologie in der DDR* (Dietz Verlag: Berlin 1991), pp. 71-94; Lykke Aresin herself played an important role as marriage counsellor in the GDR. See also Erik Huneke, ‘Sex, Sentiment, and Socialism: Relationship Counseling in the GDR in the Wake of the 1965 Family Law Code’, in Scott Spector, Helmut Puff, Dagmar Herzog (eds.), *After The History of Sexuality: German Genealogies With and Beyond Foucault* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2012), pp. 231-247.

<sup>23</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, p. 143; Katharina von Ankum, ‘Political Bodies: Women and Re/Production in the GDR’, *Women in German Yearbook* 9 (1993), p. 133; For contemporary

contraception in the 1950s indicates that contraceptives were seen as potentially disruptive of the political aim of high fertility rates.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly in West Germany contraceptives often came to be seen with suspicion due to their detrimental effects on fertility rates. Some Christian conservative representatives even saw the institution of marriage as being threatened by free access to contraception.<sup>25</sup> In her book on the erotic empire *Beate Uhse*, Heinemann describes how, in the 1950s, the entrepreneur Beate Rothermund faced court hearings where she was accused of distributing condoms to unmarried couples.<sup>26</sup> The siting of condom vending machines in public places triggered discussions on whether this consumerist approach corrupted the morality of youth and led to promiscuity.<sup>27</sup> When the contraceptive pill became available in the early 1960s in West Germany, physicians and gynaecologists initially were asked to only distribute contraceptive pills to women with two or more children.<sup>28</sup> In East Germany, during the 1950s, access to contraceptives was not a matter of private choice, but depended on the consent of physicians. They, however, often only gave their consent if a person's health or the health of the family were threatened.<sup>29</sup> At first sight, it might seem a peculiar concept to tie family wellbeing to the use of contraceptives. This, however, becomes clearer when the relation between morality and medicine at the time is considered. As public access to contraceptives was stigmatised as immoral, physicians came to play a crucial role in their distribution. By stressing that the distribution of condoms and the contraceptive pill helped stabilise marriages, and did not leave

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testimonies on the limited access of contraceptives in the GDR see also McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, pp. 60-64; Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>24</sup> Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion', p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 122-128.

<sup>26</sup> Heinemann, *Before Porn*, pp. 53-54; Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 242-267.

<sup>27</sup> Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, p. 123.

<sup>28</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 122-123.

couples with fear of unwanted pregnancy, physicians served as legitimising forces.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the abortion law in the 1950s, similar restrictions were in place. In the GDR, the 1950 abortion law confined the legal grounds for abortion to medical and eugenic reasons. While in the late 1940s medical, social and ethical reasons had allowed abortion, in 1950 it was only permitted if the life of the pregnant woman was threatened, or if one parent suffered from a heritable condition.<sup>31</sup> Harsch considers two factors in explaining why the abortion law was narrowed. Firstly, as a result of pressure from the Soviet Union, which had banned abortion in 1936, the SED was obliged to revoke its abortion law. Secondly, East German gynaecologists and physicians, who predominantly championed a tighter definition of the abortion law, influenced legislation.<sup>32</sup> Atina Grossmann offers a different interpretation to explain the restrictions on abortion in East Germany. She points to the similarities between the East and West German abortion law. During the 1950s, abortion in West Germany was also restricted to medical and eugenic cases.<sup>33</sup> For her, such similarities were due to the shared past. Built on the policy of the 'Weimar "motherhood-eugenics consensus"', East and West German abortion law 'stressed the importance of fertility regulation and heterosexual intimacy leading to healthy offspring and stable marriages'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Aresin, 'Ehe- und Sexualberatungsstellen', p. 79; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, p. 125.

<sup>31</sup> Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion', pp. 56-58; Michael Schwartz, 'Emanzipation zur sozialen Nützlichkeit: Bedingungen und Grenzen von Frauenpolitik in der DDR', in Dierck Hoffmann, Michael Schwartz (eds.), *Sozialpolitische Entwicklungen im Spannungsfeld von Diktatur und Gesellschaft, 1945/1949-1989* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag: München 2005), pp. 72-73.

<sup>32</sup> Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion', pp. 57-58.

<sup>33</sup> Grossmann, *Reforming Sex*, p. 190; Michael Gante, 'Das 20. Jahrhundert (II): Rechtspolitik und Rechtswirklichkeit 1927-1976', in Robert Jütte (ed.), *Geschichte der Abtreibung: Von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Beck'sche Reihe: München 1993), pp. 172-148.

<sup>34</sup> Grossmann, *Reforming Sex*, p. 209.

In short, sexual politics of the 1950s in East and West Germany bore striking similarities in their desire to increase fertility rates. Due to their shared Nazi legacy, East and West Germany had to abandon anti-natalistic measures such as enforced sterilisation and create a new agenda for their sexual politics. Yet, the aims of sexual politics often remained similar to those of the Weimar and Nazi periods.<sup>35</sup> In an attempt to raise fertility rates, East and West German family policies of the 1950s were characterised by pronatalistic incentives in combination with restricted access to contraceptives and abortion.

The reliance on traditional family relations was another crucial feature that promoted the role of women as mothers and caregivers. A gendered allocation of tasks which assigned the male to industrial workforce and the female to subsidiary work was deemed crucial for the maintenance of a modern economic system.<sup>36</sup> The image of women in East and West Germany was distinctive. The traditional role of woman as carer in the GDR was tightly bound to a consideration of gender equality and occupation. Hence, reproductive work only represented a partial picture of East German womanhood, since women were also envisioned as workers. Linking the role of women to reproductive as well as productive work reflected the Marxist principle which regarded work as a central instrument of liberation and self-fulfilment. Women in the GDR were imagined in a dual role in her contribution to socialism.<sup>37</sup> In an attempt to challenge opposing values, the *Politbüro* published the Women's Communiqué in 1961. It

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<sup>35</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 2-4.

<sup>36</sup> Hanna Schissler, "'Normalization' as Project: Some Thoughts on Gender Relations in West Germany during the 1950s", in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2001), pp. 364-365.

<sup>37</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*; Ankum, 'Political Bodies', pp. 127-144; Marina A. Adler, April Brayfield, 'East-West Differences in Attitudes about Employment and Family in Germany', *The Sociological Quarterly* 37, No 2 (1996), pp. 245-260; Günther Schulz, 'Soziale Sicherung von Frauen und Familien', in Hans Günter Hockerts (ed.), *Drei Wege deutscher Sozialstaatlichkeit: NS-Diktatur, Bundesrepublik und DDR im Vergleich* (Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol 76) (R. Oldenbourg Verlag: München 1998), pp. 121-122.

encouraged women to enhance their qualifications and underlined the importance of their contribution to workforce.<sup>38</sup>

In contrast, the image of the West German woman was more tightly entwined with the roles of mother and carer. Although gender equality was institutionalised in the form of the Basic Law in 1953, gender was often linked with biological differences, so different means were required to establish equality between men and women.<sup>39</sup> Whilst acknowledging a mother's right to choose whether she wanted regular employment, Christian conservative Minister of Family Affairs, Franz Josef Wuermeling (1953-1962), nonetheless appealed to the key role of mothers in serving the common good through subsidiary work.<sup>40</sup> This stance is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it stressed the traditional gender role of women as carers. Secondly, despite the emphasis on the domestic role of women, it reflected contemporary liberal-democratic notions making employment choice a private female matter. Thirdly, by stressing the importance and value of work while linking it to subsidiary work, Wuermeling revealed the underlying assumptions of the gendered division of labour in West German society.

By the 1950s, when policymakers tried to establish an East and West German identity, it is apparent that the states' attempt at 'desperately seeking normality', as Herzog quotes, ran counter to the daily experiences of their citizens.<sup>41</sup>

Consequently, state measures did not have the desired effect. Biopolitics did not work as a top-down-model, but it was rather the attitudes of the people which empowered them to induce changes, not only in the liberal-democratic West but also in the East. The historiography of the GDR often tends to interpret attitudes against the regime as forms of resistance or protest, emphasising the political

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<sup>38</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>39</sup> For the lengthy discussion of how to frame gender equality in the German Basic Law see the chapter 'Constituting Political Bodies: Gender and the Basic Law' in Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, pp. 38-75.

<sup>40</sup> Schissler, 'Normalization', p. 364.

<sup>41</sup> Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, p. 101.

nature of such actions and their conscious negation.<sup>42</sup> While it cannot be denied that the GDR lacked key characteristics of Western democratic societies such as freedom of speech, freedom of travel and a market economy, social actors nevertheless had some power to shape and even transform official policy.<sup>43</sup> On the topic of nude swimming, for instance, McLellan describes how the people's ignorance of a ban of public nudity made legal prohibition ineffective.<sup>44</sup> With regard to the interaction of state, society and sexuality, arguably the states' endeavours in shaping sexual identities ran counter to sexual behaviours and attitudes that were distinct from politicians' visions.<sup>45</sup> In the words of Mark Fenemore, '[s]exuality has thus historically been about the exercise and denial of power as well as the pursuit and enjoyment of pleasure'.<sup>46</sup>

This can be seen in relation to the legal restriction of abortion. Figures for abortions conducted on medical grounds may well have fallen in the first half of the 1950s, but illegal abortions soared in both East and West Germany.<sup>47</sup> Policies for high fertility rates did not diminish people's fear of unwanted pregnancy, nor did these measures generate a desire to have more children. Herzog argues that in the 1950s and early 1960s abortion was '*the* German method for keeping family size small'.<sup>48</sup> In addition, the image of the West German woman as carer was contradicted by the increasing numbers of women in employment.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Fulbrook, 'Rethorising State and Society', pp. 280-298; Ina Merkel, 'Sex and Gender in the Divided Germany: Approaches to History from a Cultural Point of View', in Christoph Klessmann (ed.), *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History* (Berg: Oxford 2001), pp. 96-97.

<sup>43</sup> Fenemore, 'Limits of Repression', p. 171; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*; Fulbrook, 'Rethorising State and Society', pp. 280-298.

<sup>44</sup> McLellan, 'State Socialist Bodies', pp. 48-79.

<sup>45</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*.

<sup>46</sup> Fenemore, 'Recent Historiography of Sexuality', p. 763.

<sup>47</sup> Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion', pp. 59-60; Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, p. 283; Franz X. Eder, *Kultur der Begierde: Eine Geschichte der Sexualität* (Verlag C.H. Beck: München 2002), p. 213; Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, p. 101.

<sup>48</sup> Dagmar Herzog, 'Between Coitus and Commodification: Young West German Women and the Impact of the Pill', in Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2006), p. 268 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>49</sup> Schissler, 'Normalization', p. 366; Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, pp. 50-51.

However, in the GDR the image of the working mother was only partly adopted by the population. Unlike the state vision, women often only worked in part-time jobs or in jobs which were increasingly in commerce and services.<sup>50</sup> The labour market in the GDR, as in West Germany, continued to be characterised by gender segregation rather than equality.<sup>51</sup>

Around the 1960s, both states reacted to these developments with policy adjustment. In keeping with their welfare visions, East and West German sexual politics aimed at making sexuality an arena of negotiation rather than restriction, and deliberately handed parts of the decision-making process over to their citizens. This shift in policies also impacted on sex education films.

### **2.1.2. Sexual Politics and Adjustment during the 1960s**

Both states' biopolitical strategies moved towards persuasion rather than prohibition, aiming at what Foucault has termed 'technologies of the self',<sup>52</sup> where the sexually enlightened subject internalises prescribed norms and values and performs them on his/her body himself/herself. Along with this change in strategies, however, came new obligations and costs which sex education had to address.

The development of the abortion law is an example of this. By the mid-1960s, ready to the evidence of increasing abortion rates, the law was relaxed. In 1972, abortion in the first three months of pregnancy was made legal.<sup>53</sup> Within this period, abortion became a matter of private choice rather than being dependent on medical authority. Free choice, however, came with a price, as women who

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<sup>50</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>51</sup> Ute Frevert, 'Umbruch der Geschlechterverhältnisse: Die 60er Jahre als geschlechterpolitischer Experimentierraum', in Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried Karl Christian Lammers (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hans Christians Verlag: Hamburg 2000), pp. 643-645.

<sup>52</sup> Foucault, 'Technologies of the Self', pp. 16-49.

<sup>53</sup> Harsch, 'Society, the State, and Abortion', p. 53.

chose abortion had to deal with consequences such as social stigmatisation. Following international trends, the GDR was ahead of West Germany, where a legal termination period was only introduced in 1974.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, contraceptives, which were difficult to come by during the 1950s, increasingly became a matter of private discretion in the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>55</sup> Demands for free access to contraception took a certain understanding of self-determination for granted.<sup>56</sup> Prior to these developments the availability of contraception depended on the approval of medical professionals. In extreme cases, the provision of contraceptives was dependent on the physician's moral opinions.<sup>57</sup> This can be read as an instance of what historian Frank Mort has termed the 'medical-moral alliance'. Mort described the emergence of public health campaigns in nineteenth-century Britain as the result of cooperation between scientists, clerics and other political forces rather than a concerted action run by the state authorities.<sup>58</sup> The entanglement between moral and medical tasks helps to understand the convergence of medical and moral authority in the person of a physician, where professional and moral considerations are conflated in the prescription of contraceptives.<sup>59</sup>

The introduction of the contraceptive pill shows how this convergence became subject to a re-arrangement during the 1960s. In 1961, *Schering* introduced the

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<sup>54</sup> Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, pp. 155-160. Gante, 'Das 20. Jahrhundert', pp. 201-203. In the following year, the West German 1974 abortion law was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. By abandoning the idea of a legal termination period, a new bill was passed in 1976, permitting abortion only under specific circumstances. Lorena Anton, Yoshie Mitobe, Kristina Schulz, 'Politics of Reproduction in a Divided Europe: Abortion, Protest Movements, and State Intervention after World War II', in Kathrin Fahlenbrach, Martin Klimke, Joachim Scharloth, Laura Wong (eds.), *The Establishment Responds: Power, Politics, and Protest since 1945* (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, Basingstoke 2012), pp. 106-107.

<sup>55</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, p. 58.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Jütte, *Contraception: A History* (Polity Press: Cambridge, Malden 2003), p. 161.

<sup>57</sup> Jütte, *Contraception*, p. 213.

<sup>58</sup> Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, New York 1987), pp. 32-33; see also Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience, Vol 1: Education of the Senses: Victoria to Freud* (Oxford UP: Oxford, New York 1999), pp. 280-281.

<sup>59</sup> Silies. *Liebe, Lust und Last*, pp. 186-220.

first contraceptive pill, *Anovlar*, to the West German market and advertised it as a drug for menstrual disorders.<sup>60</sup> Although the potential of *Anovlar* for contraception was known, it only tentatively found its way to the West German market as the *anti-baby pill*. The original plan to distribute *Anovlar* to married couples only was soon subverted. In her oral history study, Eva-Maria Silies shows that the pill was often purchased through unofficial channels.<sup>61</sup> For instance, friends or parents procured it for unmarried and teenage girls.<sup>62</sup> Despite initial reservations, the pill turned out to be the most widely used contraceptive during the 1960s. In 1961 it was taken by about two thousand women, by 1968 numbers have jumped to 1.4 million. In 1977, 3.8 million women took the pill.<sup>63</sup>

In East Germany, the contraceptive pill *Ovosiston*, produced by VEB Jenapharm, was available in 1965 and was first advertised as a remedy for hormonal disorders.<sup>64</sup> In the first year only a few selected gynaecologists were allowed to prescribe it, but this soon changed.<sup>65</sup> In the mid-1960s, marriage and sex counselling services advised married couples as well as teenagers about the possibilities of contraception.<sup>66</sup> The birth control pill was advertised as empowering women to defend their equal status. The physician Karl-Heinz Mehlan, renowned as the 'father of the GDR pill', advocated the term *Wunschkind-Pille* (Planned Child Pill) to stress the self-determination of women in deciding how many children she wanted to have.<sup>67</sup> As in West Germany, the numbers of pills distributed rose. Between 1965 and 1967, less than 1 million

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<sup>60</sup> Jütte, *Contraception*, p. 210.

<sup>61</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, pp. 297-327.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>63</sup> Herzog, 'Between Coitus', pp. 273-274.

<sup>64</sup> Gislinde Schwarz, 'Von der Antibaby- zur Wunschkindpille und wieder zurück', in Gisela Staube, Lisa Vieth (eds.), *Die Pille: Von der Lust und von der Liebe* (Rowohlt: Berlin 1996), p. 153.

<sup>65</sup> Schwarz, 'Von der Antibabypille', p. 155.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*; Aresin, 'Ehe- und Sexualberatungsstellen', pp. 77-79; Huneke, 'Sex, Sentiment, and Socialism', pp. 231-247.

<sup>67</sup> Karl-Heinz Mehlan, *Wunschkinde? Familienplanung, Antikonzeption und Abortbekämpfung in unserer Zeit* (Verlag Volk und Gesundheit: Berlin [1969] 1972 third revised edition).

packages were sold, but in 1968 2.5 million were distributed, and four years later this rose to 13 million.<sup>68</sup> McLellan points out that the pill was initially taken cautiously, but by the 1970s it was 'well established as the default contraceptive choice'.<sup>69</sup>

Despite criticism about unknown long-term effects, and short-term effects such as increase in weight and headaches, the rising sales numbers demonstrate that the pill came to dominate the contraceptive market.<sup>70</sup> According to Silies, most women saw the pill as the most reliable contraceptive.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, women increasingly perceived the pill as a means to claim self-determination.<sup>72</sup> The decision on contraception thus shifted from physician influence to patient choice. With the advent of the birth control pill the 'medical-moral alliance' became brittle. With ever-increasing frequency female patients consulted physicians in matters of contraception, not so much to obtain professional advice about possibilities, but for prescription of the pill.<sup>73</sup> While health considerations continued to be the physician's responsibility, moral questions pertaining to contraception gradually became a private matter. This shifting emphasis generated new situations in decision-making and resulted in renewed public discussions about contraception. These discussions about contraception took on different shapes in East and West Germany.

In the GDR, Mehlan labelled the pill (*Wunschkind-Pille*) as an instrument of family planning and emphasised the self-determination of women in deciding on the number of children they had. In the FRG there were several different discourses around this topic. In the early 1970s, the West German New Women's Movement

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<sup>68</sup> Schwarz, 'Von der Antibabypille', p. 155.

<sup>69</sup> McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, p. 61.

<sup>70</sup> Barbara Sichtermann, 'Die Frauenbewegung und die Pille', Gisela Staupe, Lisa Vieth (eds.), *Die Pille: Von der Lust und von der Liebe* (Rowohlt: Berlin 1996), pp. 55-66.

<sup>71</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, pp. 297-305.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Jütte, *Contraception*, p. 213.

pointed to the health risks involved in taking the pill, noting the lack of research into long-term effects that could result from uninterrupted use over long periods. Despite this criticism, the notion of the pill as a technology to claim female self-determination became prevalent.<sup>74</sup> Such “emancipation” had its price, however, and women had to gauge their right to self-determination against possible health risks. Additionally, the pill had effects on intimate life. Barbara Sichtermann stressed that the pill signified the constant availability of women for sex<sup>75</sup>, and Herzog pointed out that it reinforced the notion that penetration was the ‘only acceptable sexual activity’.<sup>76</sup> Despite the rapidly increasing numbers of women taking the pill, the Catholic Church took a fierce stance against any form of contraception. In his infamous encyclical “*Humanae vitae*” in 1968, Pope Paul VI vehemently defended the position that sexual intercourse was only designed to produce offspring.<sup>77</sup>

The development of the abortion law and the introduction of the pill signified a shift in sexual politics from prohibition to counselling and persuasion. It brought with it a renegotiation of duties, responsibilities and boundaries. The increasing relocation of moral decisions in the private domain prompted the provision of more and more sources for information, counselling and guidance. In East Germany this became visible in the rising numbers of counselling institutions during the 1960s.<sup>78</sup> The introduction of sex education into schools for all students can also be seen as a consequence of this need.

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<sup>74</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, p. 424.

<sup>75</sup> Sichtermann, ‘Die Frauenbewegung’, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> Herzog, ‘Between Coitus’, p. 274.

<sup>77</sup> Silies, *Liebe, Lust und Last*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>78</sup> Aresin, ‘Ehe- und Sexualberatungsstellen’, pp. 77-79; Huneke, ‘Sex, Sentiment, and Socialism’, pp. 231-247.

### 2.1.3. Sexuality and Young People

An area where this shift can be clearly discerned are policies directed towards the sexuality of young people. An increasing number of surveys on the sexual behaviour of young people, students and workers revealed that their sexual lives did not follow moral norms.<sup>79</sup> Two findings made a decisive impact on policy makers and experts on sexuality: Firstly, sex was no longer, if it ever was, regarded for mere purposes of procreation but seen as a pleasurable, lustful activity. Secondly, premarital sex amongst teenagers was widespread.<sup>80</sup>

By the 1960s, pedagogues and journalists published an ever-increasing number of surveys and made the general public aware of a growing generational divide.<sup>81</sup> Teenagers were seen as distinct from the older generation particularly with regard to consumerism and popular culture.<sup>82</sup> In post-1945, juvenile behaviour became central to discussions as to how the growing availability of consumer

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<sup>79</sup> One of the first surveys conducted by Ludwig von Friedeburg in 1949 already revealed that sexual attitudes of some of the participants stood at odds with the public opinion and image. Ludwig v. Friedeburg, *Die Umfrage der Intimsphäre* (Beiträge zur Sexualforschung, Heft 4) (Ferdinand Enke Verlag: Stuttgart 1953); see also Eder, *Kultur der Begierde*, p. 212; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 123-128; Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe*, pp. 107-109; Siegfried, 'Don't trust anyone', p. 731; Christian de Nuys-Henkemann, "'Wenn die rote Sonne abends im Meer versinkt...': Die Sexualmoral der fünfziger Jahre", in Anja Bagel-Bohlan, Michael Salewski (eds.), *Sexualmoral und Zeitgeist im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Leske + Budrich: Opladen 1990), pp. 107-145.

<sup>80</sup> For a good overview of surveys on sexuality and the media marketing of the findings in West Germany, see Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 154-190; Eder, *Kultur der Begierde*, pp. 212-213, 215; For an overview of surveys on sexuality conducted in the GDR, see, for instance, Kurt Richard Bach, 'Zur Entwicklung der Sexualpädagogik in der DDR', in: Joachim S. Hohmann (ed.), *Sexuologie in der DDR* (Dietz Verlag: Berlin 1991), pp. 230-232.

<sup>81</sup> Dorothee Wierling, 'Mission to Happiness: The Cohort of 1949 and the Making of East and West Germans', in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2001), p. 120; Siegfried, 'Don't trust anyone', pp. 727-744. On the aspect of consumer culture and generational change, see particularly Detlef Siegfried, 'Understanding 1968: Youth Rebellion, Generational Change and Postindustrial Society', in Axel Schmidt, Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (Berghahn: New York, Oxford 2006), pp. 59-81.

<sup>82</sup> Discussions about a 'generational divide' were not particularly new in post-1945. For instance, sociologist Karl Mannheim observed a 'generational divide' during the 1920s. Karl Mannheim, 'Das Problem der Generationen', *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie KVS* 7, No 2 (1928), pp. 157-185.

products affected the life styles of the young.<sup>83</sup> Contemporaries as well as historians described the entanglement of sex and commerce in 1960s West Germany as a 'consumer and/or sex wave'.<sup>84</sup> In 1966, the magazine *Spiegel* featured an entire issue on the topic 'Sex in Germany'.<sup>85</sup> On its title cover there was a naked torso of a woman, her breasts and genitals covered by miniature versions of title covers of other magazines floating around her body like playing cards.<sup>86</sup>

East and West Germany both saw an increase in images of semi-nude and nude bodies in journals, including sexy postures of heroes and stars.<sup>87</sup> Sex was matched with marketing strategies to increase circulation. Following the motto sex sells, youth journals featured topics on sexuality, love and romance.<sup>88</sup> The notion of self-fulfilling love moved into the centre of young people's interests disregarding official recommendations and doctrines of the SED. As this attitude toward sexuality was in stark contrast to accepted 1950s morals, these developments alarmed policymakers. Seeking to close this gap between political ideas and sexual practice, the 1960s were characterised by attempts to reconcile politics with young people. These rapprochement policies were guided by a fear

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<sup>83</sup> Poiger, *Jazz*; Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*; Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried (eds.), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2006); Daniel Biltereyst, 'American Juvenile Delinquency Movies and the European Censors: The Cross-Cultural Reception and Censorship of the Wild One, Blackboard Jungle, and Rebel Without a Cause', in Timothy Shary, Alexandra Seibel (eds.), *Youth Culture in Global Cinema* (University of Texas Press: Austin 2007), pp. 9-26; Alexandra Seibel, 'The Imported Rebellion: Criminal Guys and Consumerist Girls in Postwar Germany and Austria' in Timothy Shary, Alexandra Seibel (eds.), *Youth Culture in Global Cinema* (University of Texas Press: Austin 2007), pp. 27-36.

<sup>84</sup> Eder, *Kultur der Begierde*, pp. 211-226; Herzog, 'Sexual Morality', pp. 371-384.

<sup>85</sup> 'Sex in Deutschland', cover page, *Der Spiegel* 19 (1966).

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Poiger, *Jazz*, pp. 31-205; Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, p. 159; Dorothee Wierling, 'Die Jugend als innerer Feind: Konflikte in der Erziehungsdiktatur der sechziger Jahre', in Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zwahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart 1994), pp. 404-425; John Griffith Urang, *Legal Tender: Love and Intimacy in the East German Cultural Imagination* (Signale: Cornell UP 2010).

<sup>88</sup> For East Germany, see Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', pp. 74-78; Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, pp. 28-29, McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, pp. 24-26; For West Germany see Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 123-158; 'Gesellschaft/Sex: Die gefallene Natur', *Spiegel* (1966), pp. 50-69; Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 295-324; Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, p. 142.

of losing contact with youth. The SED feared to lose young people to the Western values. A loss of people was experienced before the erection of the Berlin wall in August 1961 by the rising numbers of border-crossings,<sup>89</sup> this threatened to undermine the construction of socialism.<sup>90</sup> In the West, rapprochement with the young was nurtured by the fear that they would develop a superficial mind-set and sex would become a meaningless and emotionless commodity.<sup>91</sup>

In the GDR, in the aftermath of Stalinist rule in the 1950s, measures had already been taken to reconcile young people after the forceful suppression of demonstrations in June 1953. By that time, criticisms of the failings of the GDR could be uttered more openly for the first time. As early as 1954, as a result of the failure to make East Germany an attractive place for young people, the SED authorised a series of articles on the topic of 'Love and Marriage in Socialism'.<sup>92</sup> In 1958, Ulbricht gave indications for the integration of sex education as part of a more comprehensive socialist education of young people. Officially announced in the 'Ten Commandments of Socialist Ethics and Morals', Ulbricht considered the moral and physical education of young people to be crucial for the education of 'clean' and 'decent' citizens who would respect their families. In the following years, youth journals more frequently featured topics on love and fashion.<sup>93</sup> However, lacking sufficient political backing these undertakings were loosely implemented.<sup>94</sup> This changed somewhat in 1963 when the Party's *Politbüro* issued their Youth Communiqué which laid out the importance of young people and their contribution to the construction of socialism. In a more conciliatory

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<sup>89</sup> Corey Ross, 'East Germans and the Berlin Wall: Popular Opinion and Social Change before and after the Border Closure of August 1961', *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, Vol 1 (2004), pp. 25-43.

<sup>90</sup> See for instance, Wierling, 'Die Jugend als innerer Feind'.

<sup>91</sup> Poiger, *Jazz*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>92</sup> Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, p. 28.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>94</sup> Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', pp. 74-78; Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, pp. 28-30.

fashion it invited young people to have the courage to think for themselves.<sup>95</sup> The Communiqué stressed the importance of the young generation by calling them ‘masters of tomorrow’.<sup>96</sup> This new political-pedagogic discourse was part of the greater economic reform project, the New Economic System, which sought to increase production levels.<sup>97</sup> This programme attempted to loosen central control in favour of greater economic flexibility and attached great importance to the education of the young.<sup>98</sup>

Apart from the new rhetoric seen in the Communiqué, ‘the high point of the SED’s brief flirtation with a more open approach to youth policy’, as McDougall argues, was the *Deutschlandtreffen* (German meeting) in Berlin in 1964. For three days, the GDR’s capital offered a number of sports and cultural events for East and West German youth, including jazz and rock ‘n’ roll music.<sup>99</sup> This reform period was of short duration. In December 1965, efforts to create public spaces for young people were brought to an end with the Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED.<sup>100</sup> This plenum is reputed to be the ‘most rigorous and momentous’ interference of the SED imposed on the art and intellectual scene.<sup>101</sup> The DEFA film studio probably had to bear the gravest consequences as the entire film production of 1965 came to a halt.<sup>102</sup> Following the plenum, the partial

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<sup>95</sup> ‘Kommuniqué des Politbüros des Zentralkomitees der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands zu Problemen der Jugend in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik’ (1963), in Siegfried Dübel, *Dokumente zur Jugendpolitik der SED* (Juventa Verlag: München 1964), pp. 164-166.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>97</sup> Dorothee Wierling, ‘Erzieher und Erzogene: Zu Generationsprofilen in der DDR der 60er Jahre’, in Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, Karl Christian Lammers (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hans Christians Verlag: Hamburg), p. 631; McDougall, *Youth Politics*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Kommuniqué’, pp. 153-154; Wierling, ‘Erzieher und Erzogene’, pp. 631-632.

<sup>99</sup> McDougall, *Youth Politics*, p. 163-168; see also Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, pp. 169, 173-175.

<sup>100</sup> Günter Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965 – Studien und Dokumente* (Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag: Berlin 1991).

<sup>101</sup> Günter Agde, ‘Vormerkung’, in Günter Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965 – Studien und Dokumente* (Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag: Berlin 1991), p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Daniela Berghahn, *Hollywood behind the Wall: The Cinema of East Germany* (Manchester UP: Manchester, New York 2005), p. 135; Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Daily Life in The East German Cinema 1949-1989* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, London 2002), p. 151.

autonomy given to young people regarding their leisure time came under the strict control of party functionaries, infamously earning the plenum the name *Kahlschlagplenum* (clear-cutting).<sup>103</sup>

In 1960s West Germany, the approach towards young people was more reconciliatory. Detlef Siegfried notes that from the early to the late 1950s youth was often associated with pejorative terms such as rowdyism and delinquency and played a central part in the *Halbstarcken* (literally 'half-strongs') debate.<sup>104</sup> A different stance towards young people, however, emerged with the growing consumer culture, and young people's lifestyles began to set standards for society.<sup>105</sup> From a perspective of cultural pessimism, policymakers, pedagogues and Church representatives in the previous decade had attacked the growing availability of erotic consumer products with censorship measures.<sup>106</sup> The law regarding the circulation of youth-endangering literature (Gesetz über den Vertrieb jugendgefährdeter Schriften) was already in place in 1953. Yet the erotic representation of stars and sexualised marketing boomed and '(...) media and advertising just kept pushing the boundaries of what it was possible to show'.<sup>107</sup> The steady increase of erotic images in cinema during the 1960s came along with another influence in media technology, the inception of television in the mid to the late 1950s. Since then, cinema faced an economic crisis for its first time, loosing huge numbers of cinema-goers. Between 1957 and 1968, the numbers of cinema-goers declined by some 75 per cent. Consequently, many cinemas closed during the 1960s and film production was reduced by half of its

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<sup>103</sup> Wierling, 'Die Jugend als innerer Feind' (1994), pp. 411-415; Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag*.

<sup>104</sup> Siegfried, 'Vom Teenager', pp. 582-583.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 582; Siegfried, 'Don't trust anyone', p. 732; Poiger, *Jazz*, p. 1.

<sup>106</sup> Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 190-214; Stephan Buchloh, "*Pervers, jugendgefährdend, staatsfeindlich*": Zensur in der Ära Adenauer als Spiegel des gesellschaftlichen Klimas (Campus Verlag: Frankfurt, New York 2002). These debates were not restricted to West Germany. For the discussion about the Law about youth-endangering literature in Austria at the same time, see Edith Blaschitz, *Der "Kampf gegen Schmutz und Schund": Film, Gesellschaft und die Konstruktion nationaler Identität in Österreich, 1946-1970* (LIT Verlag: Berlin, Wien, Münster, Zürich, London 2014).

<sup>107</sup> Herzog, 'Between Coitus', pp. 270-273.

numbers.<sup>108</sup> Against this background, the increase of erotic images in the form of popular sex education films, sex films and other types of self-proclaimed 'enlightenment' films by the end of the 1960s can be interpreted as an attempt to revive the cinema and raise attendance figures.<sup>109</sup> Together with a new type of film funding, legislated by the 1967 *Gesetz über Maßnahmen zur Förderung des deutschen Films* (Law for the Subsidisation of the German Film), cinema productions reaching a box office of over 500,000 German marks were automatically subsidised, the commercial display of erotic images was facilitated.<sup>110</sup>

Young people still were perceived as being exposed to the manipulative forces of a profit oriented media industry. The tenor of discussions on the young during the 1960s no longer regarded them as criminal offenders but rather as victims of consumer industry.<sup>111</sup> Rather than punishing young people, youth politics increasingly wanted to give them a critical perspective on erotic media products and become confident consumers.<sup>112</sup> This education itself drew on media, as sex education films among other forms demonstrate. The persuasive force of the media was by no means questioned. It was rather a question of putting these influential tools to proper use. In this framework self-determination and pluralism of norms became important ideals. So, it might be said that 'what ultimately dissolved the former culture of censorship was above all market forces'.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Walter Uka, 'Abschied von gestern: Avantgarde, Revolution, Mainstream: Der bundesdeutsche Film in den sechziger Jahren', in Werner Faulstich (ed.), *Die Kultur der 60er Jahre* (Wilhelm Fink Verlag: München 2003), p. 201.

<sup>109</sup> Thissen, *Sex erklärt: Der deutsche Aufklärungsfilm* (Wilhelm Heyne Verlag: München 1995), p. 204.

<sup>110</sup> Uka, 'Abschied von gestern', pp. 202-203.

<sup>111</sup> Siegfried, 'Vom Teenager', p. 589.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 596.

<sup>113</sup> Herzog, 'Between Coitus', p. 272.

#### **2.1.4. Biopolitics and the Policing of Sexuality**

In East and West Germany between 1945 and 1970, in terms of the biopolitics of sexuality, both states show striking similarities and differences. In the wake of the 'system conflict', East and West Germany attempted to link sexuality to procreation and took active steps in creating a gender hierarchy that corresponded with this aim. As much as East and West Germany shared the biopolitical trajectory of raising the birth rate, the conceptions and images of the gender hierarchy had decisive differences, especially concerning the role of women as mothers. Whereas the GDR focused on establishing women in a dual role as mothers and workers, the FRG aimed at confining women as subsistence workers within the family. Actual sexual attitudes and behaviours of people, however, did not neatly correspond with visions of sexual morality. In East and West alike, the state was forced to react and adjust its policies.

The late 1950s and early 1960s in East Germany, and the mid to the late 1960s in the FRG, have to be regarded as a period in which policymakers tried to keep pace with people's understanding of sexuality and sexual attitudes, including the increasing acceptance of a consumer culture. The 1960s can thus be interpreted as a phase in which the states sought to undertake corrective measures to attune political goals with actual behaviour. In doing so, a new rhetoric was needed in the policing of sex, characterised by replacing restriction with persuasion. The emphasis was now laid on private choice, decision-making and self-regulation.

These changes in sexual politics included a move away from medical experts who were influential in deciding the legitimacy of abortion cases, for instance. The divergence of peoples' behaviour from projected aims and the consequent policy adjustment towards persuasion and personal responsibility, created the need for a new kind of knowledge. The entanglement of medical and moral

authority had to be redefined from authority to persuasion. During the 1960s governments increasingly used experts to conduct research into sexual behaviour and adjusted policy accordingly.

At the same time a belief that everything is educable had developed. Historian Dorothee Wierling, for example, characterises the GDR during the mid-1960s as the 'heyday of pedagogic optimism'.<sup>114</sup> Likewise for the FRG from the mid-1960s, Wilfried Rudloff observes a 'boom in education' (Bildungsboom), highlighting the increased interest in integrating education into the broader aims of contemporary planning policies.<sup>115</sup> It seems consequential therefore that, around the same time, demands for the strengthening of sex education and its implementation as a regular school subject came to the fore. Sex education, as I will demonstrate, became part of the educational agenda and played a decisive role in the biopolitical knowledge for self-governed citizens.

## **2.2. The Shaping of Sex Education in East and West Germany**

The adjustment of sexual politics towards self-government created the need for a new kind of pedagogic knowledge. As has been demonstrated above, the adjustment of policies during the 1960s can be understood as a relocation of emphasis from a 'medical-moral alliance' that placed moral decisions in the hands of medical experts, to a new morality that depended on negotiation, multiple values and emphasised choice and self-responsibility as important factors in the government of the body. Arguably, this development was mirrored

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<sup>114</sup> Wierling, 'Die Jugend als innerer Feind', p. 404.

<sup>115</sup> Wilfried Rudloff, 'Bildungsplanung in den Jahren des Bildungsbooms', in Matthias Frese, Julia Paulus, Karl Teppe (eds.), *Demokratisierung und gesellschaftlicher Aufbruch: Die sechziger Jahre als Wendezeit der Bundesrepublik* (Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag: Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich 2003), pp. 259-282; see also Alfons Kenkmann, 'Von der bundesdeutschen "Bildungsmisere" zur Bildungsreform in den 60er Jahren', in Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried, Karl Christian Lammers (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten: Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften* (Hans Christians Verlag:Hamburg 2000), pp. 402-423.

in sex education. The discussions and conceptions of how young people should be educated can be located between the poles of biology and morality. I will demonstrate that, with the thematic shift in sex education from biological towards moral and social questions, the body, when handled and managed properly, was increasingly displayed as a tool to achieve happiness.

The role of experts from the emerging academic discipline of sexual pedagogy became crucial in the development of pedagogic concepts for school sex education, thereby strengthening the role of sex education within sexual politics. Some experts became involved as advisors in the realisation of films. This subchapter looks into the contribution of experts to the discourse on sex education. Many topics deemed important in sex education for young people reappeared in films. By looking at contributions in pedagogic journals, sex education literature and school curricula I shall trace which ideas were proposed by sex educators and how these intersected with sexual politics.

### **2.2.1. Sex Education during the late 1940s and 1950s**

Until the late 1940s to the late 1950s sex education was guided by VD education. Only three months after the end of war, order No 25 of the Soviet Military Administration (Sowjetische Militäradministration, SMAD) ordered the opening of health centres for the treatment of the growing numbers of VD patients.<sup>116</sup> At that time VD treatment was time consuming. Only after penicillin was introduced after the war, did this situation change significantly, as it provided a quick cure.<sup>117</sup> As part of the health policy of the SMAD, the introduction of sex education in schools

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<sup>116</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 190-198; Betheny Moore Roberts, 'Heikle Fragen: DDR-Sexualpädagogik und der DEFA-Aufklärungsfilm', in *Die imaginierte Nation: Identität, Körper und Geschlecht in DEFA-Filmen* (edited by the DEFA-Stiftung Berlin) (Berlin 2007), pp. 52-54.

<sup>117</sup> Lutz Sauerteig, 'Venereal Disease', in J. Merriman, J. Winter (eds.), *Europe since 1914: Encyclopaedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, Vol 4 (Charles Scribner's Sons: Detroit 2006), pp. 2630-2631.

was much influenced by VD policy.<sup>118</sup> In these years, formal sex education targeted school leavers at an age of seventeen to instruct them on VD, besides aspects of biological human reproduction including information on the male and female reproductive system, fertilisation, pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, in the West the *Federal State Association for Combating Venereal Diseases and Sex Education* (LAGG, Landesarbeitsgemeinschaft zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten und für Geschlechtserziehung) in North Rhine-Westphalia perceived sex education as taking prophylactic action against the spread of VD.<sup>120</sup> Ten years later, the (West) Berlin guidelines of 1959 still regarded VD as crucial to their understanding of sex education.<sup>121</sup>

In contrast to VD campaigns during the Nazi regime that had connected VD prevention to population policy and national fertility, VD campaigners of the late 1940s, according to Timm, rather stressed messages about the 'need to resist sexual temptations'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, popular sex education films during the late 1940s indicate the extent to which sex education was meant to support the moral fight against VD. *Schleichendes Gift* (Creeping Poison, 1946), directed by Herrmann Wallbrück, *Station IV* (1948) by Richard Groschopp, and *Straßenbekanntschaft* (They met in the Street, 1948) by Peter Pemas were three of the titles informing the German audience about VD infection and its wider moral implications.

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<sup>118</sup> DIPF R 935: *Lehrpläne für Grund- und Oberschulen der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1946*.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Heinrich Oestereich, 'Gegenwartsaspekte der Geschlechtererziehung', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene* No 4 (1966), p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> 'Richtlinien für die Sexualerziehung in der Berliner Schule vom 26. September 1959', p. 1; reprinted in Heinz J. P. Mehl, *Sexualerziehung in der Schule* (Hermann Schroedel Verlag: Berlin, Dortmund, Darmstadt 1969), pp. 114-115. The link between VD prevention and sex education pertinent to the first guidelines in East and West Germany had its precursors in the sex education campaigns during the first decades of the twentieth century. Most notably, the founding of the German Society for Combating Venereal Disease (Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Bekämpfung von Geschlechtskrankheiten) in 1902 institutionalised the worry of spreading VD. It engaged in many educational campaigns to instruct people against the physical and moral hazards that came along with VD infections. Lutz Sauerteig, *Krankheit, Sexualität, Gesellschaft* (Franz Steiner Verlag: Stuttgart 1999).

<sup>122</sup> Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, p. 189.

Blaming extramarital, promiscuous sexual behaviour as well as casual sexual affairs, these films set a moral tone by promoting sexual abstinence until marriage as a prophylactic measure. In addition, the showcasing of images of disfigured limbs and genitals not only gave visual evidence of the pathological body, but were used to evoke fear in the audience. Medical images in these films were used to present a defective body as a result of immoral behaviour, making the imbrication of moral and medical narratives particularly visible.<sup>123</sup>

Popular VD films to instruct the audience on VD, its prevention and moral consequences shaped part of the public health agendas in all four occupational zones in the late 1940s.<sup>124</sup> The exchange of VD films between the zones, as the (Eastern zone) DEFA film *They Met on the Street* (1948) exemplifies, furthermore points to the fact that filmic health education in the late 1940s was characterised by similarities rather than differences between the East and the West. While the idea to use popular VD films for instructing wider audiences roots back to World War I and thereafter,<sup>125</sup> *They Met on the Street* not only discusses the risks of VD infection posed to sexual relations but most notably critically portrays the role of Nazi trained physicians and their interventionist attitudes towards the female body. Despite its traditional approach to the narrative, the film marks a clear break with Nazi ideology of racial politics and eugenics.<sup>126</sup> . Apart from VD prevention, the healthy reproductive body stood at the core of sex education

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<sup>123</sup> On the topic of early VD films of the 1910s and 1920s, see Annette Kuhn's pioneering study: Annette Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality, 1909-1925* (Routledge: London, New York 1988); see also Gertiser, 'Der Schrecken wohnt im Schönen'.

<sup>124</sup> Ursula von Keitz, 'Körperpolitik zwischen den Trümmern: Gesundheitsfilme aus der Besatzungszeit, 1946-1949', *Filmblatt* 53 (2013/14), p. 50.

<sup>125</sup> For the German context, see Curt Thomalla, *Geschlechtskrankheiten und ihre Folgen* (1919/1920), produced by UFA Kulturabteilung in Berlin; Leo von Zumbusch, *Das Wesen und die Gefahren der Geschlechtskrankheiten* (1920), produced by Neue Kinomatographische GmbH in Munich; Hans Schulze, *Geschlechtskrankheiten und ihre Bekämpfung* (1923/24), produced by Deulig Film AG in Berlin; Rudolf Biebrach, *Falsche Scham* (1925/26), produced by UFA Kulturabteilung in Berlin; Walter Ruttmann, *Feind im Blut* (1931), produced by Praesens-Film in Berlin and Zurich.

<sup>126</sup> Ursula von Keitz, 'Cinema and Public Health Care in Early Postwar Germany, 1945-48/49', in Christian Bonah, David Cantor, Anja Laukötter (eds.), *Communicating Good Health* (Rochester UP: Rochester (forthcoming)).

guidelines in East and West Germany during the 1950s. The body was presented in its biologically 'normal' state, which essentially meant its capacity to reproduce. School sex education translated the biology of reproduction as an innate characteristic for which the male and female body were predestined. The prevention of conception through contraception, as West Berlin guidelines indicated, was hence to be taught only with reservations.<sup>127</sup> The West German physician Annemarie Linnartz suggested that, only once sufficient biological knowledge had been acquired in 'a third phase', should topics such as VD, prostitution, abortion and contraception be introduced.<sup>128</sup> Inherent in this concept of sex education was the fear that too early an instruction could induce sexual feelings as well as pre-marital sexual activity.<sup>129</sup> Hence, questions of what should be taught at what age were, and still are, central concerns in discussions on sex education.<sup>130</sup> The concern that sex education would provoke early sexual feelings in pubescent students was an issue for biology teachers, who were officially entrusted with the delicate issue of sex education.<sup>131</sup> Therefore a gradual structure of the biology curriculum, allowing teachers to tackle plant and animal reproduction in primary school, and human conception at grammar school, was

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<sup>127</sup> 'Richtlinien für die Sexualerziehung 1959', p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Annemarie Linnartz, 'Geschlechtererziehung – warum?', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene*, No 4 (1966), p. 24.

<sup>129</sup> The fear to invoke early sexual feelings through sex education has been a recurrent theme in discussions about sex education and was not restricted to Germany. For further reading on this aspect see Julian B. Carter, 'Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, No 2 (2001), pp. 213-249; Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Mass., London 2000), pp. 23-67, 98-117; Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex and Sex Education since the Sixties* (W.W. Norton & Company: New York, London 2006) for the US. See Sara Bragg, David Buckingham, 'Too much too young? Young People, the Media and Sexual Learning', in Fiona Attwood (ed.), *Mainstreaming Sex: the Sexualization of Western Culture* (IB Tauris: London, New York 2009), pp. 129-146 for the UK.

<sup>130</sup> Lutz Sauerteig, 'Sex education in Germany from the eighteenth to the twentieth century', in Franz X. Eder, Lesley A. Hall, Gert Hekma (eds.), *Sexual Cultures in Europe : Themes in Sexuality*, Vol. 2 (Manchester UP: Manchester, New York 1999), pp. 9-33; Bragg, Buckingham, 'Too much too young', pp. 129-146; Louisa Allen, 'Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Constituting a Discourse of Erotics in Sexuality Education', *Gender and Education* 16, No 2 (2004), pp. 151-167.

<sup>131</sup> Sauerteig, 'Sex Education in Germany', pp. 9-33.

seen as an advantage.<sup>132</sup> One West German commentator noted that ‘the knowledge which has been imparted with regard to plants and animals just has to be transferred to the human beings’.<sup>133</sup> By creating an analogy with animals and plants, he underscored the perception of sex education as a matter of biology. Sexual reproduction was deemed a necessary act for the preservation of the species and thus became defined as a biological rather than lustful event. An example that reflects these fears, for which Gerhard Dietrich, lecturer at the Karl-Marx University in Leipzig, sought to provide a solution, was the publication of a new biology textbook for the eighth and ninth school grades. It contained a section on human reproduction for fifteen year olds in the ninth grade, and a discussion amongst biology teachers arose as to how to deal with this, as students one year younger had access to it.<sup>134</sup> On this occasion Dietrich utilised the gradual structure of the school curriculum to his advantage. He emphasised that to start with plants and animals from an earlier age, fourteen year olds would be prepared to deal with the topic of human reproduction one year earlier than the guidelines stated.<sup>135</sup>

In this respect East and West German sex education seems to be characterised by similarities rather than differences. The idea of providing young people with information on the biology of human reproduction was a longstanding tradition in Weimar Germany that had been addressed by the reformist hygiene movement of the 1920s. Prominent figures such as Max Hodann highlighted the importance of informing young people about the physiology and anatomy of sexual reproduction as part of sex education. This was intended to overcome religious

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<sup>132</sup> For the structure of the guidelines see for instance DIPF R 935: *Lehrpläne für Sowjetischen Besatzungszone 1946*; ‘Richtlinien für die Sexualerziehung 1959’, p. 1.

<sup>133</sup> Friedrich Martin, ‘Sexualerziehung und Ehevorbereitung: Ein “heiβes” Thema’, *Erziehung und Beruf: Zeitschrift für Schule und Leben* 2 (1963), p. 73.

<sup>134</sup> Gerhard Dietrich, ‘Sexuelle Erziehung allein Aufgabe des Biologieunterrichts?’, *Biologie in der Schule* 11 (1959), pp. 511-513.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

and other myths in favour of a rational description of sexual reproduction.<sup>136</sup> In their efforts to provide compulsory sex education in school, sex education campaigners in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s often drew references to these early actors so as to forge a legitimate, and most importantly, anti-fascist legacy of sex education.<sup>137</sup>

The East and West German guidelines that were in place during the 1950s give an insight into the social implications of biological instruction. They stressed the need to impart ethical standards to facilitate affectionate relationships that ideally resulted in functioning marriages.<sup>138</sup> The combination of biological instruction and the promotion of procreation within the realm of matrimony indicated the extent to which the guidelines sought to normalise and naturalise family values through the biology of reproduction. On the one hand, the close link between biology and moral sex education was facilitated by a medical-moral alliance which had shaped sex education since the turn of the century. On the other, it was brought about by the fact that the first guidelines for sexual education after 1945 in East and West Germany were set up with the assistance of medical experts and VD campaigners.<sup>139</sup>

After its introduction by the SMAD in 1947, sex education did not play a major role and was tackled reluctantly by the SED.<sup>140</sup> Guidelines were not updated throughout the 1950s. The leadership's reluctance echoed the situation in Soviet

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<sup>136</sup> Atina Grossmann, 'More Rational Sex: The German Case', in Robert A. Nye (ed.), *Sexuality* (Oxford UP: Oxford, New York, 1999), pp. 326-328; Sauerteig, 'Sex Education in Germany', pp. 21-22; Sauerteig, 'Representations', pp. 133-135.

<sup>137</sup> See for instance Rudolf Neubert, 'Gedanken zum Problem der Sexualpädagogik', in Rudolf Neubert, Rudolf Weise (eds.) *Das sexuelle Problem in der Jugenderziehung* (Greifenverlag: Rudolstadt 1956), pp. 7-8.

<sup>138</sup> 'Richtlinien für die Sexualerziehung in der Berliner Schule, 26 September 1959', p. 1; DIPF R 935: *Lehrpläne für Sowjetischen Besatzungszone 1947*.

<sup>139</sup> Heinrich Konsten, 'Geschlechtererziehung in Berlin – ein Modellfall?', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene* No 4 (1966), pp. 20-22), p. 20; Neubert, 'Gedanken zum Problem', pp. 7-8; Wilhelm Brandt, 'Erfahrungen mit den "Richtlinien für die Sexualerziehung in der Berliner Schule"', in Reinhold Ruthe (ed.), *Sexualerziehung in der Schule: Grundlegung – Richtlinien – Didaktik – Audio-visuelle Hilfsmittel*, (Claudius Verlag: München 1970), p. 120.

<sup>140</sup> Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', p. 74.

Russia where sex education was practically non-existent during the Stalinist era.<sup>141</sup> However, this changed somewhat in the mid-1950s. Following the death of Stalin in 1953, and owing to the protests in June of the same year that took place in many East German cities opposing the SED's increased Sovietisation, the *Politbüro* tentatively sought alternative ways to approach socialism. Amongst these were attempts to target young people by making the GDR an attractive place for them to live in.<sup>142</sup> Within the *Politbüro* discussions arose as how to re-organise the national youth organisation *Free German Youth* (FDJ, *Freie Deutsche Jugend*) to better appeal to young people.<sup>143</sup> The increasing numbers of children's and youth magazines is also evidence for this increased attention on young people. In 1953, for instance, the magazines *Neues Leben* (New Life) for adolescents and *Atze* for children were launched. The magazine *The Trommel* (The Drum), introduced in 1958, also targeted a younger audience. Sex education, it seems, was another area where SED hoped to forge links with the young generation.

In 1955, Ulbricht encouraged the daily newspaper *Junge Welt* (Young World) to publish articles on sexual issues.<sup>144</sup> By launching a series of articles on the topic of 'Love and Marriage under Socialism', the SED aimed to connect with the young on private matters.<sup>145</sup> In the same year *Neues Leben* called for the need to provide young people with adequate sex education. East German teenagers who were 'sexually enlightened' by the age of seventeen, said the article, were likely to have consulted 'obscure' sources to obtain their knowledge. The article pointed to the problem of young people quenching their thirst for knowledge with

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<sup>141</sup> Igor Kon, 'Sexuality and Culture', in Igor Kon, James Riordan (eds.), *Sex and Russian Society* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, Indianapolis 1993), pp. 22-26.

<sup>142</sup> Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, p. 103.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', p. 75.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

Hollywood films and soft pornographic novels.<sup>146</sup> The physician and director of the Social Hygiene Institute at the University of Jena, Rudolf Neubert, believed that the personal development was at risk to be disrupted by consuming 'trashy' information spread by the mass media. To him, Western media served capitalist and bourgeois interests that undermined the education of values of true socialist happiness.<sup>147</sup> Advocates of sex education for the young stressed the negative external influences on youth for which socialist sex education would provide a solution.

The fear that U.S. mass media had a negative impact on the development of young people was not only a concern in the Socialist East, as West German commentators were equally worried about the malign influence of US popular culture on German youth.<sup>148</sup> Based on the idea that an uncritical viewer would not be able to distinguish between fiction and reality, Wuermeling was convinced that mass media, particularly film, had the potential to evoke dissatisfaction in the audience to such an extent that it could provoke a desire for political change and oppositional activism.<sup>149</sup>

In 1956, after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev criticised the Stalinist model at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Soviet Union, a number of medical experts started publishing sex education books for young people. In an atmosphere that allowed for some criticism of the system, sex educators hinted at the shortcomings of sex education and tentatively suggested alternatives. Amongst the first physicians who authored literature on sex education in the GDR was Rudolf Neubert. Neubert, probably best known for his marriage advice book *Das*

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<sup>146</sup> 'Morgen ist es zu spät', *Neues Leben* 3 (1955), pp. 17-18.

<sup>147</sup> Neubert, 'Gedanken zum Problem', pp. 11, 40.

<sup>148</sup> Poiger, *Jazz*; Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side*, pp. 146-149.

<sup>149</sup> Buchloh, *Pervers, jugendgefährdend*, pp. 183-188.

*Neue Ehebuch* (The New Marriage Book, 1957)<sup>150</sup> which was distributed until the early 1970s, was sceptical as to whether sufficient sex education was provided for the young. In 1956, he observed that

The so called “enlightenment” about human reproduction plays a subordinate role in sexual pedagogy but it is still relevant since not all parents nor teachers are capable of answering the questions of children appropriately.<sup>151</sup>

Neubert, like some of his contemporaries, deemed biological instruction necessary in the sex education of the young.<sup>152</sup> The asset of biological instruction was believed to lie in the straightforward manner by which rational ‘facts’ about the human body could be addressed and checked through exams.<sup>153</sup> Neubert also pointed to the complementary role of biological instruction and stressed the need for the moral guidance of the young. Neubert’s critique particularly targeted the East German curriculum. The restricted range of topics, addressing the biology of reproduction, and the (late) mediation he perceived as inappropriate and untimely.<sup>154</sup>

In an attempt to make a contribution Neubert published *Die Geschlechterfrage: Ein Buch für junge Leute* (The Gender Question: A Book for Young People) in

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<sup>150</sup> Neubert’s *Das Neue Ehebuch* (The New Marriage Book, 1957) for young adults was according to Herzog and McLellan the most popular sex advice book in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*(2005) , p. 195; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism* (2011), pp. 86,89, 166; Susanne Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik in der BRD und in der DDR im Vergleich* (Psychosozial Verlag: Gießen 1999), p. 87.

<sup>151</sup> Original: ‘Die sogenannte “Aufklärung” über die Fortpflanzung spielt in der Sexualpädagogik eine untergeordnete Rolle. Sie ist heute noch nötig, da nicht alle Eltern und Lehrer imstande sind, die Fragen der Kinder richtig zu beantworten.’ Neubert, ‘Gedanken zum Problem’, p. 40; For a similar view see Wolfgang Schauwecker, ‘Fragen der Geschlechtererziehung in Mitteldeutschland I’, in Hans Harmsen (ed.), *Sexualerziehung in der UDSSR und in Mitteldeutschland: Zur Entwicklung und Organisation des Gesundheitswesens in Sowjetrußland, in osteuropäischen Volksdemokratien und in Mitteldeutschland* (Akademie für Staatsmedizin in Hamburg: Hamburg 1967), p. 20.

<sup>152</sup> Neubert, ‘Gedanken zum Problem’, p. 40. See also BA DQ1/3150: Heinrich Brückner, ‘Analyse der gegenwärtigen Situation auf dem Gebiet der Sexuellen Erziehung im Kindesalter als Unterlage für sexualpädagogische Empfehlungen’, Abschluss der Forschungsarbeit “Sexualerziehung im Kindesalter” (1964-1966); Forschungsstelle Kinderklinik der Karl-Marx Universität Leipzig; Forschungsleiter Siegfried Liebe; 15 September 1966, pp. 1-5.

<sup>153</sup> BA DQ1/3150: Brückner, ‘Analyse der gegenwärtigen Situation’, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> Neubert, ‘Gedanken zum Problem’, p. 40.

1956. He dedicated two chapters to beauty and make-up, advising young women to underline their 'natural beauty' by using make-up.<sup>155</sup> However, Neubert also warned against excessive use as then girls looked like cheap copies of stars. He concluded that this could provoke false intentions in their male contemporaries.<sup>156</sup> Arguing alongside popular gender stereotypes, however, Neubert took a critical position on what he perceived to be an uncritical imitation deriving from mass media. In the same year, the physician H. J. Hoffmann and the psychologist P. C. Klemm published a sex education book for teenagers, *Ein offenes Wort: Ein Buch über die Liebe* (An Open Word: A Book about Love). They also expanded the scope from biology to morality and ethics. Although large parts of the book dealt with the biology and anatomy of the male and female genitals, physiological changes during puberty, sexual reproduction, and pregnancy, they also addressed the different meanings of love. The authors claimed that love could only be experienced in its 'purest' form within a heterosexual partnership which ideally led to marriage.<sup>157</sup> They wrote

It is resting on the young people who, in our days, bind together for life to create change. Together we create the preconditions for a new, higher form of love and marriage which everyone for himself and herself has to live.<sup>158</sup>

While at first glance this conception seems strikingly similar to bourgeois notions of partnership, Klemm and Hoffmann stressed the socialist component by elevating love to the shaping principle for society as a whole. The emphasis on the restoration of family values, heterosexuality and related gender roles of motherhood and fatherhood, as these books demonstrate, coincided with

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<sup>155</sup> Rudolf Neubert, *Die Geschlechterfrage: Ein Buch für junge Menschen* (Greifenwald Verlag: Rudolfstadt 1956), pp. 130-133 for beauty, pp. 133-135 for make-up.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>157</sup> Hans-Joachim Hoffmann, Peter G. Klemm, *Ein offenes Wort: Ein Buch über die Liebe* (Verlag Neues Leben: Berlin [1956] 1967, twelfth edition), pp. 159-178.

<sup>158</sup> Original: 'Den jungen Menschen, die sich in unseren Tagen zusammenschließen fürs Leben, obliegt es, hier Wandel zu schaffen. Gemeinsam gestalten wir die Voraussetzungen für eine neue, höhere Form der Liebe und Ehe, jeder für sich aber muß sie auch leben.' *Ibid.*, p. 163.

measures encouraging maternity. Sex education in the 1950s was primarily understood as preparation for marriage.

Addressing the central motifs of East German sex education, Neubert's *Die Geschlechterfrage* and Hoffmann and Klemm's *Ein offenes Wort* ran to several editions well into the 1960s. Both books defended sex education as important means to fight the influence of (Western) mass media.<sup>159</sup> External influences were assumed to have a negative impact on the development of young people. A central topic that closely connected to the agenda of broadening sex education was love. Love became a core value in morally framing and legitimising sex education. By emphasising the narrative of love Neubert, Hoffmann and Klemm anticipated a trend that crucial for the socialist education of the young.

The importance of love for socialism was emphasised in the SED's Youth Communiqué of 1963. It declared that 'true love belongs to youth as youth belongs to socialism'.<sup>160</sup> Sex education books of the 1950s, such as Neubert's can be seen to have prepared the ground for the Communiqué that picked up many of the topics proposed by these pedagogues. Love as a guiding principle did not end with the individual but formed a cultural fundamental that served the purpose of socialist society rather than the self.<sup>161</sup> The educator Bernd Bittighöfer, for instance, stressed that personal intimate relationships were not isolated from the interests of society.<sup>162</sup> In his sex education book for young readers *Du und der andere neben dir* (You and the One next to You) of 1965, various sections addressed the topic of friendship and love. Biological aspects of sexuality were absent, and he focused on love as an essential emotion.<sup>163</sup> He

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<sup>159</sup> Neubert, *Die Geschlechterfrage*, p. 27;

<sup>160</sup> 'Kommuniqué', p. 163.

<sup>161</sup> Hoffmann, Klemm, *Ein offenes Wort*, p. 163; Bernd Bittighöfer, 'Sozialistische Geschlechtsmoral und Erziehung der jungen Generation zu sittlich wertvoller Partnerschaft', *Pädagogik: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis der sozialistischen Erziehung* 9 (1965), p. 792.

<sup>162</sup> Bittighöfer, 'Sozialistische Geschlechtsmoral', p. 795.

<sup>163</sup> Bernd Bittighöfer, *Du und der Andere neben Dir* (Dietz Verlag: Berlin [1965] 1967).

explained that love was to be directed to the partner of the opposite sex and was important for the benefit of the socialist society, i.e. collective forms of work, labour brigades, youth groups and common sports activities.<sup>164</sup> The theme of heterosexual love in the GDR became an important narrative for socialist sex education. By creating an East German 'amorous imagination', as John Griffiths Urang observes, love stories shaped a central aspect in the East German mass media contributing to the GDR's cultural imagination.<sup>165</sup> Sex education shaped part of this. Sex education in the GDR saw a clear shift from disease prevention in the late 1940s to moral education in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. This was facilitated by state officials beginning to take sex education seriously in an attempt to influence young people. Since the mid-1950s sex education in the GDR was not only considered as a prophylactic measure to curb VD rates but significantly became a constituent for learning appropriate sexual conduct as part of successful life and personal happiness. From that time, not only medical experts but more and more social experts and educators such as Bernd Bittighöfer engaged in developing concepts in line with socialist education.<sup>166</sup>

West German sex educators had similar reasons as to why sex education benefited young people. Herrmann Kreutz wrote in an article called 'Moderne Geschlechtererziehung' (Modern Sex Education), there was no such thing as isolated sex education, as it had to be understood as embedded in wider education. The aim was to raise a young boy to a man and a young girl to a woman, and to guide both on how to establish a proper partnership.<sup>167</sup> According to this concept, raising a family became the ultimate goal. The family was not

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>165</sup> Urang, *Legal Tender*, p. 19.

<sup>166</sup> See also Dietrich, 'Sexuelle Erziehung', pp. 511-515; Heinz Grassel, 'Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', *Pädagogik: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis der sozialistischen Erziehung* 8 (1965), pp. 762-766.

<sup>167</sup> Hermann Josef Kreutz, 'Moderne Geschlechtererziehung und Lehrerbildung: Ein aktuelles sexualpädagogisches Problem', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene* 3 (1966), pp. 19-23.

only a biological necessity but also, in contrast to conceptions in the GDR, functioned as the milieu and symbol of personal satisfaction. As in East Germany, the influence of mass media was regarded with suspicion. Another West German sex educator, Friedrich Martin, accused the mass media of promoting sexual promiscuity. He explained that ‘taboos are not deemed appropriate anymore; where stars exploit their bedroom stories to advertise themselves and each magazine praises the “beautiful love”’.<sup>168</sup> To Martin, these tendencies to commercialise sexuality indicated a departure from God and from the natural order of the Self.<sup>169</sup>

Unlike in East Germany, influential sex education writers often had Protestant or Catholic backgrounds. Due to the fact that Christian institutions were excluded from the re-education and de-nazification programmes of the Allied forces, they were not under Allied control. Consequently, in the immediate post-war years, they re-established their networks quickly.<sup>170</sup> The Catholic organisation the *Volkswartbund* in Cologne was a decisive and influential institution for the moral education of young people, and became one of the main actors in campaigns to shield young people from the influence of mass media. Through its influence, the *Law for the Protection of the Young from Harmful Writings* was passed in the early 1950s. It forbade selling literature classified as ‘trash and smut’ (Schmutz und Schund) to under-aged people.<sup>171</sup> The *Volkswartbund* also edited the monthly journal *Concepte* (Concepts) which discussed topics such as ethics and social hygiene, and engaged in discussions about sex education.

Amongst the leading sex educators of the late 1940s and 1950s were the Swiss-born Protestant neurologist and marriage counsellor, Theodor Bovet, and

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<sup>168</sup> Original: ‘Tabus sind dort nicht mehr angebracht, wo Stars ihre Schlafzimererlebnisse als Reklame benutzen und jede Illustrierte die “Schöne Liebe” preist.’ Martin, ‘Sexualerziehung und Ehevorbereitung’, p. 72.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-55.

Catholic professor for pedagogy and catechetics in Munich, Klemens Tillmann. Both authors deemed it important to impart knowledge of Christian values of marriage and family as part of sex education. In their sex education books they addressed traditional gender relations of motherhood and fatherhood by portraying girls in their future roles of mothers, and boys in their futures role of breadwinners.<sup>172</sup> The arguments of Christian-conservative commentators frequently drew specifically on biology. They used comparisons of plants and animals to claim man's special status as 'the living image of God' within his creation, as emphasised in Heinz Mehl's pedagogical writings.<sup>173</sup> Similarly, another West German commentator wrote that the ability to love was the feature which distinguished humans from animals.<sup>174</sup>

The emphasis on Christian family values in sex education of the 1950s and early 1960s coincided with the aims of the Christian conservative government under Adenauer.<sup>175</sup> In seeking to establish a situation of normalcy in the post-war years, politicians aimed to restore traditional family values to induce a feeling of security and stability.<sup>176</sup> From the mid-1960s onwards alternative models, such as 'anti-repressive' and 'emancipatory' sex education, increasingly challenged the traditional understanding of sexual morality and defied the idea that sexual intercourse served procreation only.<sup>177</sup> A proponent of the 'anti-repressive' strand of sex education was the psychologist Helmut Kentler.<sup>178</sup> He criticised the idea of sexual abstinence for its preservation of bourgeois morality. 'Repressive sex education', as he described sex education that proposed sexual abstinence,

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<sup>172</sup> Sauerteig, 'Representations', pp. 138-139, 158.

<sup>173</sup> Mehl, *Sexualerziehung in der Schule*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>174</sup> Kreutz, 'Moderne Geschlechtererziehung', p. 22.

<sup>175</sup> Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik*, pp. 64-82.

<sup>176</sup> Lutz Niethammer, "'Normalisation' in the West", in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968* (Princeton UP: Princeton, Oxford 2001), pp. 237-265.

<sup>177</sup> Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik*, pp. 97-119.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

maintained hegemonic structures.<sup>179</sup> With reference to the works of the Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), Kentler considered sexual drive as a creative rather than repressive force, which, according to him, needed to be cultivated toward principles of lust rather than procreation.<sup>180</sup> What has been presented as a clear-cut shift from 'traditional' to 'emancipatory' sex education, however, has to be regarded with some caution. Often varying concepts about the sex education of the young were discussed at the same time; religious and 'conservative' sex education co-existed alongside 'progressive' and 'emancipatory' ideas. Sex education in West Germany was characterised by its pluralism.<sup>181</sup> This is why Bovet's sex education books *Von Mann zu Mann* (From Man to Man) and *Die werdende Frau* (The Woman-To-Be) of the late 1940s and early 1950s, for instance, continued to be edited until the late 1960s, running into a twelfth edition in 1968.<sup>182</sup>

Numerous books on this topic suggest that since the 1950s there was no lack of pedagogical concepts for sex education. The implementation of a holistic concept in school sex education going beyond biological instruction, however, was only slowly taken into consideration.

### 2.2.2. School Sex Education

To what extent did the pedagogues' demands of broadening sex education influence school curricula? As indicated above, the GDR had guidelines in place that dated back to 1947. These addressed school leavers aged seventeen on the

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<sup>179</sup> Helmut Kentler, *Sexualerziehung* (Rowohlt Taschenbuchverlag: Reinbek bei Hamburg 1970), p. 27.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>181</sup> Zimmermann, *Sexualpädagogik*, p. 49.

<sup>182</sup> Theodor Bovet, *Von Mann zu Mann: Eine Einführung ins Reifealter für junge Männer* (Katzingen: Tübingen [1950] 1968); Theodor Bovet, *Die werdende Frau: Eine Einführung ins Reifealter für junge Mädchen* [1948] 1968).

topic of 'human reproduction and ontogenetic development'.<sup>183</sup> Regarding the attempt to integrate sex education from an early age, it was not until the mid-1960s that sex education became compulsory.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, this was only when entering grade nine, which meant that students received initial sex education at the age of fourteen and fifteen. This is why, throughout the 1960s, pedagogues such as Heinz Grassel continued to repeat reasons why early sex education would benefit the socialist individual.<sup>185</sup> Confined to the biology curriculum, sex education in the 1960s encompassed a similar range of topics as in the 1950s; the female and male reproductive systems, the development of the follicle, the menstrual cycle, and VD. From the mid-1960s, however, one can observe an expansion towards social and emotional topics. The guidelines from 1966 revealed that problems of sexuality in adolescence should be taken into account.<sup>186</sup> An overview shows that this area included topics such as: a discussion on 'the relationship between the opposite sexes', 'the responsibility toward society', 'love as requirement for sexual relationships', 'equality (Gleichwertigkeit) and gender equality' and 'consequences of early pregnancies'.<sup>187</sup> These topics were perceived as a precondition for sex education. Moral and social aspects of sexuality did not appear as an addendum to biology but were discussed in their own right. In addition, this thematic

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<sup>183</sup> DIFP R 935: *Lehrpläne der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands 1947*.

<sup>184</sup> See DIFP R 962: *Lehrpläne für Grund- und Oberschulen der SBZ* (1947), pp. 28-29; DIFP R 962: *Lehrplan für Zehnjahrschulen: Biologie* (1951), pp. 20-21; DIFP R 962: *Lehrplan Biologie für die Oberschule, 9.-12. Schuljahr* (1954), pp. 25-27; DIFP R 963: *Direktive Oberschule für den Biologieunterricht* (1956), pp. 26-27; DIFP R 963: *Präzisierte Lehrplan für den Biologieunterricht, Klassen 7-10* (1966), p. 19; See also, Bach, 'Zur Entwicklung der Sexualpädagogik', pp. 229-230.

<sup>185</sup> Heinz Grassel, 'Psychologische Grundlagen der Geschlechtererziehung', in Heinz Grassel (ed.), *Probleme der geschlechtlichen Erziehung in der Schule* (Studienmaterialien zum Studium der Pädagogischen Psychologie, Universität Rostock 1964), pp. 19-37; Grassel, 'Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', pp. 762-766; Heinz Grassel, 'Psychologische und pädagogische Probleme der sexuellen Bildung und Erziehung' (Studienmaterial zum Studium der pädagogischen Psychologie, Universität Rostock 1972), pp. 212-220.

<sup>186</sup> DIFP R 963: *Präzisierte Lehrplan für den Biologieunterricht, Klassen 7-10* (Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1966), p. 19.

<sup>187</sup> DIFP R 963: *Lehrplan Biologie der Vorbereitungsklassen 9 und 10 zum Besuch der Erweiterten Oberschule* (Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1967), p. 40.

expansion was evidence of the inclusion of socialist principles into sex education, which was expected to contribute to the building of a socialist society. The political charge of the term 'love' is a case in point here.

In West Germany sex education of the young had been advanced since the 1950s. However, it was 1968 before sex education was made compulsory in each of the *Länder's* curricula. Unlike East Germany, school matters in West Germany fell within the domain of the *Länder*. Nevertheless, strong recommendations to introduce sex education in schools came from the national level, most notably from the Ministry of Health. It urged the need for school sex education with initiatives like the publication of the *Sexualkunde-Atlas*, a sex education textbook, and the commission of the sex education film *Helga*.<sup>188</sup> After the 125th conference of the *Kultusminister* for education, an assembly of the education ministers of the *Länder*, agreed on official recommendations for guidelines of sex education, and in 1968, the individual states started to implement these.<sup>189</sup> With minor variations, the main principles of official recommendations were maintained by states.<sup>190</sup> School sex education in West Germany, as the recommendations suggested, started in the first school year. By acknowledging that ideas of juvenile sexuality were to be developed from an early age, school sex education was no longer restricted to the older children. Moreover, the guidelines emphasised the importance of the contribution of subjects such as social studies, humanities, arts and religion to sex education.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 198.

<sup>189</sup> BA B310/1107: 'Empfehlungen zur Sexualerziehung in den Schulen laut Beschluß der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 3 Oktober 1968'. These recommendations were issued by order of the Kultusministerkonferenz, the Permanent Conference of the Ministers for Education of the German federal states. A reprint of the 'Empfehlungen zur Sexualerziehung 1968' was published in Ruthe (ed.), *Sexualerziehung in der Schule* (1970), pp. 156-160. For a further reference to the Beschluss see also Seiring, 'Wie sag ich's meinem Schüler? Sexualerziehung in der Bundesrepublik', *Süddeutsche Schülerzeitung* (1969), pp. 259-264.

<sup>190</sup> For the decrees of sex education guidelines of the federal states see B 310/1107: 'Erlässe in den einzelnen Bundesländern über die Sexualpädagogik an Schulen' (1970), compiled by the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA).

<sup>191</sup> 'Empfehlungen zur Sexualerziehung 1968', p. 159.

However, despite this interdisciplinary approach, biology continued to be the main focus of sex education. According to the recommendations, sex education aimed to give primarily answers to ‘questions about human sexuality in a scientific and factual manner’.<sup>192</sup> Biology was thus construed as addressing issues of human reproduction and sexual behaviour.

The emphasis on scientific rationality over morality was supported and promoted by the Ministry of Health. In initiatives to propagate sex education, Käte Strobel, social democrat Federal Health Minister (1966-1969), emphasised biological instruction. For her, a scientifically justified curriculum meant overcoming social and moral taboos.<sup>193</sup> In the guidelines, moral views were again integrated into a medical-moral alliance, elevating biological over moral education. With this shift in emphasis, as Sauerteig notes, ‘the old question of where the private sphere of the family ends and where the duty of the state to interfere begins’, was revived.<sup>194</sup> In 1977, the Federal Constitutional Court decided that sex education was primarily the task of parents and family. However, the state had the right to provide sex education in schools without the consent of the parents as long as it ‘abstain[ed] from any form of indoctrination of children and young people’.<sup>195</sup> The tension arising from this court decision again prioritised the discussion as to whether the mediation of biological facts of sexual reproduction would be sufficient to sexually enlighten young people.<sup>196</sup>

In the 1960s, a holistic concept of school sex education as demanded by pedagogues in East and West Germany was partly implemented. An expansion of topics, including social and moral aspects of sexuality, arrived along with major

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<sup>192</sup> See section ‘Aufgabe’ in ‘Empfehlungen zur Sexualerziehung 1968’, p. 156.

<sup>193</sup> BA B310/5: Käte Strobel, ‘Gesundheit in unserer Zeit’, speech at an Information Session in Nuremberg on 25 November 1967, typed manuscript/speech.

<sup>194</sup> Sauerteig, ‘Sex Education in Germany’, p. 26.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts 47 (1978), decision No 2’, 21 December 1977.

See Sauerteig, ‘Sex Education in Germany’, p. 26.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

changes in sexual politics, i.e. abortion law, contraception and healthcare benefits. Sexual politics increasingly relied on techniques of self-regulation which in turn created the need for a new pedagogical rhetoric. In East Germany sex education was linked to the goal of building a socialist society, emphasising moral over biological education. As the 1977 court decision demonstrated, West Germany seemed to prioritise biological instruction so as to avoid any form of indoctrination and achieve “value-free” education.

### **2.3. Sex Education Films and their Institutional Contexts**

In this subchapter I will examine the institutional context of sex education films to demonstrate how they became a vital tool in sex education.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the East German pedagogue and director of the *Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel* (DZL, German Central Institute for Teaching Aids), Werner Hortschansky, was convinced that learning would increase if audio-visual media were used in class-room teaching.<sup>197</sup> This assumption was shared by *modern* pedagogues and contemporary filmmakers. Pedagogues participated in the progressive belief in film and its educational influence that had developed since the emergence of moving pictures at the end of the nineteenth century. From that time it was believed that a single film had the potential to reach huge audiences and teach thousands of students. Thomas A. Edison, who was amongst the early advocates of film in the classroom, enthusiastically predicted that in future every branch of human knowledge would be taught by motion pictures.<sup>198</sup> Henry Ford also saw the educative potential of

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<sup>197</sup> Werner Hortschansky, *Unterrichtsfilme und Lichtbilder in der Schularbeit*, edited by the Zentralinstitut für Film und Bild in Unterricht, Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Volks und Wissen: Berlin 1951), p. 5.

<sup>198</sup> See Ken Smith, *Mental Hygiene: Classroom Films, 1945-70* (Blast Books: New York 1999), p. 19.

the medium and was amongst the early promoters of the educational film.<sup>199</sup> In contrast to the US, where the production of educational films was often sponsored by industrial companies, the distribution of education films in the GDR and FRG was subject to the educational mandate of national and local educational institutions.<sup>200</sup>

Attempts to use films for education in Germany stretched back to the beginnings of film but their systematic institutionalisation for education occurred under Nazi rule during the mid-1930s. With the foundation of the *Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfdU)*, and in 1940 the *Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht (RWU)*, the production and distribution of educational films was instrumentalised for Nazi ideology.<sup>201</sup> This understanding of educational film as a matter of state policy survived the Nazi regime and continued to place film as a central tool in the educational agenda in East and West Germany.<sup>202</sup>

### 2.3.1. Sex Education Films in East Germany

In the GDR, under the SMAD, one can detect tendencies to centralise film production in regard to health education. In consultation with Maxim Zetkin, head of the Soviet led *Zentralverwaltung für Gesundheitswesen*, the Filmaktiv<sup>203</sup>, and

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<sup>199</sup> Geoff Alexander, *Academic Films for the Classroom: A History* (Mc Farland & Company: North Carolina 2010), p. 15.

<sup>200</sup> The Walt Disney production *The Story of Menstruation* (1946) is one of the first examples of a sponsored sex education films for the classroom. The U.S. film was commissioned on behalf of International Cello-Cotton Company, the forerunner company of Kimberly Clark. See Michelle Martin, 'Periods, Parody, Polyphony: Fifty Years of Menstrual Education through Fiction and Film', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 22, No 1 (1997), pp. 21-23.

<sup>201</sup> 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* (Matthiesen: Husum 2002), pp. 66-75.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., pp. 278-279; The organizational structure of the RWU/RfdU also served as a role model for other European countries such as the Netherlands in post-1945. See Masson, *Watch and Learn*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>203</sup> The Filmaktiv was the forerunner organisation of the DEFA film company to be founded in 1946.

film directors, such as Fritz Dick, a film studio with a medical-biological laboratory was founded. The production of the first medical and educational films started as early as 1945.<sup>204</sup> Two years later, in 1947, the studio became part of the DEFA film company. No longer was the *Zentralverwaltung für Gesundheitswesen* responsible for the production of health films but the *Zentralverwaltung für Volksbildung*, the central administration board for popular education under SMAD control, and its *Zentralbildstelle*.<sup>205</sup> This meant that the corner stone for a centralised structure of the educational film was laid under Soviet control. After the founding of the GDR in 1949, the *Zentralbildstelle* (ZBS) was renamed several times to finally become the *Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel* (hereafter, DZL).<sup>206</sup> The main task of the DZL, in cooperation with the DEFA film studio on popular scientific films, was to guarantee the entire production of educational films. This included commissioning and approval of films as well as distribution to the local film distribution services.<sup>207</sup>

In this function the DZL acted as a hub and oversaw the entire production and distribution of teaching tools in East Germany. It controlled and contributed to each step of film production and assigned them to school curricula. Unlike cinema productions, the ideas for a film script came usually from a pedagogic employee of the DZL who drafted the first film scenarios and proposals. With these proposals the DZL then approached the DEFA film studio for popular

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<sup>204</sup> The titles of the first medical films were *Fleckfieber droht* (The Dangers of Typhus, 1946) and *Seuchengefahr* (Danger of Epidemic, 1946). Both films were directed by Hans Cürliis. Fritz Dick appeared in the credits as assistant director, author, camera operator, and head of laboratory as well as unit manager. See the online database of the DEFA Stiftung <http://www.defa-stiftung.de/filme> (last accessed in February 2014).

<sup>205</sup> Schmidt, *Medical Films*, p. 279.

<sup>206</sup> As *Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Film und Bild in Unterricht* (1950-54, Central Institute for Film and Image in Education) and *Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel* (1954-62, Central Institute for Teaching Aids), the *Zentralbildstelle* was a subordinate institution of the Ministry for Popular Education. From 1962 to 1970 the DZL was incorporated into the *Deutsche Pädagogische Zentralinstitut* (DPZI, German Pedagogical Central Institute), also a subordinate institution of the Ministry for Popular Education, and operated under the name *Institut für Unterrichtsmittel* (Institute for Teaching Aids) from 1970. Günter Jordan, *Film in der DDR: Daten, Fakten, Strukturen*, edited by Filmmuseum Potsdam, (Potsdam 2009), pp. 93, 146.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

scientific film. Next, the film studio compiled all proposals in their yearly production plans which then had to be approved by the committee (Hauptverwaltung Film), before production.<sup>208</sup> As part of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the committee decided upon each GDR film project. Film production, including feature film, in the GDR was thus characterized by comparatively long pre-production phases.<sup>209</sup> After approval by the committee, the DZL commissioned the DEFA studio with production. Pedagogic experts from the DZL supported the production as expert advisors. After the completion of the footage, again, the approval of the DZL was required, before a film could be released to schools. In contrast to feature films, education films were subjected to the discretion of two ministries; the Ministry of Cultural Affairs acting through the *HV Film* committee, which gave the DEFA film studios the starting signal for the production, and the Ministry of Popular Education with its department *HV Lehrmittel*, which designed films for use in schools. The films were usually distributed to schools together with accompanying booklets, authored by pedagogues affiliated to the DZL. These were meant to guide teachers on 'correct' use and contextualisation. They usually summarised the plot, gave additional comments on particular scenes and discussed classroom use.

In the production of sex education films, however, some deviations from this pattern can be observed. The film *Befruchtung und Furchung eines Kanincheneies* (Fertilisation and Cleavage of a Rabbit Egg Cell)<sup>210</sup>, for example, was the earliest film to be used in post-1945 sex education. Originally produced by the RdFU/RWU in 1936, the film was licensed in 1947 under the SMAD and

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<sup>208</sup> The committee consisted of members of the DEFA studio, party representatives, and cultural functionaries.

<sup>209</sup> Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (Routledge: London, New York 2002), p. 99.

<sup>210</sup> *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies* (1936), produced by the Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfdU).

approved to be used in biology classes.<sup>211</sup> This six minute film deployed real and fast motion pictures of micro-photographic shots. It presented the movement of sperm cells towards an egg cell, the changes inside the cell, cell division and the formation of the morula. The film was produced and shot at the Berlin Charité hospital. This re-use of former RWU material was not an isolated case. On the contrary, in concert with the Allied forces, the entire stock of the RdfU/RWU had been re-evaluated in consideration of which films could be recycled and re-released.<sup>212</sup> The Allied powers approved of seventy-five per cent to be used in post-1945.<sup>213</sup>

From the films produced in the GDR, Götz Oelschlägel's tetralogy *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* (1963-65, Relationships between Boys and Girls)<sup>214</sup> was not commissioned on the educational mandate of the DZL. Instead the series was produced on the initiative of the film director Oelschlägel and the DEFA film studio for popular scientific film. Oelschlägel dedicated the series to the moral education of young people from the age of eleven to twenty-one and focused on the formation of friendships and partnerships with the opposite sex. Pedagogues, initially Heinz Grassel, had urged the use of feature films in order to meet the demands of a one-sided sex education which had only offered films on biological topics.<sup>215</sup> Oelschlägel's series took this into consideration. It connected to topics such as love and romance with a filmic style that reminiscent of

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<sup>211</sup> BA DR 2/3730: *Verzeichnis der zur Verwendung in den Schulen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone durch die sowjetische Militäradministration genehmigten Unterrichtsfilme 1947.*

<sup>212</sup> Schmidt notes that despite a thorough screening of educational films by the Allies little attention has been paid to medical and scientific films. Schmidt, *Medical Films*, p. 278.

<sup>213</sup> Joachim Paschen, Werner Selg, Martin Viering, 'Medien für die Schulen – Zur Entwicklung in Deutschland', in: *Medien, Bildung und Visionen: 75 Jahre Bildstellen/Medienzentren, 50 Jahre FWU*, (edited by FWU Institut für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht) (Imprimatur Verlag: Lahnstein 2000), pp. 54-57.

<sup>214</sup> The series *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 1-4* (1963-65) consisted of four episodes directed by Götz Oelschlägel and produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films. The titles for each of the episodes are: *Sagst du's dem Kinde* (Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 1, 1963); *... weil ich kein Kind mehr bin...*: (Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 2, 1963); *Partner* (Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 3, 1964) and *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* (Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 4, 1965).

<sup>215</sup> Grassel, 'Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', p. 14.

contemporary feature than instructional film. Only after the *HV Film* had approved of the series to be released for organised screenings in cinemas did the DZL include the series into the educational film supply. At that time the topical education of young people toward moral socialist values, including love and friendship, had gained ground with the public.

From 1961 to 1963, film director Dick produced a tripartite series *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* (Biology of Human Reproduction)<sup>216</sup> which followed the conventional patterns of commissioning. A former army physician, photographer and amateur filmmaker, Dick had gained a reputation as a director of medico-scientific films in the mid to the late 1940s.<sup>217</sup> Together with medical authorities such as the surgeon Ferdinand Sauerbruch (1875-1951), and the gynaecologist Helmut Kraatz (1902-1983), Dick was involved in the production of no less than three hundred medical films between 1947 and 1981.<sup>218</sup> In contrast to Oelschlägel's series, Dick delivered biological education, which still ranked among the top topics in sex education. *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* covered the anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system, the fertilisation and embedding of the germ cell, and the foetal development and childbirth. Commissioned by the DZL, the series was based on preliminary film scripts written by psychologist Manfred Kurze, research associate at the Humboldt

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<sup>216</sup> The three episodes of series *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1-3* (1961-1963), directed by Fritz Dick and produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films, are entitled: *Anatomie und Physiologie des menschlichen Geschlechtesystems* (Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1, 1963/64), *Befruchtungsvorgang und Einbettung des Keimes* (Biologie der Fortpflanzung 2, 1962/63) and *Vorgeburtliche Entwicklung und Geburt*: (Biologie der Fortpflanzung 3, 1963).

<sup>217</sup> The titles of the first medical films produced in the Soviet zone of Germany were *Fleckfieber droht* (The Dangers of Typhus) and *Seuchengefahr* (Danger of Epidemic, 1946). Both films were directed by Hans Cürlis. Fritz Dick appeared in the credits as assistant director, author, camera operator, and head of laboratory as well as unit manager. See Gerhard Knopfe, 'Kalendarium einer deutschen Spezies: Der populärwissenschaftliche Film der DEFA', in Günter Jordan, Ralf Schenk (eds), *Schwarzweiß und Farbe: DEFA-Dokumentarfilme 1946-92* (ed. by Filmmuseum Potsdam) (Jovis: Berlin [1996] 2000), p. 297.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., see also Schwarz, 'Vom Jahrmarktsspektakel', p. 28. A useful and comprehensive but incomplete overview of Dick's films can be found on the website of the DEFA Stiftung, <http://www.defa-stiftung.de/cms/defa-stiftung-home> (accessed in October 2011).

University and gynaecologist Helmut Kraatz.<sup>219</sup> By seconding medical experts to Dick, the DZL stressed its ambition to produce scientifically unobjectionable medico-scientific films for the classroom.

This overview of the sex education films in East Germany has demonstrated the involvement of medical experts in the production of sex and health education films as early as 1945, and the enduring nature of biological approaches to sex education.

### 2.3.2. Sex Education Films in West Germany

In West Germany, the reconstruction of the film industry and the production of educational tools went hand in hand with the comprehensive re-education programme of the Allied forces, who oversaw the entire reconstruction of the West German economy and industry after the Second World War.<sup>220</sup> In mandatory screenings, the German population was confronted with the cruelties and mass murder of the Nazis. For this reason, insofar as it was possible with large cities lying in ruins, the re-opening of cinemas was a priority in the re-education programme.<sup>221</sup> In particular, the young, who had never experienced a democratic system before, became a target for audio-visual education. They had to be educated morally and socially as a new generation of citizens who would be

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<sup>219</sup> BA DR 118/5118: *DEFA-Filmakte zu Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1961-1963*.

<sup>220</sup> Hake, *German National Cinema*, pp. 87-95; Heiner Roß (ed.), *Lernen Sie diskutieren! Re-education durch Film: Strategien der westlichen Alliierten nach 1945* (Filmblatt-Schriften: Beiträge zur Filmgeschichte, Bd. 3) (Cinegraph Babelsberg: Berlin 2005).

<sup>221</sup> Ronny Loewy, 'Atrocity pictures: Alliierte Filmaufnahmen aus den befreiten Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagern', in Heiner Roß (ed.), *Lernen Sie diskutieren! Re-education durch Film: Strategien der westlichen Alliierten nach 1945* (Filmblatt-Schriften: Beiträge zur Filmgeschichte Bd. 3), (Cinegraph Babelsberg: Berlin 2005), pp. 89-96; Brigitte J. Hahn, 'Dokumentarfilm im Dienste der Umerziehung: Amerikanische Filmpolitik, 1945-1953', in Heiner Roß (ed.), *Lernen Sie diskutieren! Re-education durch Film: Strategien der westlichen Alliierten nach 1945* (Cinegraph Babelsberg: Berlin 2005), pp. 19-32; Brigitte J. Hahn, *Umerziehung durch Dokumentarfilm? Ein Instrument amerikanischer Kulturpolitik im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945-1953* (=Kommunikationsgeschichte 4)(Lit Verlag: Münster 1997).

able to govern a democratic country.<sup>222</sup> The reconstruction of the film industry in the Federal Republic, unlike East Germany, was subject to changes and the competing interests of Allied powers. The Information Control Division of the U.S. army deemed the construction of the film industry and cinema crucial. It advocated a German film industry based upon principles of free competition, open markets, decartelization and abolition of state control.<sup>223</sup>

In 1949, the SPIO (Spitzenorganisation), the main professional organisation of the German film industry, instituted the Voluntary Self-Regulation (hereafter FSK, *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle*). The FSK was responsible for approving films for theatrical release. The role of the FSK remained questionable, since freedom of censorship was guaranteed through the *Basic Law*, but, in fact, it acted as an agency of self-censorship.<sup>224</sup> Two years later the *Filmbewertungsstelle* (Film Evaluation Office) established a system of economic support that equally involved political censorship. With the *Federal Film Law* in place, films promoting nationalist, racist and communist ideas were banned.<sup>225</sup> The U.S. influence on West German film industry over those of the other Allied forces corroborated with the European Recovery Programme (ERP) between 1948 and 1952. The ERP, or 'Marshall Plan', named after Secretary of State George Marshall, guaranteed financial support for the economic reconstruction and re-education of European industries. This enabled the U.S. to assert its influence on the re-construction and democratisation in Europe on a large scale. Films, in this regard, were crucial for

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<sup>222</sup> Hahn, 'Dokumentarfilm', p. 30.

<sup>223</sup> Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (North Carolina UP: Chapel Hill/London 1995), p. 54. It was the U.S. model which eventually was implemented. In contrast, the British Allies had favoured a centralised film industry in West Germany so as to not have film production subjected to the free market economy.

<sup>224</sup> Martin Loiperdinger, 'State, Legislation, Censorship and Funding', in Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter, Deniz Götürk (eds.), *The German Cinema Book* (BFI Publishing: London 2002), p. 155.

<sup>225</sup> Hake, *German National Cinema*, p. 89; Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany*, pp. 51-54.

the ambitions of American re-education policy. Several hundred film titles were imported to support the reconstruction on an economic as well as cultural level.<sup>226</sup>

In 1946, as part of the filmic education of young people, three institutes came into being, giving access to revised collections of the former Nazi institution RfdU/RWU: the *Institut für Film und Bild* (Institute for Film and Image) in Hamburg, the *Institut für den Unterrichtsfilm* (Institute for Educational Films) in Munich and the *Zentralbildstelle* (Central Educational Film Hire Service) in Berlin. After screening of the RWU films by the Allied powers, only thirteen per cent were eliminated from the stock. This elimination concerned films with Nazi and militaristic contents. Another twenty per cent were revised by cutting out and shortening scenes that contained NS symbols.<sup>227</sup>

The foundation of the *Institut für Film in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (hereafter FWU, Institute for Film and Image in Science and Education) in 1950 was the result of a desire to create one central institution for the three western zones.<sup>228</sup> The FWU acted as a central location, similar to the former RWU and the East German DZL, which produced and distributed educational media, although, in contrast to the GDR, not exclusively. The office was established in Munich, and with financial support of the *Länder* the FWU produced films and placed orders to privately owned production companies. The FWU films also targeted extracurricular youth and adult education. The FWU's first post-war productions addressed topics that could induce a democratic mind-set. The educational film *Unsere Straße* (Our Street, 1951), for instance, displayed the joint commitment of boys and girls to the construction of a destroyed street in a rural area and

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<sup>226</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>227</sup> Ursula von Keitz, 'Die Kinematographie in der Schule. Zur politischen Pädagogik des Unterrichtsfilms von RfdU und RWU', in Peter Zimmermann, Kay Hoffmann (eds.), *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland, Vol 3: Drittes Reich, 1933-1945* (Reclam: Stuttgart 2005), p. 488.

<sup>228</sup> Paschen, Selg, Viering, 'Medien für Schulen', pp. 56-57; Keitz 'Kinematographie in der Schule', p. 488.

emphasised the feeling of solidarity and responsibility in re-construction.<sup>229</sup>

Distribution methods remained similar to those of the former RWU. The FWU was a central institution which supplied the *Landesbildstellen*, the distribution services of the *Länder*, and distribution services in local communities. In 1956 the FWU film production was split. The production of educational film remained part of the FWU, whereas scientific film production was incorporated into the newly found *Institut für den wissenschaftlichen Film* (IWF, Institute for the Scientific Film) in Göttingen. The *Länder* acted as shareholders of the FWU. The supervisory board was assembled by one representative of each of the *Länder*. The responsibilities of the board were fixing the guidelines for the FWU and approving production and economic plans.

Due to the lack of production material and projectors, the FWU often produced silent films. Only in the mid-1950s did the production of sound films overtake that of silent. In 1956, the first Technicolor film came into being.<sup>230</sup> During the 1960s the FWU developed thematic programmes, giving an overview of the production plans for the following five years. The FWU, as did the DZL in East Germany, cooperated closely with teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education, and with representatives of school administration boards to develop and adjust the filmic production to subjects taught in schools.<sup>231</sup> The main focus in the 1960s was on political education, early modern and modern history and geography.<sup>232</sup> The FWU, however, did not have the influence of the East German equivalent the DZL as local film distribution services could purchase films produced by the FWU, but they also could hire films independently. For instance, the film *Jungen in den Flegeljahren* (1958, Boys in their Teens) directed by Werner Kipp and produced in his Hamburg film studio *R.K.F. Filmproduktion*, was distributed

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<sup>229</sup> Karl Koch, *Unsere Straße* (1951), produced by FWU.

<sup>230</sup> Paschen, Selg, Viering, 'Medien für die Schulen', pp. 53-59.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-59.

through local distribution services (Landesbildstellen). Likewise ...*erwachsen sein dagegen sehr* (1956, Being an Adult though) was not a production commissioned by the FWU but produced in Hamburg by the privately owned company of the film director Wolf Hart.

Although the FWU was a central umbrella organisation representing the interests of the *Länder*, it had no executive power to dictate which films were held in the individual distribution services of the *Länder* and cities. In addition, owing to the fragmentation of the West German film industry since 1945, school films were produced on a less centralised level than in the GDR. As a consequence, greater independence was given to distributors, either commercial or non-commercial, who decided which films they wanted distributed under their names.<sup>233</sup> The greater diversity of topics in West German sex education films was a result of this less centralised level production, which allowed for independent local production.<sup>234</sup>

In West Germany the first sex education films entered the market during the phase of the ERP. For example *Die Entstehung menschlichen Lebens* (1948, Formation of Human Life)<sup>235</sup> and *Wunder der Menschwerdung* (1948, Miracle of Humanisation)<sup>236</sup> found their way to West Germany. Both films were produced by the U.S. McGraw Hill production company. In the first half of the twentieth century, this publishing house focused on textbooks, mostly in the areas of engineering and industrial management. As early as the mid-1940s, the company expanded into education films. A close cooperation with diverse governmental institutions allowed McGraw Hill to become an important supplier of textbooks and films for the West German market. As part of the ERP, McGraw Hill gained a

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<sup>233</sup> Hans-Michael Bock, Tim Bergfelder (eds.), *The Concise Cinegraph: Encyclopaedia of German Cinema* (Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford 2009), p. 564.

<sup>234</sup> See filmography.

<sup>235</sup> *Die Entstehung menschlichen Lebens* (1948, US).

<sup>236</sup> *Wunder der Menschwerdung* (1948, US), produced by McGraw Hill.

reputation for industrial and management films.<sup>237</sup> The films *Boy to Man* (1961)<sup>238</sup> and *Girl to Woman* (1964)<sup>239</sup> were examples of these kinds of sex education films. Both were originally produced by the American company Churchill Wexler film production and distributed in German translations.

Apart from the import of American productions in these early years, a number of films from the former RWU was re-released. This included the film *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies* (1936) which was used in East as well as West Germany.<sup>240</sup> The film *Helga: On the Origins of Human Life* (1967)<sup>241</sup> is another example of heterogeneous production conditions in West Germany. This film was directed by Erich F. Bender on behalf of the Ministry of Health. This film was part of a national agenda brought forward by minister of health Käte Strobel.

Additionally, the FWU distributed its own productions for sex education. Amongst them were *Der weibliche Zyklus* (1963, The Menstrual Cycle)<sup>242</sup>, and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (1965, Pregnancy and Childbirth).<sup>243</sup> Both films were produced with the assistance of the medical expert Claus-D. Moslener. Similar to the GDR a reliance on biological topics can be observed here.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> On the influence of McGraw Hill management films in Europe, see, in particular, the chapters ‘Zeichentrick im Effizienzfiel: Industrial Management (1951)’ and ‘Popularisierungsstrategien: Produktivitätsfilme 1948-1952’ in Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 207-246.

<sup>238</sup> Robert B. Churchill, *Boy to Man* (Vom Jungen zum Mann) (USA 1961), produced by Churchill Wexler Film Production, German synchronization by H.G. Zeiss Film on behalf of the Konferenz der Landesfilmdienste.

<sup>239</sup> Robert B. Churchill, *Girl to Woman* (Vom Mädchen zur Frau) (USA 1964), produced by Churchill Wexler Film Production, German synchronization by H.G. Zeiss Film on behalf of the Konferenz der Landesfilmdienste.

<sup>240</sup> Joachim Brauer, *Die AVM in der Geschlechtererziehung* (Manz Verlag: München 1968), p. 72-73.

<sup>241</sup> Bender, *Helga* (1967).

<sup>242</sup> *Der weibliche Zyklus* (1963, West Germany), produced by FWU.

<sup>243</sup> *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (1965, West Germany), produced and commissioned by FWU.

<sup>244</sup> For a detailed list of sex education films in East and West Germany, see the filmography.

## 2.4. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the comparison of sexual politics and sex education in East and West Germany. Its aim was to better understand the historical context of East and West German sex education films in order to assess their role in and contribution to sexual politics of the time.

The concept of biopolitics is a suitable basis for this comparison, as it is grounded in an idea of modern population policies that, as Dickinson has demonstrated, was paradigmatic for Germany during the twentieth century.<sup>245</sup> Central to biopolitics as an analytical tool is an understanding of sexual politics as an arena of power relations and discourses about the management of sexuality that relocates and shifts over time. According to this perspective sexual politics are a matter of the exertion and defiance of power, combined with strategies of adjustment.

The historical comparison has revealed that, around the 1960s, there was a shift from sexual politics as a means of primarily medical management, to the self-management of the sexual body, this becoming a parameter for successful sexual conduct and life. This challenges the assumption that the 1960s marked a watershed for freedom and liberation. Instead, assessing these adjustments as biopolitical highlights the importance of strategies of persuasion, relocation of power relations and dynamics between self-determination and state regulation.

The examples of maternity protection laws, the legislation of abortion, and access to contraceptives demonstrate that the GDR and FRG shared some striking similarities. Following the war, East and West German sexual politics were strongly associated with demographic ruptures, a surplus of women and a rising VD rate. As a result, sexual policies were conceptualised around VD prevention,

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<sup>245</sup> Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', pp. 1-48.

increase in birth rate and stabilisation of the heteronormative concept of partnership and family. The implementation of these policies often relied on legal and medical prescriptions.

This framework increasingly became debatable during the 1950s and 1960s. When it became obvious that sexual politics could not produce expected results since citizens did not fully comply with the state prescriptions, an adjustment was necessary. The FRG and GDR reacted similarly, as measures to loosen the abortion law and improve accessibility to contraceptives demonstrate. Citizens were expected to take decisions themselves where medical professionals had previously been responsible. Along with this increase in personal choice came more responsibilities. The states tried to adjust their sexual politics so that a wider range of personal options and choices was provided. Consequently the need for new pedagogical measures emerged.

The development of sex education is representative of this process of adjustment. In both countries sex education gradually moved away from VD prevention and biological instruction towards moral and social questions. Also, the fact that sex education was introduced as a distinct school subject in the 1960s, was indicative that every citizen had to learn appropriate sexual behaviour in order to lead a successful life.

A closer look at the concepts and strategies of sex education revealed that West Germany increasingly resorted to rationality to confront the moral challenges of the time. Käthe Strobel, who in her role as Federal Health minister from mid to the late 1960s hoped to dismantle social taboos through biological instruction, embodies this approach. In contrast, the GDR settled for an approach grounded in political ideology and focused on the core principal of love and social aspects of sexuality. The adjustment of sex education shows two distinctive movements.

West Germany in the late 1960s shifted from VD prevention, to moral questions of sexuality, to rational measures. Rationality came to serve as the lowest common denominator in a society that was increasingly characterised by pluralism of values. In contrast, the GDR shifted from VD prevention only to morality and aimed at tackling the adjustment in sexual politics with a focus on sexuality as a mainly social matter.

Another main difference in sexual politics was the role women were expected to play in society. Whereas West Germany stressed the importance of women acting as housewives and mothers, East Germany constructed an image of women combining their roles as mothers and workers. Significantly, the role of men as breadwinners remained unchallenged.

Based on this assessment of East and West German sexual politics, chapters 3 to 5 are concerned with placing sex education films in this context. Film, as has been suggested, functioned as a biopolitical tool that was affected by and contributed to broader developments in sexual politics and sex education. Films created and mediated sexual knowledge by combining it with techniques for self-government. On this understanding, the subsequent chapters address the discursive strands, biology (discussed in chapter 3), morality (discussed in chapter 4) and gender (discussed in chapter 5), to explore how films engaged with the broader developments in sexual politics. The separation of the strands in each of the following chapters unfolds the diversity of sexual knowledge in films.

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## 3. The Biological Body: Rationality and the Medico-Scientific Management of the Body

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As discussed in chapter 2, despite the shifting emphasis of sex education for the young, biology remained crucial. Its significance can be seen in the number of sex education films explaining sexual biology. Out of some thirty-two films identified, thirteen were dedicated to the mediation of biological knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, almost half of the films available for East and West German classrooms between 1945 and 1970, presented biological sex education.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the first films available post-1945 were titles such as *Befruchtung und Furchung eines Kanincheneis* (1936),<sup>3</sup> *Die Entstehung menschlichen Lebens* (Formation of Human Life, 1948)<sup>4</sup> and *Wunder der Menschwerdung* (*Miracle of Humanisation*, 1948).<sup>5</sup> All these films focused on human reproduction from a biological perspective and were distributed until the late 1960s.

A number of new films addressing biological aspects were produced in the 1960s. In East Germany, for instance, the filmmaker Fritz Dick directed the three-piece series *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* (Biology of Human Reproduction, 1961-1963)<sup>6</sup> with the assistance of the DZL. In West Germany, the national supplier of teaching tools, FWU, engaged in productions such as *Der Weibliche Zyklus* (The

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<sup>1</sup> A number of films distributed for sex education have been identified by consulting diverse historic publications, compiling available teaching tools on this subject. Also online databases which are still in the process of being fed were helpful search engines in order to identify sex education films. So far, approximately thirty two films have been identified.

<sup>2</sup> See filmography.

<sup>3</sup> RfdU, *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneis*.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Entstehung menschlichen Lebens* (1948)

<sup>5</sup> *Wunder der Menschwerdung* (USA 1948), produced by McGraw Hill.

<sup>6</sup> Dick, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1-3* (1961-1963, East Germany), commissioned by the DZL, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific film.

Menstrual Cycle, 1963),<sup>7</sup> *Reifeteilung* (Reduction Division, 1965),<sup>8</sup>  
*Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (Pregnancy and Childbirth, 1965),<sup>9</sup> *Kernteilung*  
(Mitosis, 1965)<sup>10</sup> and *Pubertät bei Jungen* (Male Puberty, 1966).<sup>11</sup>

The endurance of biology amidst a shifting emphasis in sex education involved a change in its status. In the late 1940s and most of the 1950s, sex education was primarily perceived as a means of VD prevention. In this context biological instruction provided information on disease pathology as a deterrent, as well as a prophylactic measure.<sup>12</sup> During the late 1950s and 1960s demands were made for the integration of moral and social themes into sex education. First and foremost, sexual pedagogues made a case for a holistic approach to sex education. They argued that with changes in the social environment such as the increased commodification of sex, the loosening of abortion laws and better access to contraceptives, sex education needed a new rhetoric that would provide guidance on sexual morals and choices.<sup>13</sup> Pedagogues in both East and West believed biology could not tackle the social and moral changes being experienced at that time. Nonetheless, biology was perceived as a foundation for the discussion of social and moral aspects.

The shift of emphasis in sex education made biology one component within a holistic approach. Nevertheless it remained unchallenged as to its capacity to deliver objective and rational knowledge about “the facts of life”. At the time (and even today) this established a heterosexual model, emphasising the biological distinctiveness of the male and female sex on the basis of their capacity to

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<sup>7</sup> FWU, *Der weibliche Zyklus*.

<sup>8</sup> *Reifeteilung (Meiose)* (1965) produced by FWU and Rudolf Stölting (Munich).

<sup>9</sup> FWU, *Schwangerschaft und Geburt*.

<sup>10</sup> *Kernteilung (Mitose)* (1965), produced by FWU and Rudolf Stölting (Munich).

<sup>11</sup> *Pubertät bei Jungen* (1966), produced by FWU and the animation studio Brunsch (West Berlin).

<sup>12</sup> The link between sex education and VD prevention has been a recurrent topic in international social hygiene and sex education since the beginning of the twentieth century. See, for instance, Pernick, ‘More than Illustrations’, pp. 19-35.

<sup>13</sup> See for instance, Oestereich, ‘Gegenwartsaspekte’, pp. 3-5, 11-12.

reproduce. Backed by scientific authority, this seemingly objective knowledge prepared a normative basis for the moral and social understanding of sexuality.

This chapter is concerned with the contribution of sex education films to the establishment of biological knowledge as a normative undercoat. It highlights biology as a persistent strand of sex education concerned with attributing rational meanings to the body, and will ask how films mediated “the facts of life”. The focus, hence, lies on biology as a constructive process attaching meaning to the body. In order to better understand the translation of biological knowledge in sex education films, the chapter sets out to scrutinise their stylistic and narrative characteristics. These are significant as they translate medico-scientific knowledge of the body into applicable social relations. The filmic translation is firstly concerned with the arrangement of knowledge and the composition of audio and visual elements, so as to make the filmic contents easy to comprehend. Translation thus includes questions of what is said about the body, and how the way it is said produces normative understanding of the sexual body. Secondly, the filmic translation of medico-scientific knowledge of the body aims to sustain social power relations. Translation is thus also concerned with questions of how the body is addressed and who holds authority over imparted knowledge. Based on these questions this chapter will shed light on the filmic strategies involved in the production of a body image grounded in scientifically validated biological knowledge. To better understand this it is essential to point to the relationship between film and science. On the one hand film was used as a medium for the distribution of knowledge. On the other, notably in a research context, it obtained the status of a scientific instrument capable of producing scientifically valid images.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cartwright, *Screening the Body*; Henning Schmidgen, ‘Cinematography without Film: Architectures and Technologies of Visual Instruction in Biology around 1900’, in Nancy

The subchapter 'Genealogy of the Medico-Scientific Film' will trace the entanglement of medicine and film. It will focus on how this established a specific understanding of objectivity that played a central role in discussions of film use in the classroom after 1945. The idea of objectivity in sex education films derived from the scientific uses of film as a tool to record and distribute scientific evidence. The aspirations of scientific film to produce knowledge and make it accessible to an audience, arguably stood at the heart of educational film and remained formative after 1945.

The following subchapters undertake an in-depth analysis tracing the diversity of translation processes that contributed to the emergence of a biological body. With the focus on individual film elements, commentary and graphic cues (discussed in chapter 3.2.), schematic graphics (discussed in chapter 3.3.), micro-cinematography (discussed in chapter 3.4.) and forms of representation of science itself (discussed in chapter 3.5), I will demonstrate how films created and translated scientific into pedagogic knowledge. Each of these elements employed specific strategies to standardise the body, maintain hierarchies of knowledge and claim scientific objectivity.

The subchapter '*Biology of Reproduction (1963/64): A case study*' scrutinises how individual film elements worked together to generate a normative version of the body as medico-scientific object. The ensuing biologisation aimed at a form of governmentality that was meant to facilitate a particular rational body perception which allowed the centre-staging of heterosexuality and procreation as a biological necessity.

The consideration of these genealogical factors and filmic strategies will help to explain how the biologisation of the body in films contributed to establishing a normative foundation within shifting sex education.

### 3.1. Genealogy of the Medico-Scientific Film

Recent enquiry, mostly from a feminist perspective, has increasingly questioned the notion of the timeless character of scientific evidence and power.<sup>15</sup> With regard to medical imaging, Lisa Cartwright and Regula Burri, amongst others, have suggested that every new imaging technology has required a different set of reading skills, and has thus re-formulated body image and an objective stance towards it.<sup>16</sup> The manifestation of evidence has been stripped off its ontological character regarding its changing form. Arguably, this inquiry has successfully contributed to the deconstruction of biological superiority and demonstrated that the idea of objectivity is not time-transcendent, but rather dependent on social categories of scientific practice, argumentation and visualisation. Thus a social conception of 'objectivity' is closely intertwined with the social environment and can only be maintained through the same.<sup>17</sup> Following the assumption that every new medical imaging technology configured prerequisites for the establishment of scientific objectivity, this genealogy focuses on film and the special role it maintained within and through science.

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<sup>15</sup> Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Free Association Books: London 1991); Burri, *Doing Images*; Cartwright, *Screening the Body*; Dijck, *The Transparent Body*; Gugerli, 'Soziotechnische Evidenzen', pp. 131-159; Jordanova, 'Medicine and Visual Culture', pp. 89-99; Martin, *The Woman in the Body*; Sturken, Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*; Treichler, Cartwright, Penley (eds.), *The Visible Woman*; Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, 'The Image of Objectivity', *Representations* 40 (Special Issue: Seeing Science) (1992), pp. 81-128; Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women and Men* (Basic Books: New York [1985] 1992, second revised edition).

<sup>16</sup> Cartwright, *Screening the Body*, pp. 3-4; Burri, *Doing Images*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>17</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 14-15.

The advent of film as a new medical imaging technology brought with it its own imagery to support scientific objectivity.<sup>18</sup> The significance of film for science stems mainly from two characteristics. Firstly, film was perceived as moving photographs of real life processes. It was understood and used as an apparatus for registration and observation that made visible processes that were hitherto hidden from the human eye. In this role, film obtained credibility to represent parts of reality without loss. Secondly, closely connected with this idea of filmic documentation, was the expectation that film was able to produce scientific evidence. Given these expectations, and the postulated value of film for the sciences, it is understandable that scientists contributed to the production of education films from the early days.<sup>19</sup> A fascination for visual material, most notably photography from the early to the mid-nineteenth century, and cinematography from the late 1880s, prompted scientists and educators to experiment, test, modify and critically assess these new media formats.<sup>20</sup> Since their inception, photography and film, amongst other visual tools, were deployed in the scientific realm for education, research, and medical diagnosis and observation.<sup>21</sup> Visual recording tools impacted greatly on medical practices, as they became central to diagnostic and observation techniques. For instance, cinematography made it possible to share a physician's observation within and beyond an expert community. An early advocate of the use of cinematography was the Swiss clinician Julius Ries. In his contribution *Kinematographie der Befruchtung und Zellteilung* (Cinematography of Fertilisation and Proliferation), published in 1909, Ries thought the film apparatus to be capable of preserving

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<sup>18</sup> Cartwright, *Screening the Body*.

<sup>19</sup> Schmidt, Medical films, pp. 42-44; Pernick, 'More than Illustrations', pp. 19-35.

<sup>20</sup> Scott Curtis, 'Photography and Medical Observation', in Nancy Anderson, Michael R. Dietrich (eds.), *The Educated Eye: Visual Culture and Pedagogy in the Life Sciences* (Dartmouth College Press: Hanover, New Hampshire 2012), pp. 68-93; Iwan Rhys Morus, 'Seeing and Believing Science', *Isis* 97, No 1 (2006), pp. 101-110; Schmidgen, 'Cinematography', pp. 94-120.

<sup>21</sup> Schmidgen, 'Cinematography', pp. 94-120.

and disseminating results of immediate perception and observation.<sup>22</sup> Using the example of cell and nuclear division, he argued that these processes were best observed under the microscope. This, for Ries, however, raised two problems. Firstly, the processes either unfolded too quickly for human perception, or so slowly that observation became tedious. Secondly, only a few researchers had access to the microscopic gaze, leaving out others such as medical students.<sup>23</sup> Ries contended that, if one tried to record microscopic observations through drawings only a 'composition of memory images' could be preserved.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, people having access 'achievements in research' in the form of drawings had to accept these without authentic proof.<sup>25</sup> Ries believed that film could solve this dilemma by not only delivering proof through the depiction of reality but also by enhancing human perception. The basis for his thought was an assumption of the capacity of film to produce scientific evidence.<sup>26</sup>

This conception of film as a device with the capacity to produce and distribute scientific facts and hidden truths, influenced the development of scientific filmmaking.<sup>27</sup> Doctors, pedagogues and social hygienists stressed the importance of film in bringing objective truths to everybody's perception. The Munich doctor Waldemar Schweisheimer envisioned the supremacy of film over the press, for it could convey and persuade more powerfully than traditional media formats. He also stressed its capacity to mediate knowledge on the basis of persuasion.<sup>28</sup> Scientific interest thus was also closely intertwined with pedagogical and reformist ideas seeking to explore the optimal use of visual apparatuses to

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<sup>22</sup> Julius Ries, 'Kinematographie der Befruchtung und Zellteilung', *Archiv für mikroskopische Anatomie* 74, No 1 (1909), pp. 1-31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Cartwright, *Screening the Body*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>28</sup> See Schwarz, 'Jahrmarktsspektakel', pp. 19-20.

enhance learning.<sup>29</sup> In 1924 neurologist Curt Thomalla, who directed a number of health films and would later pursue a career in the *Reich Ministry for Popular Education and Propaganda* (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda), postulated that education films had to be objective, accurate, thorough, and comprehensible.<sup>30</sup> As truthful and objective representation of reality came to be central, the extent to which fictionalised scenes should be included in films became a subject of contention,<sup>31</sup> and discussions emerged on how to classify the education film.<sup>32</sup> Thomalla, for example, introduced a threefold concept differentiating university, classroom, and popular film. Another commentator, Friedrich Plage, made a distinction between educational and instructive.<sup>33</sup> Each of these classifications represented a ratio in the use of fictionalised and documentary scenes. As in theory, film production processes seem to have been characterised by adapting to screening contexts. Using *UFA-Kulturfilmabteilung*, film historian Klaus Kreimeier notes that the same source material was re-edited and re-arranged in order to customise the films for the respective target audiences.<sup>34</sup>

This approach accounts for the characteristic heterogeneous composition of these films, making it hard to develop a consistent definition of the genre.<sup>35</sup>

However, a few common characteristics aiming at the request for objectivity can be discerned. The use of micro-cinematography, slow and fast motion, graphic abstraction of complex phenomena, schematic drawing and trick animation stood

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<sup>29</sup> Schmidgen, 'Cinematography', pp. 94-120; Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> Ursula von Keitz, 'Wissen als Film: Zur Entwicklung des Lehr- und Unterrichtsfilms', in Klaus Kreimeier, Antje Ehmman, Jeanpaul Goergen (eds.), *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland, Vol 2: Weimarer Republik 1918-1933* (Reclam: Stuttgart 2005), p. 132.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132-135.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Klaus Kreimeier, 'Ein deutsches Paradigma: Die Kulturabteilung der Ufa', in Klaus Kreimeier, Antje Ehmman, Jeanpaul Goergen (eds.), *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland, Vol 2: Weimarer Republik 1918-1933* (Reclam: Stuttgart 2005), pp. 83-84.

<sup>35</sup> Schmidt, *Medical films*, pp. 41-42; Bonah, Laukötter, 'Moving Pictures and Medicine', pp. 122-123; Kreimeier, 'Ein deutsches Paradigma', pp. 83-84.

at the core of the scientific film. What all these components had in common was that they fostered a static gaze. In addition, the usually fixed camera position helped to fix the filmic frame. It is this form of static representation which shaped the very notion of objective representation, in contrast to the dynamic aesthetics of flexible camera work that was increasingly used in entertainment cinema.<sup>36</sup> To support the scientific message, the camera did not intervene but was meant to solely 'document' and 'record' the processes. This experimental arrangement, according to media scholar Ramón Reichert, still acts as a guarantor of scientific objectivity.<sup>37</sup> Through the combination of three mainly symbolic systems, life action shots, including slow and fast motion and micro-cinematography, graphical and schematic animations, and inter-titles including (live) commentary, a powerful and authoritative framework was created which lent a documentary character to the life processes on screen.<sup>38</sup> Scientific film, it was assumed, would be able to generate objective knowledge, enhance human perception and distribute pedagogically valuable scientific truths to large audiences. This set of assumptions endured more or less uninterrupted from the early phase, through the Nazi regime, to the post 1945 period.<sup>39</sup>

When taking a closer look at the situation after 1945, arguments for the introduction of educational films seem familiar. In a 1954 article in the East German film journal *Deutsche Filmkunst* (German Film Arts), film critic and pedagogue Boleslaw Lewicki's stated that

The principle of the so called scientific supplementation and elucidation of sensory perception is the characteristic of the scientific film. This principle forms the borderline between scientific film and documentary film. The

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<sup>36</sup> Kreimeier, Klaus, 'Komplex-starr: Semiologie des Kulturfilms', in Klaus Kreimeier, Antje Ehmman, Jeanpaul Goergen (eds.), *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland, Vol 2: Weimarer Republik 1918-1933* (Reclam: Stuttgart 2005), pp. 88-89.

<sup>37</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>38</sup> Kreimeier, 'Komplex-starr', pp. 87-119.

<sup>39</sup> For a subtle study on medical film and the RWU in Nazi Germany see Schmidt, *Medical films*.

filmic apparatus is equipped with the possibility of registration and depiction of those natural phenomena that are inaccessible for the normal sensory perception of human beings.<sup>40</sup>

Lewicki, like his predecessors, emphasised the multifunctional role of film by describing it as a tool that represented scientific knowledge while acting as a scientific apparatus which observed, registered and generated scientific images. In a similar vein, the East German pedagogue and later head of the *DZL*, Werner Hortzschansky, favoured the use of films with biological images in class-room teaching over conventional teaching aids such as the chart, the textbook or the slide.<sup>41</sup> According to him, static images failed to represent the functioning of natural processes over time.<sup>42</sup> Film, he stated, was able to close the gap between static representation and observation of natural processes in real time. He maintained that through editing techniques, particularly the manipulation of time through slow and fast motion, film made natural processes visible to the naked eye which otherwise could not be observed.<sup>43</sup> Hortzschansky too perceived film not only as a device for the mediation of scientific knowledge, but also as a scientific instrument producing manipulated scientific observation.<sup>44</sup> Both authors subscribed to the belief that film, despite its manipulative character, visualised rational findings and thereby contributed to objective representation. In 1951, Hortzschansky further claimed that an exchange of education films could, if not

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<sup>40</sup> Original quote: 'Die Spezifik des wissenschaftlichen Films ist das Prinzip der sogenannten wissenschaftlichen Ergänzung und Verdeutlichung von Sinneswahrnehmungen. Dieses Prinzip bildet die Grenzlinie zwischen wissenschaftlichen Film und Dokumentarfilm. Der Filmapparat besitzt die Möglichkeit der Registrierung und Darstellung von Naturerscheinungen, die der normalen Sinneswahrnehmung des Menschen unzugänglich ist.' Boleslaw A. Lewicki, 'Zur Theorie des bildungs-wissenschaftlichen Films', *Deutsche Filmkunst* 3 (1954), p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> BA DR2/4168: Werner Hortzschansky, 'Unterrichtsfilm, Lehrfilm, Industriefilm, Forschungsfilm, populärwissenschaftlicher Film, Dokumentarfilm: Versuch einer Begriffsbestimmung', Sonderdruck, *Deutsche Filmkunst* 1 (1955).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

contribute to German unification, at least bridge the growing gap between East and West Germany.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast to Hortzschansky, Karl Gass wrote in *Deutsche Filmkunst* in 1956, that the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films considered its ideological commitment as 'the systematic distribution of the latest findings' of the ever 'progressing sciences'.<sup>46</sup> In this context, the production of sex education films containing biological information received a wider political dimension by positing biology and film in a modern understanding of scientific progress. Unlike Hortzschansky, Gass linked a belief in scientific progress to socialist ideology and thus pointed to its implications for Cold War rivalry. This often rhetorical competition between East and West was not restricted to a race for scientific superiority, but also included the educational system. From the end of the 1950s to the early 1960s, East German curricula expanded toward natural sciences such as chemistry, metallurgy, electronics, machine building, energy, agriculture and mathematics.<sup>47</sup> The numbers of graduate engineers in the years 1960 and 1961 were double those in the FRG.<sup>48</sup>

While hopes for German unification decreased on the erection of the Berlin wall in 13 August 1961, Hortzschansky's comment nevertheless made a point, and his belief in the objective and rational mediation of biological knowledge was

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<sup>45</sup> Original quote: 'Im Austausch von Unterrichtsfilmen und Lichtbildern mit Westdeutschland müssen Brücken geschlagen werden, die zur Einheit unseres Vaterlandes führen.' SAPMO DY 30/IV 2/9.05/: Werner Hortzschansky, *Unterrichtsfilme und Lichtbilder in der Schularbeit*, edited by the Zentralinstitut für Film und Bild in Unterricht, Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1951), p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Karl Gass, 'Was ist ein populärwissenschaftlicher Film?', *Deutsche Filmkunst* 2 (1956), p. 46.

<sup>47</sup> Hubert Laitko, 'The Reform Package of the 1960s: The Policy Finale of the Ulbricht Era', in: Kristie Macrakis, Dieter Hoffmann (eds.), *Science under Socialism: East Germany in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 1999), pp. 45, 53-55.

<sup>48</sup> Manuel Schramm, Uwe Fraunholz, 'Between the Ivory Tower and the Industrial Laboratory: Universities in the West German Innovation System, 1945-1990', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 37, No 2 (2012), p. 259. For a detailed account on comparative innovation cultures between East and West Germany see Uwe Fraunholz, Thomas Hänseroth, 'Transzendierungen von Wissenschaft und Technik im Systemwettbewerb: Innovationskulturen im deutsch-deutschen Vergleich', Uwe Fraunholz, Thomas Hänseroth (eds.), *Ungleiche Pfade? Innovationskulturen im deutsch-deutschen Vergleich* (Waxmann: Göttingen 2012), pp. 9-26.

shared by West German pedagogues. In a handbook for teachers and educators the West German sex educator Joachim Brauer pointed out that film had the potential to illustrate the complexities of life insightfully.<sup>49</sup> By stressing technical possibilities of film, such as microscopy and slow and fast motion enhancing human perception, he shared a progressive view, praising advancements through medical technologies.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, Brauer saw film not so much as manipulative, but as an instrument to delve into the body and document natural phenomena.<sup>51</sup> The elaborate and technically sophisticated macro-shots of proliferation and embryonic development employed by the West German film *Helga* illustrate Brauer's point.<sup>52</sup> Despite the mixed reception of the film, the colourful macro-shots of cell proliferation were commonly perceived as an aesthetic approach showing the 'spectacle of human reproduction'.<sup>53</sup> Due to similar expectations, some East and West German sex education films were indeed exchanged. An inquiry by the East German pedagogue Heinz Grassel to the BZgA testifies his interest in *Helga*.<sup>54</sup> As for the film series of Oelschlägel, the usage of the episode *Weil ich kein Kind mehr bin* in the (West German) classroom is discussed in Brauer's compilation of sex education films.<sup>55</sup>

This brief overview demonstrates that doctors, pedagogues and filmmakers were engaged in discussion on the use of education films from the first decades of the twentieth century. A belief in the capacity of film to deliver first-hand evidence was combined with pedagogical interests to make films empathic devices for teaching. The specific role assigned to film was to deliver a factual and objective presentation of life processes.

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<sup>49</sup> Brauer, *AVM in der Geschlechtererziehung*, p. 37.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Bender, *Helga*.

<sup>53</sup> Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 206-209; reactions to the film *Helga* as well as newspaper snippets can be found in BA B310/24.

<sup>54</sup> BA B310/154: Heinz Grassel to BZgA, enquiry for the film *Helga* to be used at an international symposium for sexual pedagogy, 27 August 1968.

<sup>55</sup> Brauer, *AVM der Geschlechtererziehung*, pp. 50-53.

Under these premises, sex education films presented a biological approach to speaking about the body. Pedagogues, doctors and filmmakers alike agreed film could speak about “the facts of life” in a scientifically objective way.

Consequently, a multifaceted filmic rhetoric unfolded that interweaved scientific and pedagogic considerations with techniques of visualisation. Films did not simply apply biological jargon but unveiled an interdisciplinary-informed approach in the biologisation of the body.

The questions in the ensuing chapters are concerned with tracing this process of biologisation. They ask how films constructed scientific objectivity and how they made this knowledge pedagogically relevant. In doing so, the biologisation of the body in sex education films is understood as a constructive process that maintained and created hierarchies so as to underline the objectivity of the “facts of life”.

### **3.2. Mediation: Commentary and Graphic Cues**

During the first decades of the twentieth century education films are often referred to as ‘lecture films’ [Vortragsfilme], or ‘cinematographic lectures’, alluding to the static modus of filmic presentation while generating the need of a commentary.<sup>56</sup> In the 1920s, for Thomalla, films had to be illustrative materials for a teacher’s lecture<sup>57</sup>, a mode of didactic mediation which, some thirty years later, was still the prevalent didactic modus in biological sex education films. When scientific images targeted lay audiences, authoritative mediation and explanation was considered essential to make the images intelligible.<sup>58</sup> In arguing that sex

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<sup>56</sup> Geoff Alexander, *Academic Films for the Classroom: A History* (Mc Farland & Company: North Carolina 2010), p. 37.

<sup>57</sup> Curt Thomalla, ‘Was ist ein Lehrfilm?’, *Der Bildwart* 1, No 2 (1924), pp. 20-21.

<sup>58</sup> Kirsten Osterherr, ‘Cinema as Universal Language of Health Education: Translating Science in *Unhooking the Hookworm* (1920)’, in Nancy Anderson, Michael R. Dietrich (eds.), *The Educated*

education films, aligned with the tradition of the 'lecture film' that made the commentator indispensable for the understanding of images, this chapter considers commentary and graphic cues in their explanatory function to images.

With the example of the use of sound film in school I will first illustrate how the narrator's capacity to give meaning to images challenged the authority of the teacher. I will use two examples to analyse how, on the basis of authoritative mediation, the commentary aimed at convincing viewers to perceive images as scientific facts, and that what was displayed on screen was authentic and scientifically valid knowledge applicable to all bodies. In addition, I will address the question of how the symbiosis of image and narrator leaves room for underlying assumptions. With the example of how sexual intercourse is addressed in the film *Boy to Man*, I will demonstrate that by creating facts the narrator also supported a rational view of sex as firmly linked to procreation. Finally, I will consider graphic cues as a further element of authoritative guidance.

Mediation and explanation aimed at establishing and making the audience relate to universal facts.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore mediation aimed at diminishing whatever ambiguity was left in the images.<sup>60</sup> In this respect, commentary and graphic cues performed a similar function to inter-titles in the early educational film, which, as Kreimeier notes, '[...] regulate the film as semantic construction: the thesis it [the film] wants to strengthen in the inner notebook of the audience'.<sup>61</sup>

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*Eye: Visual Pedagogy in the Life Sciences* (Dartmouth College Press: Hanover, New Hampshire 2012), pp. 131-136; Gertiser, 'Domestizierung', pp. 59-60.

<sup>59</sup> Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Indiana UP: Bloomington, Indianapolis 2001), pp. 105-109.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>61</sup> Kreimeier, 'Komplex-starr', p. 106.

### 3.2.1. Commentary

The commentary fulfilled a key function in the mediation of images. It explained and contextualised them and thus established a meaningful relation between narration and image.<sup>62</sup> It lent authority to the moving images and was used to underline the film's argument, while the images were arranged around the text.<sup>63</sup>

In sex education films the contextualisation of images was normally achieved with the help of an extra-diegetic narrator. Unlike in a textbook, where the text propelled the narrative, in films the narrator fulfilled the task of maintaining coherence.<sup>64</sup> The narrator's authoritative presence took over the role of teacher as soon as the film started and the real life teacher disappeared into the dark. With the wider acceptance of sound film in the late 1920s, discussions arose as to whether the teacher's authority was in danger of becoming compromised.<sup>65</sup> In German classrooms, these discussions came after sound film had become the prevalent format in the late 1940s and early 1950s,<sup>66</sup> as, until then, the teacher had commented on the films' images.

Sound films using biological scientific images still allowed the teacher to decide whether the narrator or teacher mediated the images. Teachers often considered the voice-over narration disturbing, particularly for younger audiences. In his 1968 compilation Joachim Brauer exemplified how the films *Der weibliche Zyklus*, *Pubertät in Jungen* and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* could be used in a classroom without sound.<sup>67</sup> Brauer thought that, due to extensive jargon,

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<sup>62</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 127, 128; Kreimeier, 'Ein deutsches Paradigma', p. 69; Keitz, 'Kinematographie in der Schule', p. 471.

<sup>63</sup> Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> For an analysis of (West) German sex education books from the 1900s to the 1970s see Sauerteig, 'Representations', pp. 129-160.

<sup>65</sup> Nichols, 'Documentary and the Coming of Sound', published online <http://FilmSound.org/film-sound-history/documentary.htm> (last accessed July 2012). Gertiser, 'Domestizierung', pp. 59-60, 64-68; Keitz, 'Kinematographie in der Schule', p. 472.

<sup>66</sup> Gertiser, 'Domestizierung', p. 61.

<sup>67</sup> Brauer, *AVM in der Geschlechtererziehung*, pp. 46-50.

additional preparation for *Der weibliche Zyklus*, for example, was necessary.<sup>68</sup> Although no jargon is used in *Pubertät bei Jungen*, Brauer similarly recommended showing the film without sound for younger students, though no particular reason was given for this.<sup>69</sup> Arguably, this reflects early discussion as well as the composition of the images still pointed to the format of the 'lecture film'.

During the film an extra-diegetic film narrator or a teacher performed this function. Either way, biological images were in need of mediation, since they were, as a rule, not self-explanatory for a lay audience. Also the montage of the (moving) images was designed to complement an argument delivered by a narrator.<sup>70</sup> Rhetorical continuity in these films was therefore established through textual argumentation rather than a spatial and temporal continuity achieved by editing. The film theorist Bill Nichols uses the term 'expository mode' for this textual based presentation common to documentaries and nature films.<sup>71</sup> It is characterised by the use of a voice-of-God, an invisible or extra-diegetic narrator who shapes the argumentation and offers meaning to images.<sup>72</sup> As a consequence, the audience is guided towards the act of seeing; both in the sense of looking and perceiving.

Narrative guidance was an important feature of sex education films, since for the most part they showed broadly unambiguous semiotic spaces geared to the illustration of universal knowledge. The narrator explained these spaces in order to align audience interpretation to the images. With this authoritative technique, rational and objective presentation of body knowledge was prioritised over talk of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 84-85.

<sup>70</sup> Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 107

<sup>71</sup> Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Indiana UP: Bloomington, Indianapolis 1991), pp. 34-44.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.; See also Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 100.

adolescent sexual experience. The expository mode aimed at making the audience relate to facts by giving an authoritative contextualising explanation.

The West German film *Der weibliche Zyklus* is an example of how commentary attributed factual status to images. Following the opening credits, the film fades in to the first image, showing a dark coloured human torso with curvy shapes against a bright background. Before the audience can contemplate the meaning of this shape, the narrator explains that 'The life of *the* woman is influenced, to a high degree, by her specific female organs and is therefore subject to a biological rhythmic course.'<sup>73</sup> This remark anticipates the following graphic of the uterus and ovaries which marks the initial shape as a female body. In this way the image of the torso is contextualised as female immediately after its appearance in an attempt to clear any possible ambiguities and streamline interpretation.

Moreover, the commentary proposes a dominant reading of the images to come by stressing that what the audience is about to see is an influential component of female life. At this point the narrator's choice of words is decisive. The narrator uses the term "'the" woman' to give the torso a sexual identity and make the image a rule of generality and factuality. From this point the film claims to present facts that are true for every woman. This short sequence highlights the importance of the narrator in guiding the audience towards understanding of iconic images as normative facts.

In doing so the commentary aims at preventing different interpretations of images. An analysis of the narrator's role shows that commentary has to interfere whenever images leave room for interpretation. Furthermore, it can reveal that the universal facts the narrator aims to create are not unbiased, but rather

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<sup>73</sup> Emphasis by the author. Original: 'Das Leben *der* Frau wird durch die spezifisch weiblichen Organe in starkem Maße beeinflusst und in einen biologisch rhythmischen Ablauf gebracht'. FWU, *Der weibliche Zyklus*.

represent dominant readings that transport idealised views of biological body processes.

This can be aptly demonstrated in the film *Boy to Man* (1961) by focusing on how it resolves the mediation of sexual intercourse. The corresponding sequence of images is as follows: in combination of three frames, the sequence starts with an introduction to the production of sperm cells in the male body. The corresponding image shows an abstract graphic of a cross-section of the male reproductive system. The subsequent frame presents micro-cinematographic shots of moving sperm cells. In a third frame, an abstract graphic of female reproductive organs is presented.

These three frames are connected by animation and a match-cut, with the sperm cell as the connecting element. The first frame is dedicated to the production of sperm cells, represented by white lines pushing through the schematic graphic of the male reproductive system. A text overlay reads “Samenausstoßung/ejaculation”<sup>74</sup> as the white line progresses. The second frame is related to the first frame via match-cut, whereas the third frame again uses white lines to signify the movement of the sperm cells from the vagina to the uterus and beyond. Whilst there is visual continuity in this sequence, indicated by the presentation of sperm cells, it is the narrator who gives conclusive meaning and explains that the sequence is about sexual intercourse.

Without the narrator the sequence only vaguely hints at sexual intercourse. In this respect, the representation of the sperm cells and the inscription of ejaculation serve as the main visual marker. In addition, the first schematic cross-section depiction of the male reproductive system indicates an erect penis, which, however, is cut off by the frame. This might induce the viewer to complete

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<sup>74</sup> *Boy to Man* is a U.S. production and has been synchronised in German. Original English inscriptions remained in place and German translations were inserted next to the original.

the image in his/her imagination. Albeit separated by the micro-cinematographic shots of sperm cells, the alignment of the schematic graphics of the male and female reproductive system are arranged so that they face each other. Again, this leaves little room for imagining sexual intercourse. These faint traces of ambiguity make it necessary for the narrator to intervene and declare sexual intercourse as a rational, almost biomechanical act. In its explanation the commentary is not interested in emotions, feelings and factors not related to this idea of rational biological knowledge. The sequence of images is filled with meaning by the narrator in order to optimise understanding. He stresses that the act of sexual union has the purpose of reproduction and sperm cells have a place of destination.<sup>75</sup> In this way the narrator links sex to procreation as genuine fact, leaving aside emotional factors and any other form of individualistic experience.

Both examples illustrate that the narrator was a crucial element in establishing factual validity for the body processes shown, and how authoritative mediation optimises understanding and gives meaning.

### **3.2.2. Graphic Cues**

Graphic cues represent the second pedagogic strategy instructing the audience on the correct reading of the films' images. In the form of determining inscriptions, pointing arrows, colouring and highlighting of body parts, stop motion and trick animations of bio-chemical reactions (i.e. proliferation of fluids, movements of sperm and egg cells through the body), graphic cues acted as instructional tools, guiding the students' gazes through body maps. Exceeding textbook rhetoric, where the reader was encouraged to envision physiological processes on the basis of static representations in combination with text, film united the cognitive

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<sup>75</sup> The narrator uses the term 'Bestimmungsort'.

act by a simultaneous mediation of moving images, graphic cues and text, thus allowing stronger coherence.

The graphic cues used for the mediation of schematic and cross-section drawings served as authoritative visual supplements to the written or spoken commentary. In addition, they embodied a hegemonic order of knowledge transfer effective beyond the film. As the authority's prolonged hand, instructional graphic cues represented the teacher's fescue pointing at the body map. Therefore it can be argued that graphic cues maintained teacher authority within the film while, at the same time, authority was handed over to the commentary. Authoritative function was maintained with symbols replacing the fescue. Arguably, the fear of losing authority, as implied by contemporaries, was unfounded as the teacher authority reached into filmic space.

### **3.3. Schematic Graphics**

Schematic and animated graphics formed the main part of the visual repertoire in the presentation of biological "facts". Schematic images simplified the complexity of human sexuality and typified it with symbolical markers allowing for an overview of the human body. Through simplification a focus was laid on processes and organs that were deemed essential for the particular narrative.<sup>76</sup>

This simplification and focus on the essentials made for easy comprehension, and memorisation and schematic graphics were employed for pedagogical utility.<sup>77</sup> Arguably, schematic graphics were also used for an additional effect of scientifically validating the displayed knowledge for a popular audience.

Simplification and classification are characteristic pedagogic features in the

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<sup>76</sup> Michael Reiss makes a similar point with regard to biology textbooks. Michael J. Reiss, 'The representation of Human Sexuality in Some Science Textbooks for 14-16 Year Olds', *Research in Science & Technological Education* 16, No 2 (1998), pp. 137-149.

<sup>77</sup> Kreimeier, 'Komplex-starr', pp. 87-119.

scientific context in order to arrive at accountable and universally viable knowledge.<sup>78</sup> The use of schemes and graphics, in the context of research or education, aimed to create a proximity to scientific imaging. The films thus produced a semblance of science and scientific authority for a lay audience. This served to validate the displayed knowledge. Reichert uses 'display of knowledge as a commodity' (Wareninszenierung des Wissens) to describe the stereotypical arrangements and repetitive compositions of imagery in educational film as contributing to the commodification of science.<sup>79</sup>

These two factors, the pedagogical value of simplification and the proximity to scientific imaging, meant that schematics were crucial teaching devices in sex education films. They were considered as "factual", "accurate" and, most importantly, "easy to comprehend". Pedagogues, as highlighted in subchapter 3.1., constantly referred to these attributes to highlight the pedagogical value of the films.

When considering the question as to how schematic graphics impacted on the biologisation of the body, it has to be taken into account that simplification implicates omission. The following examples show how the simplification of body processes with schematic graphics removed feelings, desires and individual body features from narratives. In this regard schematic graphics served to standardise and depict knowledge and optimise understanding. Michael Lynch, however, points to the fact that schematic graphics are not only about reducing but also about adding information to gear the image "[...] in the direction of generic pedagogy and abstract theorizing".<sup>80</sup> Sex education films simplified and typified the body with schematic graphics. Schematic graphics are crucial sources of

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<sup>78</sup> Michael Lynch, 'The externalized retina: Selection and mathematization in the visual documentation of objects in the life sciences', in Michael Lynch, Steve Woolgar (eds), *Representation in Scientific Practice* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., London 1990), pp. 160-166.

<sup>79</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, p. 146.

<sup>80</sup> Lynch, 'The externalized retina', p. 181.

visual information as they display scientific knowledge in a pedagogically applicable way. In the interplay between omission and addition, schematic graphics aimed at representing essential information on bodily processes.

Schematic graphics are not exclusive to sex education films but are used in a similar fashion in sex education books. In taking a closer look at three images in Neubert's *Die Geschlechterfrage*, I will demonstrate how greater reduction and omission served for greater abstract theorising.<sup>81</sup> The images I focus on illustrate the chapter 'the biological essentials'.<sup>82</sup> The first illustration is a black and white frontal cross-section graphic of the uterus, vagina, fallopian tubes, and ovaries.<sup>83</sup> The next drawing presents a profile cross-section of the female sex organs. Two further depictions show the male reproductive system arranged in the same fashion as the images of the female reproductive system; one from the front and the other a profile.<sup>84</sup> After these, another schematic shows a body from profile in which a number of glands are highlighted.<sup>85</sup> In addition, lines connect the images. The title of this third image runs as follows; 'overview over the glands with inner secretion of a fifteen year old girl'. It is only the title that indicates the sex and age as the image itself does not give this information. There are no symbolic indicators which would allow for gender identification such as a curved shape to frame the figure. The text is far less detailed than the image. It simply explains that puberty is induced by the nervous system and inner secretion of glands, and indicates the chemical structure of testosterone and oestrone which 'flush and saturate the nervous system and the brain'.<sup>86</sup> Emotions, sexual experience or depiction of erotic encounters were clearly omitted here in favour of standardised schematic body images.

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<sup>81</sup> Neubert's *Die Geschlechterfrage*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-80.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>86</sup> Neubert, *Die Geschlechterfrage*, p. 45.

Disassociated from skin, hair and other features highlighting unique and individualistic characteristics, schematic graphics made the body transparent. The transparent body, as Jose van Dijck has pointed out, is a highly mediated object.<sup>87</sup> With this in mind, delving into the body with the help of schematic graphics and micro-cinematography fails to deliver general validity. Instead, the transparent body is a 'contested cultural object'.<sup>88</sup> To make the body transparent signifies a cultural practice which attributes different meanings to it. Louisa Allen has pointed out that rationalistic accounts gave rise to the underlying intention to de-erotise the body and 'disassociate it from embodied feelings, desire and pleasure'.<sup>89</sup> This disassociation was achieved by the introduction of a transparent image, instead of a visualisation of the body with skin which could not be looked into. De-erotisation served to circumvent topics in sex education that were perceived as embarrassing. The charts, schemes, and animated drawings projected a body image of automated and optimised procedures.

Through the examples of *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* and *Girl to Woman I will* demonstrate how films used schematic graphics in a similar way as the textbook. Both films show a rational view of human reproduction as a predestined activity generated by bio-chemical processes. The introduction frames of the film *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* introduce a shaded drawing of a torso against a bright background.<sup>90</sup> Similar to the *Der weibliche Zyklus* (discussed in chapter 3.2.1.), the drawing gives no indication of the sex, apart from the torso's curved shape marking it as a female. The film verifies this assumption when it inserts a schematic drawing of the uterus into the area of the lower abdomen. This abstract chart of the torso constitutes the stage whereupon the film maps fertilisation and pregnancy. Biological processes such as fertilisation, proliferation

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<sup>87</sup> Dijck, *The Transparent Body*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Allen, 'Beyond the birds', pp. 154-155.

<sup>90</sup> *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (1965), produced and commissioned by FWU.

and blood circulation in foetus and woman are all illustrated in the form of animations and schematic graphics. Any explanation of sexual intercourse is left out of this narrative.

*Girl to Woman* (1964),<sup>91</sup> a film about puberty, alternates between fictionalised scenes and body processes explained with schematic graphics. The film identifies agents that trigger bodily reactions in order to make complex processes easily comprehensible. The onset of puberty is reduced to the pituitary gland as agent. The scene that introduces this cuts from a real life shot of a girl lying down on a bed and closing her eyes, to a schematic graphic of a female body that locates the pituitary gland in the brain. The graphic symbolises the effect the gland has on the whole body by centre-staging the pituitary gland with dashed lines radiating from it. Next, with a dashed line moving from the gland to the uterus and ovaries, the film shows how the gland induces the reproductive organs to influence bodily changes. Changes during puberty are introduced as a narrative of cause and effect triggered by glands and organs as agents. By suggesting that this process takes place within a body that is asleep (as presented in the scene before), the film gives a strong impression of the inevitability of the process. A body is established that functions according to biochemical laws and autonomously from the mind.

*Girl to Woman*, like *Boy to Man*, illustrates procreation as a narrative of cause and effect. In this case sperm cells are the agents which travel through the male and find their place of destination in the female. This tale of a steadily working body, of contracting and extracting muscles, emitting glands and growing cells explains procreation in thoroughly rational terms. Again sexuality is subordinate to procreation and de-erotised.

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<sup>91</sup> Robert B. Churchill, *Girl to Woman* (1964), produced by Churchill Wexler film production.

The body in both examples was presented as a biological machine that was governed by invariant, predetermined biomechanical processes. Audiences were meant to learn to perceive of their own bodies as predestined for reproduction. The propagation of fertility can be assumed to be the underlying interest as in these films sexuality was firmly linked to human reproduction. As high fertility rates were a decisive factor in the Cold War battle, this arguably accounts for the maintenance of similar textual and pictorial strategies in East and West Germany. This, however, did not mean that the films gave young people the *carte blanche* to have sex and produce offspring. In a holistic approach to sex education the body knowledge gained from these films was considered as a biological basis for further social and moral lessons. Furthermore, the effect of de-erotisation that came along with the schematic body maps did not exactly fuel the fantasies of the young audience.

The use of schematic graphics, anatomic models and specimen hence contributed to the notion of accuracy and factuality, thereby providing a way around potentially embarrassing insights into sexuality. Although to achieve didactic clarity schematic images relied on omission when they depicted biological processes, they had a highly normative appeal as simplification and typification also invoked scientific authority and rationalised biological body processes. The simplification of complex aspects of human reproduction frequently focused on individual elements (i.e. organs, glands, bodily fluids), which became essential agents in the representation of the reproductive system. They helped to establish narratives that explained complex body processes as inevitable matters of cause and effect.

Hence, these simplified representations inaugurated a body image in which the complexity of human sexuality was reduced to a selective rational body-model, triggered by bio-chemical processes in which emotions and pleasure were

excluded. The skilled reduction to basic biological information was the pedagogic variation of scientific reasoning and imaging techniques, which as a consequence stressed the factual character of schematic body imaging.

### **3.4. Micro-Cinematography**

While cross-sections helped to locate particular “objects” in the body, micro-cinematography was used to give evidence of the existence of living organisms. Micro-cinematographic displays of moving sperm and egg cells were recurring objects in sex education films. The contribution of micro-cinematography to the display of the body is best understood in its relationship with schematic graphics. The micro-cinematographic gaze, as Cartwright points out, causes the ‘dissolution of the corporeal body’, leading to a distance between the observer’s own body and the bodily processes he/she can watch on the screen.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the micro-cinematographic images retrieved a corporeal character only in the context of schematic drawings.

While micro-cinematography fragments the body, graphic drawings help to integrate the fragments onto body maps so as to indicate their location and function and thus reassemble the body into a mediated biological whole. Microscopic images are thus in the category of images that are in need of mediation to make them meaningful devices in the biologisation of the body. In an interplay with commentary, graphic cues, and schematic graphics, micro-cinematography provided scientific evidence for the body knowledge imparted by the other elements such as commentary, graphic cues and schematic graphics.

This mutually reinforcing arrangement of schematic drawings and micro-cinematography can be seen in the sequence of *Boy to Man* introduced in

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<sup>92</sup> Cartwright, *Screening the Body*, p. 83.

chapter 3.2. In this sequence the film juxtaposes micro-cinematographic images of moving sperm cells with schematic graphics of the male and female genitals. The images serve to illustrate the shape of the cells that otherwise would have only been depicted as abstract graphics in the form of white lines. The narrator introduces the micro-cinematographic depiction of the sperm cells with the unambiguous line 'These are living sperm cells under the microscope.'<sup>93</sup> By equating live sperm cells with the micro-cinematographic representation of sperms, the narrator makes representation congruent with its source and raises its status as lender of evidence.

Michael Lynch raises a similar point for science publications. He argues that the pairing of photographs with graphics made the photograph appear, 'as though the image is imparted by the object itself'.<sup>94</sup> In films, micro-cinematography arguably fulfilled the same function, as did photographs in this composition arranged in pairs. Schematic graphics provide a simplified and typified body map designed for orientation and localisation. In contrast, micro-cinematography is meant to display life itself and to give living proof for schematic images. In these ensembles of schematic graphics alternating with micro-cinematography, the causal link between image and object of real life footage raises the status of micro-cinematography as lender of evidence for real life processes. In contrast to graphic images, micro-cinematographic images give a higher degree of immediacy to the depicted object. This effect is also aided by the film apparatus. Characteristically, micro-cinematographic shots are very sparsely edited as the images are meant to speak for themselves. By this use of micro-cinematography, the otherwise pure authoritative ('expository') mediation intermingles with an observational mode of representation which, to Nichols, is characterised by the

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<sup>93</sup> Original: 'Das sind lebende Samenzellen unter dem Mikroskop.'

<sup>94</sup> Lynch, 'The externalized retina', p. 160

fact that the filmic apparatus aims at disappearing in favour of producing realistic effects.<sup>95</sup>

The depiction of real processes makes the film itself appear a result of observation. Despite filmic techniques such as editing and the use of slow or fast motion so as to manipulate real time, micro-cinematography claimed to open the gaze toward *natural* processes that would otherwise not be visible to the human eye. Regardless of the fact that substances had to be abstracted from the body, prepared with dissolvent and stained to eventually make them visible, the films' use of micro-cinematography claimed to reveal genuine natural processes.<sup>96</sup>

Micro-cinematography thereby claimed to be able to depict 'life', the very substrate of biological sciences per definition. The body knowledge resulting from this configuration of micro-cinematography and schematic graphics stressed the universality of the body as consisting of separate biological units and elements. The role of micro-cinematography was to give evidence for the existence of these units as actors in the rational narrative of schematic graphics and commentary.

However, there is at least one other way in which micro-cinematography contributed to the biologisation of the body. Micro-cinematographic images can also be understood as part of a cinematic mode that Tom Gunning has termed the cinema of attraction. According to him, the cinema of attraction is mainly concerned with 'its ability to *show* something'.<sup>97</sup> It is exhibitionist cinema as opposed to the voyeurism of narrative cinema and consequently establishes a different relationship with the audience. With this cinematic mode the viewer is directly addressed and invited to look at what the film has to show.<sup>98</sup> Looking at the relationship between micro-cinematographic images and the audience of sex

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<sup>95</sup> Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p. 111; see also Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, p. 55.

<sup>96</sup> Hannah Landecker, 'Microcinematography and the History of Science and Film', *Isis* 97 (2006), pp. 121-132.

<sup>97</sup> Gunning, 'Cinema of Attraction', p. 230.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

education films from the perspective of the cinema of attraction suggests that the shots were used for their exotic, alien nature and their spectacular, unseen sights. The fact that the film *Helga* was lauded for its spectacular use of micro-cinematographic shots serves as an example of this point.<sup>99</sup> However, these images were also attractions insofar as the viewer was not only the addressee of authoritative mediation but equally became a witness of the laboratory. With the viewer's gaze directed through the lens of the microscope, he/she embodied a position of a medical authority. The film *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies* consists solely of micro-cinematographic shots of fertilisation and cleavage of a rabbit egg cell. The reason for this lack of mediating elements is that the film was originally a research film and not designed for classroom use. It can be assumed that when it was shown in an educational context the film functioned as a visual spectacle as well as an invitation to the viewer to look through the microscope lens. The film illustrates this aspect of micro-cinematography as cinema of attraction.

It is a silent black and white film consisting of microscopic images of the fertilisation and cleavage of a rabbit's egg cell. Both processes are introduced with inter-titles to specify the recording speed of the micro-cinematographic shots. Apart from this information and the title no further explanation of the images is provided. This made the film suitable for different contexts and subjects,<sup>100</sup> though in order to be of pedagogic use it had to be commented by a teacher. When viewed as exhibitionist cinema, however, the images reveal a bio-aesthetic that might have induced awe in some viewers on the grounds of

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<sup>99</sup> C. Galli, 'Helga', *Filmblätter: Fachzeitschrift für Film, Fono, Foto, Fernsehen, Funk* 45 (3 November 1967), p. 1022; Anonymus, 'Sauberes Linnen', *Der Spiegel* 41 (1967), p. 190.

<sup>100</sup> According to the biology guidelines the film was allocated to the subject areas 'introduction in microscopy and cytology', introduced in the seventh school form, and 'reproduction of mammals' for students aged eleven. BBF: *Lehrmittelverzeichnis für Biologie: Filme, Lichtbilder, Tonbänder für den Biologieunterricht*, (edited by Pädagogische Hochschule Potsdam, 1969), p. 9; DIPF R963: *Präziser Lehrplan für den Biologieunterricht, Klasse 5* (Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1965), p. 15.

intrinsic beauty or strangeness. However, the film also suggests the possibility of taking an active part in laboratory observation. From this perspective the filmic apparatus reappears by simulating a microscopic gaze seeking focus and clarity as the camera moves and the frame seems to tremble. In this example the filmic apparatus takes part in exhibiting the scientific gaze through the microscope.

Arguably, in *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies* science is exhibited in a cinema of attraction. It invites the viewer to watch images of processes that are normally not accessible. It furthermore invites the viewer to take the position of the researcher by making the microscopic gaze accessible to him/her. Micro-cinematographic footage aimed at inviting viewers to objectify body particles encouraging them to become the scientific observer gazing through the microscope and experience the production of objectivity through observation. The subjective position of the viewer as an active observer was utilised to reinforce the notion of micro-cinematography as medico-scientific evidence. By producing a double bond to the viewer, this filmic rhetoric strengthened the claim of providing an authentic insight into natural processes.

As has been shown, micro-cinematography was not only used to create a scientific gaze but also established a link to the body. On the one hand, it delivered images that fragment the body, which is then reassembled by graphical and textual elements. In the interplay with these elements the images serve as lenders of evidence for real life processes. On the other hand, the shots constituted a cinema of attraction by presenting exotic views and inviting the viewer to look through the microscope. The use of schematic drawings and micro-cinematography produced a biological body image to the effect to make the viewer witness and understand that their bodies consisted of cells and thus

evoked the tiniest units for the preparation of healthy relations.<sup>101</sup> Effectively, the viewers were meant watching the lives of their own bodily constituents as the cinematic exhibition of scientific observation.

### **3.5. Establishing Trust Through Medical Authority**

Unlike schematic drawings and micro-cinematography, representations of medical spaces and professions did not immediately address body knowledge, but, arguably, helped to strengthen claims of medical authority and scientific objectivity. These images were concerned with giving an account of medical professionals enacting their professional roles. Thereby these images served to establish trust in medical professionals by attributing them with authority. This capacity of medical imagery arguably has its own tradition. In his essay on medical photographs, Scott Curtis distinguished three prominent types of photography in the nineteenth century: firstly, photos of visible public spaces such as hospitals, sanatoria, and lecture halls; secondly, photography of hidden private spaces; thirdly, portraits.<sup>102</sup> The first was designed to familiarise the wider public with the medical facilities provided and to assure them that standards of cleanliness were met. Photographs of hidden private spaces revealed invisible parts of the human body. The third type of photography, which Curtis claims was the largest category, was the portrait. He divided these into the portrait of the physician and the portrait of the patient.<sup>103</sup> The latter is rarely found in sex education films showing the biological body, since patients' photography was primarily used to document different stadiums of the course of disease and thus undermined the normalizing gesture. Portraits of physicians, by contrast,

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<sup>101</sup> Landecker, 'Microcinematography', p. 129.

<sup>102</sup> Curtis, 'Photography', pp. 72-75; For similar classifications of medical photography see also Daniel M. Fox, Christopher Lawrence, *Photographing Medicine: Images and Power in Britain and America since 1840* (Greenwood Press: New York, Westport, Connecticut, London 1988), p. 22.

<sup>103</sup> Curtis, 'Photography', p. 73.

appeared as part of feature film sequences. The audience for these portraits had naturally changed compared to the nineteenth century. It was no longer that '[a] photographic portrait taken in the doctor's office or library conferred a sense of dignity and modernity at a time when the general public might have been quite sceptical of the medical profession.'<sup>104</sup>

The filmic images of medical professionals are close to this type of portrait photograph. Representations of medical professions in sex education films served to underline the medical legitimacy held over the body images in the film. Hence, it can be argued that it was the idea of the 'presumed objectivity of the photograph [that] reinforced the desired objectivity of the physician', while, in turn, the physician's authority confers documentary character to the photo.<sup>105</sup>

However, before the audience had the chance to see images of medical professionals, and just after the classroom teacher had disappeared in the dark, authority was immediately handed over to the first (and also last) elements of the film, the credits. Substituting the oral word for the written one, the credits established new authority by giving the names of those who were involved in the production. Connecting with French literary theory, Christian Metz and Roger Odin refer to features that precede and succeed the plot as *paratexts*, arguing that opening and final credits have a modulating function on the reading of the film.<sup>106</sup> This is conspicuous in the opening titles of East and West German sex education films. These usually introduced a comprehensive list of medical authorities and academic advisors involved in the production, whilst the names of film directors, actors and actresses were often absent.

Thus, from the start of the film the viewer was made aware of a hierarchy of knowledge. This structure in the transfer of knowledge was not only maintained,

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.; Fox, Lawrence, *Photographing Medicine*, p. 23.

<sup>105</sup> Curtis, 'Photography', p. 74.

<sup>106</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 102-107.

but also itemised through the naming of medical authorities. The reference to medical institutions pointed to the films' sources. Institutions could be engaged in the filmic production for diverse reasons. They appeared as lender of specimens and models, providers of shooting locations such as delivery rooms, and/or supplied visual material. As in a book preface, the audience received preliminary information on how to perceive the film. This clearly undermined artistic-creative accounts in favour of informative content based on medical and pedagogical knowledge. Thus, the credits already determined persons who held the power of interpretation. Many of the films, such as *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies*, *Der weibliche Zyklus*, *Schwangerschaft und Geburt*, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1, 2, 3* lacked theme music, which accentuated the notion of objectivity and relevance. Any dramaturgic elements that did not contribute to the desired learning effect were omitted right from the beginning.<sup>107</sup> This is also reflected in the reductionist use of film editing techniques.

Sex education films normally announced the visual presence of scientific representatives in the credits. However, some films included depictions either featuring visible public spaces of medical professions and/or representatives in their plot. In *Helga*, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1* and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* this imagery appeared in a feature film style and was juxtaposed with schematic illustrations and micro-cinematographic documents. Moving images representing medical spaces had the same intention as photographs, namely to show biology as a domain of medical professionalism. The range of these 'photographed' images in sex education films showed the diverse environments in which medical authorities worked such as the laboratory in *Biologie der*

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<sup>107</sup> The plot descriptions in Brauer's compilation of sex education films often referred to reductionist editing and the absence of dramaturgic effects as a means for matter-of-fact presentation. Brauer, *AVM der Geschlechtererziehung*.

*Fortpflanzung 1*, the consulting room in *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1* and *Helga*, the delivery room in *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* and lecture theatres in *Helga*.

In *Helga*, the duties of medical professionals was marked by representing, for example, a researcher, a practitioner, a nurse, a midwife, or a teacher.<sup>108</sup> The synoptic view shows that sex education films were connected to iconographic depictions of a physician, as seen in the popular genre of doctor film (Arztfilm).<sup>109</sup> According to the film critic Georg Seeßlen, this “genre” was characterised by iconic appearances of the medical profession.<sup>110</sup> The first is the doctor in the lecture theatre, passing on his knowledge to medicine students; the second is the doctor amongst his team; the third depicts the doctor in the operating suite conducting surgery.<sup>111</sup> While Seeßlen draws his observations from feature films of the 1940s, all these iconic representations are found in sex education films following the decades after 1945. *Helga* featured nearly all forms of these. It shows a doctor instructing nurses on the phases of birth, and a gynaecologist explaining anatomical and physiological changes in puberty to young female teenagers. In one of the last sequences the audience gets a glimpse into the delivery room and becomes a witness of birth. Here the film displays the technical and hygienic standards of modern hospitals.

Together with schematic graphics and micro-cinematography, films such as *Helga* presented medical authorities in their societal role, thus visualising the hegemonic structure of knowledge transfer. Images featuring medical professionals showed them facing the audience. Thus, the paradigmatic perspective of medical photography was maintained in the films’ rhetoric. In

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<sup>108</sup> Bender, *Helga*.

<sup>109</sup> Georg Seeßlen, “Der Arzt, das Licht, die Patientin und der geheiligte Raum”: Zur Inszenierung des Arztes in Film und Fernsehen’, in Jutta Phillips-Krug, Cecilia Hausheer (eds), *Frankensteins Kinder: Film und Medizin* (Cantz Verlag: Ostfildern 1997), pp. 30-49; see also the essay by Rainer Herrn, ‘Die Darstellung des Arztes in zwei frühen Sexualaufklärungsfilmern’ pp. 55-65 in the same volume.

<sup>110</sup> Seeßlen, ‘Der Arzt, das Licht’, pp. 30-49.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

sustaining lecture-style mediation the social order of the classroom was relocated into films that defined the audience as in need of guidance. This didactic mode, however, also stressed that not all medical spaces established in the film were equally accessible in real life and thus visualised social orders. For instance, the gaze into the laboratory in *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1* revealed a place that was normally reserved for researchers. The mise-en-scène reinforced this notion by show-casing professional equipment. This special glimpse the audience was provided with on the one hand served to provoke curiosity. On the other, as in *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1*, it was used to give documentary evidence of the location where micro-cinematographic images were produced.

In films featuring childbirth, life action footage was regularly used. After schematic drawings, life action footage was used to witness childbirth. In addition, the gaze into the delivery room, as seen in *Helga* and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt*, assured the audience of the technical facilities and expertise available when giving birth. The fact that neither film showed the head of the mother-to-be gave the impression that the audience could be in her position. This point-of-view shot or 'eyeline-match' created a point of reference to the viewer, although it only addressed the female audience.<sup>112</sup> By depicting medical professionals as holders of scientific authority, sex education films established a system of knowledge transfer and trust that connected to social roles.

### **3.6. *Biology of Reproduction (1963/64): A Case Study***

As we have seen, the mediation of biological knowledge in sex education films is characterised by the employment of specific filmic elements that induce authority and scientific validity. The reduced use of film editing is one of these

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<sup>112</sup> For further discussion on gender and film see chapter 5. On the effect of point-of-view shots see Thomas Elsaesser, Malte Hagener, *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses* (Routledge: New York, London 2010), p. 91.

characteristics. In biological sex education films editing was used sparsely with the aim of achieving an objective and rational filmic style. Here sex education films again reveal their genealogic entanglement with scientific films that had developed modes of looking that were to be perceived as objective.

Taking the example of a sequence from *Biologie der Fortpflanzung*, I will analyse editing techniques which were paradigmatic for a number of biology films used in East and West German sex education. My analysis will focus on a sequence taken from the film's beginning and separate it into three segments. The sequence aims at explaining the female reproductive system. The interplay and montage of the filmic elements generate a filmic mode that, if considered in combination with medical authority and pedagogic knowledge, establishes the biological body as a medico scientific object.

Before anatomical and physiological features are presented, sex education films usually introduce the shape of the body and a schematic graphic of a body map to guide the gaze from the outside into the inside. This typical opening generates an overview that is memorable and yet evokes scientific authority. In this respect *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* is no exception. The first segment of the sequence begins with a profile shot of the silhouette of a woman who lies down on an examination table and bends her knees. The use of silhouette animation may derive from the tradition of shadow plays which may explain its appearance in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>113</sup> Silhouettes are a recurring feature in sex education films. The first cut replaces the silhouette of the woman with a silhouette drawing of a woman in the same position. The drawing is then complemented by schematic graphics highlighting the reproductive system inside the body. At this point, the narrator establishes the film's intention by revealing

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<sup>113</sup> One of the earliest silhouette animation films being known is the British short film *The Sporting Mice* (1909) by the filmmaker Charles Armstrong.

that the film discusses the female sex. The commentary contextualises and explains the images in order to clear any ambiguities. Subsequently, the camera zooms in to a close-up view of the coloured reproductive system. With an interplay between commentary and animated arrows, the female reproductive system is explained and marked, guiding the audience on interpretation of these images. Graphical cues such as arrows are the prolongation of the teacher's fescue from the class room into the filmic space. However, this film additionally solves the representation of sexual intercourse with a graphical cue. When the narrator talks about sexual intercourse, a little black animated arrow representing the penis hovers inside the female body towards the discussed body parts. With this strategy the film aims at a rational and dispassionate representation of sexual intercourse that was common in sex education films.

While the first few shots were a preparation for a close-up shot of the schematic graphic, with the following shots the viewer is prepared for a micro-cinematographic shot of vaginal secretion. First, the close-up of the schematic graphic of the female reproductive system is entered by an animated representation of a pipette extracting secretion from the vagina. The film then cuts to a real-life laboratory and a close-up shot of a laboratory worker holding a narrow oblong glass container in one hand while the other reaches outside the frame. The link between the previous schematic graphic and the close-up shot does not only rely on the narrator, as characteristic of these films, but makes use of visual continuity. The pipette as a tool of the laboratory serves as a signifier linking the two frames and allowing for a transition from animated to real-life images. This logical connection of graphic and real-life footage strengthens the factual, evidence lending character of the latter.

The shots of the laboratory worker's hands are followed by close-up shots that show the preparation of the sample whilst the process is explained by the

narrator. While the close-up shots only reveal a pair of hands in white sleeves processing the sample, the context of the laboratory hints at the working environment which suggests that that person is a laboratory assistant. In the next shot, the assistant is shown in a medium close-up shot placing the sample under the microscope. Here *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* uses shots of medical professionals in their professional environment to stress scientific authority.

Up to this point, the audience is addressed as passive viewers. This is achieved by the employment of static shots from a fixed camera position. This use of a fixed mechanical gaze to represent natural phenomena was assumed to meet the criteria of objectivity. This use of a fixed mechanical gaze to represent natural phenomena was assumed to meet the criteria of objectivity which points to the influence of cinematographic strategies on the scientific film.

The fixation of the camera perspective, the film frame, and focus on the field of view, points to the cinematographic influence of the scientific film.<sup>114</sup> In this context, feature film shots often shaped the plot by framing the didactic imagery. Similar to the laboratory scene in *Biologie der Fortpflanzung*, other films such as *Boy to Man*, *Girl to Woman* and *Helga*, used feature film sequences to introduce a protagonist figure who then appeared juxtaposed with schematic graphics and micro-cinematographic shots. Feature film shots in this case are subject to the instructional style of the narrative.<sup>115</sup>

From the placing of the sample under the microscope, the film cuts to the micro-cinematographic shot of the vaginal secretion. This cut changes the audience's position by evoking the scientific gaze through the lens of the microscope. While the frame is still fixed the microscopic character of the image is indicated by the

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<sup>114</sup> Reichert, *Kino der Humanwissenschaften*, pp. 60-62.

<sup>115</sup> Incidentally, this rhetorical style of combining three filmic elements, feature film shots, shots of medical artefacts and the commentary was a common technique used in the educative films in the 1920s, most notably in the German *Kulturfilm* of the Weimar Republic. See: Kreimeier, 'Komplex-starr', pp. 87-89.

narrator. With imagery showing a circular frame mimicking the ocular shape of a microscope's lens, the impression of scientific observation is conveyed.

Compared to other sex education films at that time, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* gave an unusually detailed and technical account of the laboratory scene and the preservation of the sample. In films such as *Boy to Man*, *Girl to Woman* and *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneis*, micro-cinematographic shots were not preceded by images introducing the preparation of samples, and the narrator or inter-titles only hinted at the type of image. It is more than likely that the involvement of the films' director Fritz Dick, who released about three hundred medical films in his career, and the gynaecologist Helmut Kraatz facilitated the technical-scientific approach in the *Biology of Reproduction*-series. Transitions from schematic drawings to a photographed specimen or micro-cinematographic shots were normally introduced by the narrator. The commentary on these occasions usually explained the context of the image, as micro-cinematographic shots belong to a category of images not assumed to be self-explanatory. Due to the small degree of continuity editing, the narrator guided the audience to prevent misinterpretation.

The third segment of *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* starts with the depiction of a schematic graphic of the uterus from the front. It is only through the commentary that the audience is introduced to the new image, which does not follow from the previous micro-cinematographic shot. Introducing the schematic drawing, the commentary states, 'In the profile view, the Fallopian tubes and ovaries cannot be seen, this scheme, now, shows the female genitalia inside the body from the front perspective.' Also, the continuity of this image is established by the commentary, since the narrator compares this schematic graphic shown in front view to the initially presented graphic shown in profile. The schematic graphics again include graphic cues such as arrows pointing at the uterus, the fallopian

tubes and ovaries. Next, the film cuts to an anatomical specimen, which appears in the same perspective and place as the preceding graphic in order to sustain a reference point. This specimen is introduced as a normal shaped uterus by the narrator, who highlights the same features as in the schematic graphic. The animated arrows which were used to explain the schematic graphic are replaced by a gloved hand holding a fescue. Emphasising the clinical, sterile handling, the gloved hand hints at the clinical origin of the specimen. Furthermore by juxtaposing graphics with real-life images the capacity to give evidence is increased. Hence, the image of the anatomical specimen points at its real existence and ultimately stresses the relevance and validity of the imparted information for real life processes. After this sequence, the film, in a similar manner, turns to the male reproductive system, starting with the depiction of a man's silhouette with the genitals highlighted.

My analysis of the montage that made the different filmic elements play together has revealed that these elements relied on each other and thus are important factors in the biologisation of the body. In explaining the female reproductive organs *Biologie der Fortpflanzung I* evidently relied on commentary rather than montage to establish continuity and coherence. The biologisation of the body thus becomes a thoroughly guided affair which leaves no room for ambiguities. Significantly, and typically for biological sex education films, in *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* the visual representation of sexual intercourse is circumvented by a combination of narration and graphic cue. The ensuing effect is the de-erotisation of reproduction in favour of a narrative that stresses the normativity of heterosexuality linked to procreation. In combination with the evocation of scientific authority, and didactic tools of mediation that hint at one directional processes of cause and effect, the impression of the rationality of bodily processes is enhanced. In this single sequence of roughly four minutes the body,

via the laboratory, undergoes a transformation from a silhouette of the whole living body to the anatomical specimen of a uterus. In this process the body is presented in cross-section view, penetrated by animated arrows, inspected with the microscope and pointed at with a fescue. The ensuing body is heavily fragmented and it is suggested it is to be perceived as medico-scientific object.

### **3.7. Conclusion: The Body as Medico-Scientific Object**

Sex education films frequently spoke about the body in biological terms. This chapter has set out to understand the prerequisites, means and consequences of this way of speaking. It has found the entanglement of film and science at the heart of a filmic rhetoric that was concerned with the translation of scientific knowledge. Film, science and pedagogy intermingled and formed a net of authorities, power relations, and visual strategies, and didactic, pedagogic and scientific aspirations wherein the body obtained its biological significance.

Four main elements were characteristic of this filmic presentation of the body, each of which reflected its multifaceted nature. In their interplay the elements produced a body that incorporated socially applicable and scientifically valid knowledge. On the basis of a filmic (re)construction of scientific and pedagogic authority, they unfolded a thoroughly rational perception of the body. With the use of stylistic devices such as schematic graphics and micro-cinematography the body is fragmented. The authoritative commentary, including narration and graphic cues, reassembles the body by contextualizing and framing the abstract images, turning them into universal knowledge. In this process, the body to a certain degree becomes an autonomous entity governed by biochemical processes that follow the laws of cause and effect. By laying open bio-chemical processes and the active interplay of glands and hormones, the body was alienated to an extent which allowed determining it as a model of rationality.

The overall aim in the creation of a biological body was to avoid emotional involvement on the part of the young audience, who were encouraged to perceive their own bodies in rational terms. By aiming at standardisation rather than identification, the authoritative images reinforced the perception of the body as a medico-scientific object rather than an individual sexualised subject. Consequently, the introduction of a protagonist was rare in these films, as it was assumed to impede the factual mediation of biological knowledge. Evaluations of biology films routinely lauded the absence of dramaturgic effects, as there was no possibility for identification.<sup>116</sup> The fact that the body as medico-scientific object was widely de-erotised made it easy to circumvent embarrassing topics in sex education while creating the impression of dispassion and objectivity. The biological presentation of a sexual body, however, also focused entirely on the reproductive capacities in the male and female body. These films promoted a narrative that not only introduced heterosexuality as a biological norm but also restricted the body to procreation.

This biological view on the body as a medico-scientific object certainly correlated with the role biology was supposed to play in sex education before and after 1960. In East and West Germany a holistic concept of sex education was proposed that was meant to offer more than biology, but still had biological knowledge at its foundation. In this context biological knowledge became one constituent of sex education. The expectations of biological knowledge were to deliver the “facts of life” in a rational, dispassionate way. On this basis, moral and social discussion could then take place.

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<sup>116</sup> See for short film descriptions in Brauer, *AVM der Geschlechtererziehung*.

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## 4. Sex, Love and Visual Morality: Moral Bodies on Display

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This chapter is concerned with how sex education films negotiated sexual morality. It focuses on two sex education films, *Helga* (1967) and *Partner* (1965) and explores how these films transferred contemporary notions of appropriate sexual behaviour into a filmic form. Foucault has pointed out that morality is a double-sided phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> It comprises a moral code, understood as a set of rules that spell out the limits and possibilities for behaviour. Actual behaviour, the way the addressed understands himself or herself as a moral subject, however, can differ from the code.<sup>2</sup>

In relation to sexuality in East and West Germany, official moral codes established after World War II were maintained for most of the 1950s and 1960s. In West Germany a heteronormative morality, backed by religious institutions, emerged and became characteristic of Adenauer's conservative sexual politics.<sup>3</sup> The main broadly-defined constituents of this moral code were omission of lust, official suspicion towards eroticism and commercialisation of sex, and a focus on procreation and the nuclear family.<sup>4</sup> East Germany can be said to have shared some of these basic moral constituents. Although religious influence was substituted by secular state-led measures like the 'Ten Socialist Commandments' and the ceremony of *Jugendweihe* ('youth oath', a coming-of-age celebration akin to the Catholic and Protestant confirmation celebration) which prepared

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: History of Sexuality 2*, translated by Johan Hurley (Penguin Books: London 1987), pp. 25-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> Herzog, *Sex after Fascism*, pp. 101-103; Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, pp. 112-113; Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 44-49; Nuys-Henkemann, 'Wenn die rote Sonne', pp. 107-145.

<sup>4</sup> Eder, 'The National Socialists', pp. 102-130.

young people for monogamous heterosexual relationships that ideally led into marriage and family foundation<sup>5</sup>, the East shared the West's suspicion of eroticism and fear of 'filthy' influences.<sup>6</sup>

These moral codes were debated during the 1950s and 1960s, as it became obvious that moral behaviour frequently deviated from prescribed codes. This discrepancy showed especially in the sexual behaviour of young people. Polls revealed that teenagers had sex at an increasingly earlier age.<sup>7</sup> The ubiquity of erotic representations in the media rendered the way young people had to be educated in sexual matters problematic.<sup>8</sup> The fear of having young people educated by these media implied concerns of policymakers of losing influence.

As demonstrated in chapter 1, it not only became increasingly obvious that, in the first place, the way people practised sexuality did not adhere to the moral codes, and furthermore there was a change in sexual politics. This change included a loosening of abortion laws and giving greater access to contraceptives. These measures were less prescriptive and focused on individual choice. More choice in sexual matters, in turn, increased the scope of responsibility for sex education, and self-management and decision-making came to be regarded as in need of moral guidance. Sex educators changed the way they perceived the management of the body by changing the emphasis from medico-scientific management to self-government. Keeping up with the times, a consensual rhetoric that could counter the commercialisation of sexuality was attempted in both German states. Persuasion was favoured over restriction.

Contemporary sex educators frequently pointed to rapid transformations in society and called for the incorporation of moral and social guidance into a

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<sup>5</sup> Grassel, *Methodische Hinweise*; Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Poiger, *Jazz*, pp. 106-136.

<sup>7</sup> Herzog, 'Sexual Morality', p. 382.

<sup>8</sup> Erich Stümmer, 'Die Mithilfe der Schule bei der Geschlechtererziehung', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene* 4 (1966), pp. 12-13.

holistic concept of sex education that considered sexuality as an integral part of how an individual perceived himself/herself as a member of society.<sup>9</sup> For West German pedagogue Heinrich Oestereich, social transformation made sex education adjustment necessary. He demanded 'the inclusion of sex education into the education of the young'.<sup>10</sup> To him sex education signified instruction on the biological, psychological and social aspects of sexuality.<sup>11</sup> Another commentator advocated sex education that contributed to the mediation of knowledge, the formation of conscience and instruction on sexual behaviour.<sup>12</sup> In 1956, Neubert stated that East German sex education 'is the education about the relationship between man and woman in a socialist society. It is about the question of happiness'.<sup>13</sup> This holistic approach, coinciding with the emergence of sexual pedagogy as a separate discipline, indicated a need for new imperatives of self-management. After it had become obvious that sexual behaviour and moral codes diverged, sex education was concerned with reconciling these two sides. In the 1960s, young people in the GDR were subject to far reaching expectations on the part of the state concerning their future role as socialist citizens.<sup>14</sup> Sexuality as part of holistic education was thus geared towards socialist values. Love as a guiding principle was meant to set socialist true sexuality apart from a capitalist, commoditised one.<sup>15</sup>

In West Germany pedagogical concepts intended sex education to develop a moral and self-responsible understanding that would help young people to cope

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<sup>9</sup> Bittighöfer, 'Sozialistische Geschlechtsmoral', pp. 791-800; Grassel, 'Geschlechtserziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', p. 764; Oestereich, 'Gegenwartsaspekte', pp. 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Oestereich, 'Gegenwartsaspekte', p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Stümmer, 'Die Mithilfe der Schule', p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Neubert, 'Gedanken zum Problem', p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> 'Kommuniqué', p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Urgan, *Legal Tender*, pp. 21-26.

with erotic media representation.<sup>16</sup> Holistic concepts often stressed the interconnection between sexuality and the whole life and sex education was meant to counteract the economic exploitation of sexuality.

Guidance on self-management in sexual matters will be the focus of this chapter. It will discuss how sex education attempted to reconcile moral codes with personal choices, how techniques of body management served as a template for the internalisation of sexual morality, and how moral bodies were created. Two sex education films, *Helga* and *Partner*, will be scrutinised to identify how they defined sexual morality and what templates they offered to be adapted by their young viewers. The production context set them apart from other sex education films. In an attempt to respond to the changing environment they introduced their main protagonists as autonomous and self-guided individuals.

*Helga*, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Health and the BZgA, was one of a number of initiatives introduced by Minister of Health, Käte Strobel (1966-1969), to raise public awareness for the need of sex education. In her campaign for nationwide sex education, Strobel emphasised the need to talk about sex education without inhibition. This was to be achieved by presenting sex education in a new light, free from social taboos.<sup>17</sup> Like *Helga*, the East German film *Partner* was a moral response to social circumstances. In an interview, the director Oelschlägel unveiled his motivations for making a film about teenage love. He noted that empirical studies, interviews with and letters by young people had revealed alarming results.<sup>18</sup> Oelschlägel concluded that, for young people, having relationships was often reduced to 'a matter of good form', and romantic love had

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<sup>16</sup> Stümmer, 'Die Mithilfe der Schule', p. 13; Georg Siegmund, 'Sexualerziehung heute', *Concepte: Magazin für Sozialethik und Sozialhygiene* 3 (1966), pp. 1-3; Mehl, *Sexualerziehung in der Schule*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Käte Strobel, 'Vorwort', *Sexualkunde-Atlas: Biologische Informationen zur Sexualität des Menschen*, edited by the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (Leske Verlag: Opladen 1969).

<sup>18</sup> Götz Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe ein romantischer Begriff?' *Junge Welt*-Interview, *Du und deine Zeit* 3 (Weekend supplement of the *Junge Welt*) (17 January 1965), p. 9.

no place.<sup>19</sup> Advising young people on the moral aspects of forming partnerships was the aim of his film.<sup>20</sup>

Both films stressed abstaining from a moralising approach. In the case of *Helga*, Strobel saw the circumvention from moralising in biological sex education.<sup>21</sup> Strobel advocated providing 'necessary essentials' to help young people make choices according to their ethical and social life styles.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Oelschlägel aimed at encouraging young people to follow ethical standards of living. He called upon them to, 'Try, to set benchmarks for life to avoid unpleasant mistakes in partner bonding.'<sup>23</sup> To him, emotional guidance towards love and partnership, not biological instruction, was an alternative to moralising sex education.

Modern, uninhibited speech on sexuality had distinctive formal characteristics. The BZgA, acting on behalf of the Ministry of Health, in concert with Rinco-Film GmbH, a commercial film studio in Munich, positioned *Helga* between educational ambitions and commercial interests. *Helga* was not simply a film for the classroom, but also for release as a cinematographic feature.<sup>24</sup> This helped *Helga*, the first state sponsored feature-length sex education film in the Federal Republic, to exceed expected national and international box-office rates.<sup>25</sup> *Helga* reflects the promotion of a new sexual morality in sex education. In addition, the placement of *Helga* as a commercial product amidst a 'sex wave' helped make it a box-office hit. Whilst *Helga* profited from its commercialisation, it aimed at

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Strobel, 'Vorwort'; See also Sauerteig, 'Representations', pp. 141-145.

<sup>22</sup> Strobel, 'Vorwort'.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe', p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> *Helga* was the film title for the cinematic release. As for school circulation the film was split into two parts and distributed under the titles. *er-sie-es* and *Wir wollen es*. Plot descriptions are to be found in BA B310/24.

<sup>25</sup> Records on attendance figures and gross earnings can be found in BA B310/23.

educating young people on developing a critical stance towards the commodification of sexuality.<sup>26</sup>

*Partner* was different from other sex education films in the GDR. Until then, only films with a biological focus had been admitted for school sex education.<sup>27</sup>

*Partner* set out to depict the social and moral problems in the formation of relationships between adolescents in a style evocative of feature films. The *Gegenwartsfilme* typical for the GDR cinema of the time seemed to especially influence Oelschlägel's filmmaking.<sup>28</sup> *Partner* experimented with styles and contents to address a wider range of topics than usual in sex education films.

Both films serve as examples to analyse the moral templates or 'sexual scripts' provided for young people.<sup>29</sup> The analysis will highlight the different moral bodies that emerged from *Helga's* and *Partner's* re-conciliation of moral codes and behaviour.

#### **4.1. *Helga: On the Origins of Human Life or The Intimate Life of a Young Woman***

To Strobel, sex education was not only a matter for schools and parents, but concerned the education of children, adolescents and adults.<sup>30</sup> In an attempt to promote sex education on a large scale, she commissioned *Helga*. Originally planned to be a classroom film, *Helga* eventually became a commercial feature in West German cinemas and abroad. By using mass media, Strobel showed how to popularise public health campaigns and made it clear that sex education concerned everyone from an early age on. Above all, Strobel defended the

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<sup>26</sup> Siegfried, 'Vom Teenager', p. 589.

<sup>27</sup> See for instance the series *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1-3* and *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies*.

<sup>28</sup> BA B310/5: Strobel, 'Gesundheit in unserer Zeit', 1967.

<sup>29</sup> The term 'sexual scripts' has been introduced by the sociologists John Gagnon and William Simon. Gagnon, Simon, *Sexual Conduct*.

<sup>30</sup> BA B310/5: Strobel, 'Gesundheit in unserer Zeit', 1967.

principle of value-free and factual sex education and, most notably, attempted to provide sex education 'freed from prejudices' ('frei von Vorwertung').<sup>31</sup> The following two testimonies show how Strobel's intention of unbiased speaking, however, was met with different expectations.

Under the heading 'Soft porn masquerading as documentary' on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb), a British commentator leaves behind his impressions of watching *Helga* back in the 1960s:

I was sixteen when I went to see this [*Helga*] at an out-of-town cinema (to avoid being seen by a neighbour who worked at my usual haunt). The film has little or no merit and was not worth the bus fare and the half-crown entry cost. It is badly dubbed and fuzzily photographed. The colour is not good, but at least not the garishly unattractive Technicolour which was the only real alternative back then. Although the film was widely trailed and advertised by word of mouth, it still failed to attract the audiences you might expect in those distant, post-Victorian times.<sup>32</sup>

Another British witness, whose son Andrew Petcher published his scrap book, recalls watching *Helga* in 1969:

[...] I went on a school trip to see the sex education film *Helga* which was designed to make up for the fact that our parents and school teachers were all too embarrassed to tackle the subject head on. It opened in cinemas on 24th April and we were all bussed to the Granada Cinema to watch the German government sponsored film about sex, pregnancy and giving birth. Even though it didn't have an X rating this was certainly more explicit than any of the adult films that I had deceived my way in to see and it had ladies with no clothes on, voluptuous bodies and bushy pubic

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<sup>31</sup> In the preface of the *Sexualkunde Atlas* Strobel emphasised the importance to present the topic 'free from any values' (fern von jeder Vorwertung). Strobel, 'Vorwort'.

<sup>32</sup> anches-725-976306, 'Soft porn masquerading as documentary' (21 July 2011), *Internet Movie Database* [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0157743/reviews?ref=tt\\_ury](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0157743/reviews?ref=tt_ury) (last accessed in February 2014).

hair and far from putting me off I left the cinema thinking about how I'd like to try it!<sup>33</sup>

What becomes clear is that the first viewer expected a sex film and was disappointed by being presented with sex education. In contrast, the second recalls watching *Helga* with his class as part of sex education and indicates how overwhelmed he was by its sexual openness. His comment 'far from putting [him] off' speaks of previous disappointing experiences with sex education films. This recollection suggests that the film succeeded in delivering sex education in a new way. By contrast, the first witness stresses that *Helga* had no merit as entertainment. His/her testimony makes clear that it was perceived thus by film fans in general.

In order to explain why *Helga* yielded such different reactions, it is necessary to consider the cultural climate of that time. Against the background of steadily declining attendance figures of cinema-goers since the inception of TV in the late 1950s, *Helga* was released when sex found its way into mainstream cinema. The increased cinematic display of sexualised images during the 1960s thus can be seen as an attempt to raise attendance figures.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the commercialisation of sex in mass media provoked much criticism.<sup>35</sup> In 1964, the Swedish film *The Silence*, directed by Ingmar Bergman, became probably the best-known film scandal in the history of the 1960s West German cinema.<sup>36</sup> However, attempts to ban the film on grounds of explicit nudity failed.<sup>37</sup> This, according to Steinbacher, suggests that Christian morality had lost its political significance by the 1960s,

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew Petcher, 'Sex education and X Rated Films' (24 April 2012), *New Light Through Old Windows*, wordpress by Andrew Petcher, <http://aipetcher.wordpress.com/tag/helga-movie/> (last accessed in February 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Uka, 'Abschied von gestern', pp. 201-202; Thissen, *Sex verklärt*, p. 204.

<sup>35</sup> Georg Seeßlen, *Der pornographische Film: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Ullstein Verlag: Frankfurt/Main, Berlin 1990), pp. 170-171.

<sup>36</sup> Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, pp. 283-295.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

and moral interference on behalf of the Church was no longer tolerated.<sup>38</sup> This makes *The Silence* a telling example of increased commercial representations of sexuality on the discussion of morality.<sup>39</sup>

*Helga* with its aim of speaking openly on sexuality was consciously placed amidst the commercial representation of sex. Its high box-office rates seem to put the film right in the middle of the ongoing commercialisation and commodification of sex. This impression was also fostered in the film's advertising. *Helga* had erotic and sensualist overtones to attract large audiences aged sixteen and over. The chance of seeing a naked body was suggested by *Helga*'s film poster. A drawing of a naked upper body of a woman covering her breasts added an erotic touch. 'Unbiased speaking' was stressed on the poster, promising 'straightforward sex education' and 'pulling no punches'.<sup>40</sup> This advanced Strobel's ambition of reaching out to larger parts of society, with erotic titillation as a vehicle. The poster slogan for the West German release underpinned the educational aspect by titling the film 'On the Origins of Human Life', whilst the posters distributed in France, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States advertised *Helga* with the more saucy subtitle 'The Intimate Life of a Young Woman'.<sup>41</sup> The interplay between erotic teasing on the one hand and sex education on the other resulted in distinct expectations of the film, reflected in the initial commentaries of the two British commentators.

The tension between eroticism and education that *Helga*'s marketing campaign created was a new phenomenon in sex. The promise of presenting sex education in the language of commercial cinema, as seen in the poster, suggested that it

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>40</sup> The film poster can be accessed via the online database <http://www.filmportal.de/node/29419/material/640416> (last accessed in January 2014).

<sup>41</sup> With this subtitle the film poster was distributed in the UK. The poster for the release in France ran under the same subtitle as in the UK; online available <http://www.filmportal.de/node/29419/material/640416> (last accessed in January 2014).

had little to do with the old inhibited ways. With *Helga* sex education films moved into new territory including social and moral topics such as eroticism, love and the like. As such, it represented a contribution to a holistic approach to sex education that sought to broaden its scope.<sup>42</sup> This extension of responsibility, however, also created the need for sex education to re-position itself towards these moral and social aspects.

## **4.2. Sex is Natural**

As we have seen, *Helga* set itself the task of presenting uninhibited sex education to wider society. In doing so, it incorporated social and moral topics into sex education, creating the need for a moral framework. In this regard *Helga* can be divided into two parts, the introductory sequence and the main plot. In the first part *Helga* sets out its ambitious remit. The introductory sequence is dedicated to the presentation of problems in contemporary sexuality and sex education. Stylistically it is presented in an expository documentary style with footage arranged around a commentary underscoring the accuracy of the facts presented. Thereby, *Helga* demonstrates the need for the broad implementation of sex education and lays the ground for a moral framework established in the second part. The following subchapter will be concerned with the problems *Helga* identifies.

Bearing in mind that *Helga* was conceived to contribute to open-minded and uninhibited sex education, it is unsurprising that it opens with the statement that sex is natural. This is illustrated with a series of nature scenes depicting several animal species, a pair at a time, followed by a scene showing a young couple walking through the landscape. Through these scenes, the film aims at building an analogy between the animal kingdom and humanity via visual matching.

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<sup>42</sup> BA B310/5: Strobel, 'Gesundheit in unserer Zeit', 1967.

Concurrently, a voice-over explains that animals and humans alike are designed to reproduce in order to preserve the species. From the outset, *Helga* establishes naturalness as a central factor in sexual morality.

In line with the slogan on the poster, from the start the film gives the impression that it is about to deliver 'straightforward sex education'. By tackling the most delicate topic - 'sexual intercourse' - right at the beginning, the film signals it is uninhibited and free from any moral and social taboos. The paralleling visual presentation, however, does not depict what the narrator proclaims. Despite the emphasis on sexual reproduction as the most natural thing in the world, the film leaves out sexual intercourse when it builds its analogy between humans and animals. When talking about overarching instinctive sexual behaviour, it resorts to showing mating rituals of animals and equating these with human flirtation. Here anthropomorphism serves to create a logical link in the visual narration to underpin a biological approach to sex.<sup>43</sup> In contrast to the initial suggestion in the voice-over to openly speak about sex as natural, the visual language expresses a distinct and idealised picture of naturalness delineating a moral space within which open talk about sex can take place.

The naturalness of sex is inhibited by social norms and restraints, taboos and shame. The narrator argues that it is difficult to talk openly about the topic. To testify to this 'ignorance and inhibition' about sex in society, the film presents interviews in the street. *Helga* presents a reporter who, giving the impression of conducting a survey, seems to randomly ask passers-by for their experiences with sex education and contraception. The climax of these interviews was a slap in the face by an elderly interviewee, indicating sexual repression. This use of

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<sup>43</sup> For more information on the study of anthropomorphism in public health films see for instance Gudrun Loehrer's case study: 'Anopheles Anni vs Private Snafu: Gender and Sexuality in 1940s Animation Films', in Maren Möhring, Massimo Perinelli, Olaf Stieglitz (eds.), *Tiere im Film: Eine Menschheitsgeschichte der Moderne* (transcript: Bielefeld 2009), pp. 193-205.

modern 'direct cinema'<sup>44</sup> was popular in entertainment as can be seen in popular sex education films such as the films by Oswald Kolle<sup>45</sup> and soft-core films like *Schulmädchen-Reporte* (School Girls Reports).<sup>46</sup> It served to give an impression of authentic insights into social reality. It supported the aim of showing what was really going on central to both serious sex education like *Helga*, and voyeuristic variants like the *Reporte* films.<sup>47</sup> However, a comment by the Lower Saxon educational film hire service reveals the contemporary audience seemed to question the authenticity of these scenes due to bad staging.<sup>48</sup>

After defining the problem of ignorance, *Helga's* introductory sequence presents young people as victims of an inhibited approach to sexuality. The film points out teenagers, if not properly educated, are likely to obtain their knowledge in sexual matters from dubious sources and hence at risk misunderstandings. One of these risky sources was assumed to come from inappropriate sex talk amongst peers. To demonstrate this *Helga* shows a sequence depicting teenage girls gathered in a schoolyard. As soon as the teacher approaches, the girls disperse. The voice over typifies them as 'smart alecks' (Neunmalgescheiten), but it does not necessarily address young people. Rather it is meant to remind adults and parents of their duties to instruct children properly. Here the film ties in with

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<sup>44</sup> Direct cinema developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s when for the first time cameras were built that allowed taking hand-held shots. Bordwell, Thompson, *Film History*, pp. 445-451.

<sup>45</sup> Oswald Kolle had written articles on sexuality and partnership for the West German magazines *Quick* and *Neue Revue* before he engaged in the production of a number of films during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Based on his article series *Wunder der Liebe* (Miracles of Love) his first film of the same name was released in 1968. Franz Josef Gottlieb, *Oswald Kolle: Wunder der Liebe – Sexualität in der Ehe* (1968), written by Oswald Kolle and produced by Arca-Winston Films Corporation GmbH & Co. KG (Berlin).

<sup>46</sup> Ernst Hofbauer's *Schulmädchen Report*-series ran into several sequels between 1970 until mid-1970s. The first feature-length episode was *Was Eltern nicht für möglich halten*, produced by Wolf C. Hartwig. In the UK the film was released under the title *Confessions of a Sixth Form Girl*.

<sup>47</sup> SeeBlen, *Der pornographische Film*, p. 180; Thissen, *Sex verklärt*, pp. 256-259; Miersch, *Der Schulmädchen-Report*.

<sup>48</sup> BA B310/24: E. Schwarz (Niedersächsische Landesverwaltungsamt, Landesbildstelle) to BZgA, comment on the film, 16 February 1968; see also the newspaper snippet, Anonymus 'Helga macht's möglich: Aufklärung für Wissende', *euromed: Das europäisch-medizinische Magazin* 20 (17 October 1967), p. 951.

Strobel's aim of spreading sex education throughout society, making it a matter for everyone.

The following scene introduces another problem that, according to the film, could have been prevented if an open discussion in the parental home had taken place. *Helga* invokes the cliché of the so-called 'Halbstarcken' (literally half-strongs, similar to beatniks) to illustrate the dangers of untrustworthy sources for sex education.<sup>49</sup> In typical James-Dean-outfits, black leather jackets and slicked backed hair, a group of three teenage boys are shown loitering in front of a street display of the nightclub 'Papageienbar' (parrot bar). Intrigued by a photograph of a naked woman in tight black underpants, one boy tries to remove the censoring strip that covers her breasts. In an overly didactic tone the voice over comments, 'Children who are adequately educated take such things for granted; they don't need to struggle with curiosity that comes from filthy (original: unsaubere, unclean) sources'. Censorship, like the strip on the poster in this scene, had legal backing from the 1953 "Law on the Distribution of Youth-Endangering Publications" that sought to protect youth from moral endangerment. Additionally, it prohibited smoking in public, and restricted access to dance events, cinemas and varieties.<sup>50</sup> When, in 1951, Robert Schilling, head of the Federal Department for Writings Harmful to Young Persons (Bundesprüfstelle) cited Theodor Heuss's 1926 expression 'social politic for the soul', he re-introduced a moral discourse aiming at purging young people's minds from filth and trash.<sup>51</sup> *Halbstarcken* and American mass media were seen as a political threat to the state in West Germany until the mid-1950s. From then on, influential social scientists such as

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<sup>49</sup> The impact of US American films, so-called delinquency films on East and West German youngsters was a heated debate during 1950s. Poiger, *Jazz*. On this aspect see also Biltereyst, 'American Juvenile Delinquency Movies', pp. 9-26.

<sup>50</sup> For a detailed assessment on the development of the "Law on the Distribution of Youth-Endangering Publications" in Germany from 1900 until 1970s West Germany, see Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

Helmut Schelsky, Curt Bondy and Viggo Blücher helped to disperse some of the repressive arguments by delivering psychological rather than political explanations for the behaviour of young people.<sup>52</sup>

Significantly, *Helga* drew on the moral distinction between ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ sources and contrasted the erotic voyeurism of the *Halbstarcken* with the unmediated and natural nakedness of children playing in the garden.

Without appropriate sex education, the film goes on to argue, another risk could emerge in the phenomenon of acceleration. This referred to the early onset of puberty and determines the gap between bodily and emotional maturity during adolescence. Acceleration was a central topic in pedagogical literature on sex education, pointing to the fact that the adolescent body was in a liminal stage. Although biologically prepared for sexual intercourse, pedagogues repeatedly warned against premature sexual activity and stressed the need for postponement.<sup>53</sup> Similarly in *Helga*, the voice-over narrator explains that, although young girls may sometimes look like adults, they are still children. After having discussed the risk associated with acceleration in the commentary, the film shows a young girl hitchhiking. The commentary runs, ‘It is no wonder, when girls are judged according to their appearance. Who of the adults is aware of the fact that the psychological-emotional maturity does not keep pace with the physical one?’ This risk, in contrast to the prior scenes, addressed both adults and adolescents and calls for awareness of the dangers associated with acceleration, as otherwise adults could pose a threat to teenagers. The film urges that young girls should be made aware of the fact that, ‘although they may already look like adult women, they are not’. Here, the film combines two aims: to appeal to the broader masses by stressing the need for sex education and to

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<sup>52</sup> Poiger, *Jazz*, pp. 106-123.

<sup>53</sup> Siegmund, ‘Sexualerziehung heute’, pp. 3-4; Neubert, ‘Gedanken zum Problem’, pp. 21-23; Grassel, ‘Soziologische Grundlagen der Geschlechterziehung’, p. 22.

deliver a pedagogic explanation by raising awareness of the sexual appearance of the body.

*Helga* also strongly defined misread openness by differentiating 'clean' from 'unclean' sources. While the film concedes that openness in sexual matters is necessary, it also defines how to speak openly in an appropriate manner. *Helga* delivers a critique of the commodification of sexuality as misleading, 'unclean' openness. Consequently, when the film's introductory sequence postulates the overall aim of re-establishing an open attitude towards human sexuality, the voice over warns of drastic changes that 'society could not bear'. This can be read as a strong hint that *Helga* on the one hand criticises the commercialisation of sexuality, while on the other its advertising campaign connects to it. The affirmative and consensual approach that *Helga* displays on the surface was part of a new rhetoric that sought to strengthen the connection to young people by adopting a contemporary rhetoric.<sup>54</sup> As the analysis has demonstrated the film, however, was traversed by new limitations and boundaries that defined its own version of 'clean' eroticism.

### **4.3. The Renegotiation of Moral Boundaries**

While the first part, as demonstrated above, was dedicated to singling out sex education problems resulting from society's wrong doings, the second part of the film sets up a framework within which these can be overcome. *Helga* demonstrates how a natural attitude toward sexuality, that it claims to be fundamental to successful sex education, can be rehabilitated. In doing so, the film introduces its protagonist, Helga, a young woman who becomes pregnant

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<sup>54</sup> On West German youth politics see Siegfried, 'Vom Teenager', pp. 582-623; Also Sauerteig emphasises the changing attitude towards sexuality and sex education during the 1960s. Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 123-158.

and subsequently undergoes a series of lectures in which experts advise her on sex education and correct behaviour during pregnancy.

*Helga* differentiates between 'clean' and 'unclean' sources, begging the question of how the film presents sexuality, especially the much-contested subject of sexual intercourse, in a 'clean' manner. In the fashion of biological sex education films *Helga* ascribes sexual intercourse to one purpose: procreation. Sexual pleasure and emotions are omitted and subsequently do not shape the narrative of developmental biology, whilst antenatal development and pre-natal care round off the story 'On the Origins of Human Life'. In a plethora of lecture scenes the film visualises sexual reproduction with micro-photographic images, reminiscent of the iconographic photo series by the Swedish photographer Lennart Nilsson.

The topic of love was not so much an issue for discussion let alone different forms of love and lovemaking. Interestingly love is far from being left out. It serves as a fundamental reference point essential for the biological discussion of human reproduction. Love, as the film suggests, is a key emotion that sets humans apart from animals. According to *Helga*, it is love that stands above the mere biology of sexual reproduction. The fulfilment of love, practised by a heterosexual couple, was seen in the procreation and rearing of offspring. By deciding not to present feelings of love between adults, the film avoids actual discussion of sexual feelings. On the one hand, love had to remain a powerful mystery; on the other it created a prerequisite for sexual intercourse. Originally, a scene was to be included depicting a young woman talking with her husband about her desire to have a baby. However, the Federal Centre for Health Education deemed the scene as 'too intense' to be of use for school sex education.<sup>55</sup> Obviously the young woman's directly expressed wish made the connection between love and sexual intercourse all too clear, thereby uncovering

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<sup>55</sup> BA B310/23: Film evaluation by the BZgA, 10 January 1967.

love's mysterious nature. Almost ironically, love, despite its sketchy filmic presentation, formed a tight moral precondition upon which an open discussion of the biology of reproduction as the film envisioned it could occur. The inclusion of love into sex education alludes to current pedagogic trends at the time that increasingly demanded a holistic approach. Introducing love as the basis for a successful heterosexual relationship implicitly acknowledges personal happiness as a factor in sex education. The way to achieve happiness as a natural sexuality based on love, however, as the film makes it clear, runs through knowledge and facilities provided by experts and the state. In this way of openly speaking about sex, *Helga* does not discard experts but rather enforces their role.

Accordingly, advice on the biology of puberty, sexual reproduction and pregnancy is presented in *Helga* by a series of expert talks rounded off with instructions on correct behaviour during pregnancy. These are directed in a conventional filmic style. In most of them, the expert is placed in the centre of the filmic frame, and the camera zooms out and pans toward the audience, tacitly following the presentation, sometimes nodding to give a sign of consent. One of these experts is a nurse who gives advice on the correct behaviour, physical exercise and diet for pregnant women, discusses bodily changes, and advises on the legal rights of maternity protection. The nurse delivers this information to an audience of couples and pregnant women, mirroring the initial intention of the film to be used as antenatal education. Another expert talk is centred around a physician giving a talk to nurses on the different stages of giving birth. Here, the camera focuses on the physician, zooms out and pans through the audience to indicate to whom the talk is addressed, before it zooms to a wall chart of anatomical cross-section drawings of the stages of birth. This scene serves a double function, insofar as it not only informs the viewer about the biology of giving birth but also reassures mothers-to-be that hospital personnel involved in delivery have been adequately

trained. Clear hierarchies of knowledge transfer are thus maintained. Another talk is given to young girls by a female gynaecologist. Here, the target group is different as it consists of teenagers. The gynaecologist lectures girls gathered around an anteroom table. The expert is placed right in the middle of the group and informs them about physiological changes during puberty, hinting at resulting unstable behaviour in adolescents. This scene lasts almost twenty minutes. As the voice-over narrator emphasises, the gynaecologist informs the young people with professional knowledge on her private initiative. Apart from the knowledge imparted, the scene stresses the need for such private initiatives to provide adequate sex education for the youngsters, this being at the very heart of Strobel's sex education agenda.

*Helga* envisioned an open discussion about sexuality taking place exclusively with experts. This authoritative mediation was crucial, not only to restore the reputation of the medical profession after the *Contergan* scandal in the early 1960s<sup>56</sup>, as Uta Schwarz speculates, but more importantly to distinguish, untrustworthy and 'unclean' sources from trustworthy and 'clean' information.<sup>57</sup> Medical experts were presented as the legitimate sources of 'clean' knowledge. This depiction of legitimate speakers went hand in hand with representations of designated spaces where speeches took place. Hence space became a metaphor for both, appropriate and inappropriate sex education. Public spaces where teenagers are left alone, be it at the schoolyard or in front of a night club, pose a risk rather than an opportunity for consensual sex education. It was the

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<sup>56</sup> For detailed discussions on the "Contergan affair" in West Germany see Willibald Steinmetz, 'Ungewollte Politisierung durch die Medien? Die Contergan-Affäre', in Bernd Weisbrod (ed.), *Die Politik der Öffentlichkeit - Die Öffentlichkeit der Politik* (Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen 2003), pp. 195-228; Beate Kirk, *Der Contergan-Fall: eine unvermeidbare Arzneimittelkatastrophe? Zur Geschichte des Arzneistoffs Thalidomid* (Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft: Stuttgart 1999); Alexander von Schwerin, 'Die Contergan-Bombe: Der Arzneimittelskandal und die neue risikoepistemische Ordnung der Massenkonsumgesellschaft', in Nicholas Eschenbruch et al. (eds.), *Arzneimittel des 20. Jahrhunderts: Historische Skizzen von Lebertran bis Contergan* (transcript: Bielefeld 2009), pp. 255-282.

<sup>57</sup> For Schwarz on Contergan see Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 206.

enclosed room, however, where sex education was seen as an effective undertaking, where expert and audience could be equally overseen and knowledge transfer visualised.

In the second part of the film, room for discussion was restricted and clear hierarchies as well as didactic means were established. Cinematic staging supported the construction of this tight moral space. Camera movements which frequently first capture the expert, zoom out and pan to the audience, symbolise knowledge transfer from expert to lay-audience. The camera acts as a visual mouthpiece of authoritative mediation. These lecture scenes establish a classroom atmosphere by filmic means that has a double function. First, they bring the classroom onto screen while at the same time transferring it to the public space of cinemas. The position of the camera is either directly facing the expert or positioned at an angle that allows capturing both the expert and the first rows of the audience. Hence, the camera opens a subjective field of vision that allows the real audience to participate in the lecture as the seemingly enclosed cinematic room opens to those opposite the screen and integrates them. In this configuration, the film breaks away from its initial claims encouraging everybody to speak openly about sex in favour of thematic narrowness and experts who are exclusively allowed to do so. This layout affected the audience in a double sense, first being addressed as part of the wider health campaign to talk openly about sex, and secondly being transferred into a classroom atmosphere where experts advised them.

Arguably, the solutions *Helga* gave to the problems it raised addressed the individual by invoking love as principle. At the same time the film spoke about sexuality in conventional authoritative and biological terms by establishing a hierarchy of knowledge that strengthened the role of experts and state institutions. Thereby *Helga* re-established moral boundaries under the motto of

speaking openly. Under these premises it suggested specific forms of self-management.

#### **4.4. The Role of Helga**

It is rare for biological education films to feature protagonist actors, a device that usually allows for the audience to identify on a personal level. In *Helga*, however, the employment of a protagonist is connected to the film's aim of renegotiating moral codes and behaviour. By referring to its main character, the film could stress that personal choice and agency were factors that had to be considered and guided by sex education. It is Helga herself who demonstrates and mediates the techniques of self-management deemed essential for a successful sexual life. Furthermore, in keeping with the biologically informed 'clean' nakedness which the film promotes, Helga's body becomes a medico-scientific object that enables the film to speak openly in the way it envisioned.

The protagonist is only loosely bound into the filmic narrative. While Helga is completely absent in the prologue, her role is dominant in the latter part, as she is located amidst the raft of lectures. Her first appearance is at the gynaecologist's, when she enters the doorframe half-naked dressed in a white negligee.

Here *Helga*, contrary to the film's poster, does not represent the erotic woman but a woman who takes her responsibilities towards sexual health and sexuality seriously. Standing next to a drug cupboard her half-naked figure alludes to healthy consciousness rather than being a seductive threat to society. With this appearance Helga's role is firmly established. She embodies a female model citizen who seeks professional advice from experts and acts upon it. Her next visit to the gynaecologist reveals that she is pregnant. The lectures she

subsequently attends mostly provide information on pre-natal development and antenatal care.

In these scenes, Helga serves the role of a mediator between the knowledge and other offerings the state makes to pregnant women and the audience. She is a model of the relation between state and individual. The audience can follow Helga as she gradually internalises knowledge and transforms it into techniques of self-management. After the lecture scenes, she is shown amidst other pregnant women doing exercises. Helga then continues and internalises her lessons at home. This process of internalisation towards a self-governed individual is best visualised in a scene where a medium close-up shot depicts Helga sitting on her bedroom floor remembering all the instructions behaviour during pregnancy. She memorises advice on diet, sleep and pregnancy exercises aloud, while superimposed trick animation running through the frame visually captures her memories of the instructions she received. In a similar fashion, the concluding scene presents Helga looking after her new-born baby whilst repeating aloud all she is about to do such as remembering the right temperature for the bath water and preparing the baby for winding and breast-feeding. Helga's mission from increasing her knowledge about sexuality to actual child rearing is thus complete. Mother and child prosper in the final scene. The individual as Helga is not an independent woman but follows all the advice given to her in order to achieve a successful life. Through its protagonist *Helga* displayed a form of self-management that established a direct link between knowledge that came from 'clean' and trustworthy sources and its' direct application.

In the context of this particular functionality, the depiction of (semi-)nude and nude Helga which acted as a template of body-knowledge void of sexual insinuations was legitimated. While a few scenes in the beginning of the film showed naked children frolicking in gardens and beaches to underpin the initial

argument that sexuality and nakedness were natural, this was certainly not the case for adults. The depiction of adult naked bodies in *Helga* served clearly a pragmatic functional role.

Consequently, the first time Helga's naked body is shown occurs in the context of the gynaecologists lecture. Framed from the frontal perspective against a black background, naked Helga is transferred from the otherwise social-authoritative surroundings into a seemingly void space. Arguably, it was only this 'value-free' monochrome space that made it possible to depict her naked. While the camera zooms towards the area of her womb, Helga's whole body dissolves and an animated drawing of a uterus and the Fallopian tubes appear on the screen.

In this scene, Helga is not merely the addressee of sexual advice, but a medico-scientific object. On the voice over track the gynaecologist introduces this additional role by saying: 'Look Helga, behind the bladder, the uterus is located' before schematic and animated drawings replace Helga's body entirely.<sup>58</sup> The space for nudity is restricted and tightly confined. Helga's' body becomes accessible for experts which completely limits her scope of activities; she has become a 'bloodless model animated only by medical authority'.<sup>59</sup> While Helga's nakedness was entirely subject to medico-scientific inscriptions in an allegedly void space, the actress Ruth Gassmann (Helga) actually resented being naked. Correspondence between the film production company Rinco-Film, the Federal Centre for Health Education and Gassmann's solicitor Jürgen F. Ernst reveals that after the premiere in Munich in 1967 Gassmann demanded that the director cut her head out of the scene which shows her naked body in order to disguise her identity. An interim injunction from the state court in Munich conceded Gassmann's claims. The costs for the amendment were to be paid by the actress

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<sup>58</sup> Emphasis made by the author.

<sup>59</sup> Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 203.

herself.<sup>60</sup> While her nudity posed a moral problem for the actress, film reviews hardly mentioned any moral trouble with the scene; one comment even made it explicit that the depictions of nudity in *Helga* are presented with great serenity and therefore were not salacious.<sup>61</sup> It was rather the birth scene that excited minds.

The birth scene is introduced by a pan of brightly lit ceiling that can be identified as part of a hospital setting. The following cut reveals surgical instruments, which are being carefully prepared by a nurse. To stress the impression of a sterile setting, the camera captures the nurse putting on latex gloves. The lengthy establishing shot of the delivery room carefully prepares the audience for the scenes of nudity to come.

Again, the focus on medical surroundings served a dual function. First, it assured the audience that appropriate high technological facilities are standard in West German hospitals. Secondly it confined the moral space of giving birth to a biological event rather than a social one.<sup>62</sup> The act of giving birth itself is captured by close-up shots of the opening vulva showing the head of the baby emerging and being helped out by a midwife. The sequence is interspersed with close-up shots of Helga's face expressing labour, establishing a reference to her story. The whole sequence is accompanied by the original soundtrack at low volume. This stresses the medico-scientific image of the act of birth giving and separates it from the surrounding social world.

Not without foundation, the film's slogan boldly claimed to show scenes that had never been screened before, since cameras were normally banned from delivery

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<sup>60</sup> Documentation on this case can be found in BA B310/23. See in particular Rinco-Film (Fr. Ruppel) to Wolfgang Fritsche (BZgA), 11 October 1967, transcript of a telephone conversation, dated 13 October 1967; and the resolution of the *Landesgericht München* from 17 October 1967.

<sup>61</sup> BA B310/23: Clemens Busch to BZgA, comment on *Helga*, 17 October 1967, pp. 1-5.

<sup>62</sup> Sauerteig, 'Representations', p. 144.

rooms following a decision of the National Medical Congress in 1968.<sup>63</sup> This record of the act of birth was exploited as still photographs were taken and placed in designated sex education books. A whole photo series appeared in Strobel's *Sexualkunde-Atlas*. Erich F. Bender also exploited the photo series for his book *Helga*, as did Robert Chartham for his English sex education book *Helga: The Story of the Film* (1968). For this reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that many film reviews drew attention to the birth scene, although its effect was demurred, rather than questioned.<sup>64</sup> The Catholic journal *film-dienst*, for instance, warned against the shocking effect the scene could have on the female audience.<sup>65</sup> Clemens Busch of a local State Youth Welfare Office went even further by suggesting that the presentation of the birth-giving scene would evoke disgust and reluctance towards sexual conduct. He continued that this could deter sensible girls from wishing to have children.<sup>66</sup>

The filmic space in which the denuded vulva appeared was clearly restricted to a medico-scientific surrounding. A medico-scientific gaze was used in order to make the audience witnesses of childbirth. In Strobel's endeavour to deliver an example for factual sex education that avoided taboos, these moving images had a definite function.

To sum up, *Helga*, despite addressing individual self-management, closely restricted the moral framework within which this could take place. Authorised speakers in *Helga* admittedly accentuated the autonomy of individual choice but also gave clear instructions on how to act in the best and most responsible manner to stay healthy. The agent in *Helga* was not the protagonist herself but

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<sup>63</sup> Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> See for instance Anonymus, 'Sauberes Linnen', p. 190; Do [author's code], 'Helga', *film-dienst: Katholische Filmkommission für Deutschland* 47 (1967), pp. 2-3. See also BA B310/23: Günter Dahl, 'Helga bricht das Tabu: Ein deutscher Aufklärungsfilm für ziemlich starke Nerven', *Stern* 43 (1967) (newspaper snippet, without page numbers).

<sup>65</sup> Do [author's code], 'Helga', pp. 2-3.

<sup>66</sup> BA B310/23: Busch to BZgA, 1967, p. 4.

rather the legitimised speakers whose advice she obeys. Hence Helga's role is obedience without raising doubts or showing emotion. Her bodily appearance was entirely merged in medico-scientific ascriptions. The film hence was based around a set of technocratic procedures for the support of pregnant women. As with any information on feelings, emotions or personal experience was entirely absent, *Helga* can be assumed not to have succeeded in speaking in a timely way. Reactions to the movie strongly suggest this view.

Contemporary commentators observed that the film read like a manual on how to prepare for pregnancy. The left-wing sociologist Reimut Reiche, for instance, criticised Strobel's biologist approach to sex education in an article in the news journal *Der Spiegel*. 'For the Health Minister, sexuality starts where it ends for the vast majority of people, in the moment of conflation of egg and sperm cell.' Ironically, he points to the fact that 'only occasionally young people would be given an idea that something like sexual fears do exist. In the context of pregnancy', he ridiculed, 'fears and cramps could occur but even there is a proved remedy for the avoidance of it: pregnancy exercises.'<sup>67</sup> The centre-right newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* warned against a one-sided biological approach to sex education. The youth welfare officer, Wolfgang Kretschmer, wrote in 1966 that the focus on biology in sex education would lead to 'a dislocation of mores, provoking 'external progress and internal desolation'.<sup>68</sup> He continued 'to educate young people on scientific principles is a telling symptom of our emerging techno-rational age [...] but young people need to understand the drama of romance instead of being fed with facts'.<sup>69</sup> For him, objective, factual sex education was a social utopia. Similarly, a senior member of the State Youth Welfare office in Westfalen-Lippe critiqued the film's focus, which would 'miss out

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<sup>67</sup> Reimut Reiche, 'Zeugung ist Ordnung', *Der Spiegel* 28 (1969), p. 115.

<sup>68</sup> BA B310/23: Wolfgang Kretschmer, Wolfgang, 'Die umstrittene sexuelle Aufklärung', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 January 1966, pp. 2-4.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

a pedagogic and anthropologic perspective'.<sup>70</sup> Overall, commentators dismissed the film's biologist approach and appealed for the importance of providing moral and emotional guidance to young people through sex education. Significantly, film reviews evaluated *Helga* on its pedagogic relevance and use in class-room teaching. They praised the impressive biological images, particularly for young people, rather than considerations on whether the film would be beneficial to larger parts of society.<sup>71</sup>

To conclude, *Helga* represented a new type of political stance towards sex education from the 1960s onward which, in West Germany, was mainly associated with Health Minister Käthe Strobel. On the one hand sex education should address as many social groups as possible. On the other, it should be free from conventional moral boundaries hindering free and open speech on sexuality. While attempts to accommodate these aims can be traced in *Helga*, the claim to provide non-judgemental sex education remained utopian. *Helga* created a visual morality mainly based on objectification, administration and direct governance. *Helga*'s body thus became a template for the visual narrowing of sexuality and biology as well as a receiver for the self-management of direct state governance.

#### **4.5. *Partner* (1965) and a Lesson in Choosing**

As with *Helga* the film *Partner* from the outset sought to position itself within the discussions on contemporary morality. This begs the question as to which moral discussions were characteristic in the GDR, which aspects of these discussions *Partner* connected to and what consequences this had on the film's discussion of sexual morality.

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<sup>70</sup> BA B310/23: Busch to BZgA, 1967, pp. 1-5.

<sup>71</sup> For further comments on the film, see BA B310/23.

From the late 1950s, as in West Germany, a discourse about a new morality towards young people characterised the GDR's public debate on sexuality. In an attempt to raise the country's attractiveness and educate the first generation born in the GDR towards their future role as '*Hausherren*' (masters) of socialism,<sup>72</sup> policymakers created an intricate moral framework that perceived (youth) sexuality as part of an awareness-building exercise geared towards creating a new socialist citizen. The Politbüro's Youth Communiqué of 1963 entitled 'Trusting Young People and Responsibility' (Der Jugend Vertrauen und Verantwortung), which was introduced in the same year as the New Economic System was the main reference point for this.<sup>73</sup> It inscribed a new political-pedagogic course toward the youth, encouraging discussions about love and relationships and general matters of interest to young people.<sup>74</sup> The Youth Communiqué was, as the historian Alan McDougall put it, 'the most radical youth policy document in the SED's history'.<sup>75</sup> It was meant to make up for the many restrictions on young people, such as the crushing of the popular demonstrations on 17 June 1953 when many GDR citizens protested for better working conditions, and the interventionist policy against 'beat' music.<sup>76</sup> The Communiqué invited young people to have the courage to think for themselves.<sup>77</sup> This new rhetoric subscribed to a 'youthful language' and more importantly 'struck right at its heart', as a former GDR citizen recalled.<sup>78</sup> Accepting the emotional involvement of young people in sexual issues, sexual ethics were to be articulated around romantic feelings, love, respect and benevolence. Ulbricht's support for the Youth Communiqué ran alongside his greater vision to turn the

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<sup>72</sup> 'Kommuniqué', p. 140.

<sup>73</sup> McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, p. 26.

<sup>74</sup> For detailed discussions of East German youth policy in the 1950s and 1960s see for example: Poiger, *Jazz*; McDougall, *Youth Politics*; Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*.

<sup>75</sup> McDougall, *Youth Politics*, p. 156.

<sup>76</sup> Rauhut, 'DDR-Beatmusik', pp. 52-63.

<sup>77</sup> 'Kommuniqué', pp. 140-166; see also McDougall, *Youth Politics*, p. 159.

<sup>78</sup> Cited in McDougall, *Youth Politics*, p. 158.

GDR into an attractive place in which to live and work. Together with the introduction of the New Economic System of the same year, which sought to reform the Stalinist paradigm, Ulbricht encouraged greater individuality and higher standards of training and education.<sup>79</sup> With regard to sexuality, the core concept of love was to entail respect for one's partner and society, which ultimately made it the primary denominator for the superior truthfulness of socialist sexuality in contrast to degenerate and shallow sexuality in the West.

Götz Oelschlägel's film *Partner* (1965) was the first sex education film in the GDR to bring the topic of love between young adults into cinemas.<sup>80</sup> This shows the film's firm position within the moral debates and initiatives of the time.

Oelschlägel was driven by two aims: firstly, to deliver a sex education film about love and romance for a teenage audience in a modern idiom. Previously, only films with a biological focus were permitted for the sex education of young people. Compared with other films, such as Fritz Dick's series *Biology of Human Reproduction* (1961-63), *Partner* was an 'unusual sex education film', as the promotion booklet stated.<sup>81</sup> In accordance with the Youth Communiqué Oelschlägel emphasised the need to avoid moralising or raising an accusatory finger. Instead he set out to encourage young people to create their own ethical standards of living.<sup>82</sup> By abandoning authoritative direct instruction, *Partner* resumed a filmic style found in the contemporary *Gegenwartsfilm*. For historian Joshua Feinstein, the GDR *Gegenwartsfilm* was characterised firstly by the use of a set of stylistic features reflecting international trends such as the Italian Neo-realism and the French New Wave, and secondly by a social-political take that

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<sup>79</sup> A famous SED slogan ran 'He who has the younger generation has the future' (Wer die Jugend hat, der besitzt die Zukunft.) See for instance: McDougall, *Youth Politics*, p. 154; McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism*, p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> Apart from *Partner* also the DEFA feature films started to tackle similar topics. *Denk Bloss nicht, ich heule* (directed by Frank Vogel 1965) of the same year, for instance, addressed love between young adults.

<sup>81</sup> VEB Progress Film-Vertrieb (ed.), *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* (Druckerei Volksstimme Magdeburg 1966) (without page numbers).

<sup>82</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe', p. 9.

depicted socialism as an educational process. He clearly distinguishes the *Gegenwartsfilm* from the *Alltagsfilm* of the 1970s, which presented the GDR as static.<sup>83</sup> Feinstein may have wanted not to establish a distinct filmic genre but to highlight how films helped create a collective East German identity. Hence, the demarcations of distinctive filmic works are assessed alongside changing politics in GDR socialism. *Gegenwartsfilm* corresponded with the post-Stalinist interim years until Erich Honecker's succession as head of state in 1971. *Partner*, with its distinct stylistic focus on female protagonists showing an attachment to the new society was part of the trope that shaped the *Gegenwartsfilm*.<sup>84</sup>

Secondly, through *Partner* the documentary filmmaker Oelschlägel saw his desire to produce a feature film realised<sup>85</sup> thereby breaking filmic conventions that characterised many of the DEFA educational films. Two years prior to his sex education series, he observed that DEFA films followed a pre-defined, schematic approach that yielded 'deficient, unimaginative, and unappealing' films rather than being driven by the use of a 'diversity of film genres, originality of ideas, (...) and mastery of filmic devices', particularly through camera work.<sup>86</sup> He stated that it was the 'artistic idea' and the author's hand that was responsible for an appealing and distinctive film.<sup>87</sup> *Partner* asserted the importance of an 'artistic idea' by dynamic filmic presentation,<sup>88</sup> Oelschlägel dismissed the idea of illustrative and static imaging and instead used quick cuts, dramatic lighting, different camera perspectives, montage and the iconic use of moving images for storytelling. Stylistically *Partner* aligned with the *Gegenwartsfilm*.

*Partner* was released for cinema screenings targeting viewers between sixteen and twenty-one. For general release *Partner* was screened for audiences aged

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<sup>83</sup> Feinstein, *Triumph of the Ordinary*, p. 111.

<sup>84</sup> See in particular the section about 'The Triumph of Female Protagonists' in *Ibid.*, pp. 131-135.

<sup>85</sup> Moore Roberts, 'Heikle Fragen', p. 127.

<sup>86</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Warum sind unsere Filme', p. 247.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247-249.

eighteen and over, or, if screened as part of a closed event that included a live commentator, young people aged sixteen could be admitted.<sup>89</sup> As a result, Oelschlägel's ambitions to target a teenage audience met with restrictions.

*Partner* did not appear as a regular film in the programme as it was screened as part of an accompanying educational programme. Nevertheless it was a success and one of the most viewed educational films of the time, and was in demand internationally, being distributed in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the socialist countries.<sup>90</sup> Despite the fact that East German *Gegenwartsfilm* saw a caesura by the mid-1960s, most of them being withdrawn by the infamous Kahlschlagplenum in 1965, *Partner* continued to be part of educational film stock.<sup>91</sup> Until the 1980s, it remained the only film featuring social and moral aspects of love in GDR school sex education. By then the DEFA film studio saw a need to update Oelschlägel's series 'Relationships between Boys and Girls'. This resulted in Helmut Kissling's five episode *Partner*-project in the mid-1980s. The film *Partner* took part in and connected to a wider discussion about the renegotiation of sexual morality. In doing so the film, like *Helga*, set out to define a set of social problems, which it placed within a moral framework and tackled them by suggesting specific forms of self-management with a new filmic.

#### 4.6. Visual Moralities

The main theme of *Partner* is potential problems arising from hastily formed relationships between young adults. Using three case studies, *Partner* is concerned with identifying misguided motivations in the search for the right

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<sup>89</sup> Knopfe, 'Kalendarium', p. 318.

<sup>90</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe', p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> Klaus Wischnewski, 'Die zornigen jungen Männer von Babelsberg', in Günter Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965* (Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag: Berlin 1991), pp. 171-188.

partner of the opposite sex. The first episode, the story of Ellen and Peter, shows a relationship of two young people initiated by mere sexual attraction. Only after having found out that she is pregnant, Ellen realises that sex is not enough to establish a long-term relationship and considers breaking up with Peter. The second episode, the story of Heike and Dieter, depicts problems a young married couple face in their daily lives. Interrupted education and economic restraints create tensions that culminate in domestic violence. The third episode tells the story of Gisela, Werner and Bernd. The protagonist Gisela, an unskilled worker, is engaged to Werner. She meets Bernd, who encourages her to attend further education, becomes more and more attracted to him and eventually ends her engagement.

The organising principle of Ellen's, Heike's and Gisela's story is education, personal improvement and character formation. All three stories prioritise the protagonists' awareness and the choices they make. This idea of choice was part of the new GDR's rhetoric as the 1963 Youth Communiqué testified.<sup>92</sup> Labelling young people as 'the architects for their own fortune' meant stressing their responsibilities in the wider project of socialism.<sup>93</sup> Only with self-conscious acts could a personal transformation take place. This form of self-management was deemed crucial for societal transformation and the construction of socialism. The theme of mutual dependence of individual and societal struggle had wider echoes in the *Gegenwartsfilme* of contemporary GDR cinema.<sup>94</sup> The fact that the construction of socialism was at stake shows that these dynamic aspects of individual self-management were placed within a moral code that stressed love and societal responsibility as guiding principles. In its definition of problems,

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<sup>92</sup> 'Kommuniqué', pp. 140-166.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>94</sup> Feinstein, *Triumph of the Ordinary*, p. 111.

which served as the basis for a renegotiation of moral codes, *Partner* took up the tension between individual choice and moral guidelines.

The three case studies in *Partner* are constructed around the problem of increasing divorce rates. In this context, pedagogues discussed whether the model of a so-called 'Marriage on Trial' (*Probeehe*) could protect young people from making poor decisions.<sup>95</sup> The film tackled this 'problem' at its root by exemplifying moral problems of young people. *Partner* took an affirmative stance on marriage (and accepted relationships between teenagers) but urged viewers to wait rather than to make hasty decisions on partner choice.

In its opening sequence *Partner* establishes marriage and partner choice as the overarching theme. The film shows a number of parallel montages of wedding and divorce scenes in rapid succession, using the audio track to counterpoint the imagery. A bridal couple is shown while the words 'divorce case Neubert against Neubert' can be heard on the audio track. An atonal and modernised version of Felix Mendelssohn's Wedding March stresses the strained relations between both events. This staged friction had its source in demographic data. Divorce claims had risen from the late 1950s to 1972 from 53 per cent to 64 per cent. The state considered this as a threat to the 'smallest cell in society'.<sup>96</sup> In particular, since the mid-1960s, there was a renewed focus on family values and relationships, stressing their positive effects on socialist morals as expressed in the 1965 Family Code.<sup>97</sup> Also, after the mid-1960s, the state put more effort into marriage counselling and increased the number of marriage counselling clinics.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> The pedagogue Rudolf Neubert, for instance, opposed to the idea of *Probeehe*. See Neubert 'Gedanken zum Problem', pp. 24, 25.

<sup>96</sup> Betts, *Within Walls*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>97</sup> On the 1965 East German Family Code see Timm's chapter 'Guarding the Health of Workers and Families in the German Democratic Republic', in Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 257-291, pp. 280-281.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285; Aresin, 'Ehe- und Sexualberatungsstellen', pp. 71-94, Huneke, 'Sex, Sentiment, and Socialism', pp. 231-247.

A key scene can be found in the first episode where Oelschlägel demonstrates the careless attitude of young people towards the social institution of engagement. The scene shows a party where an engagement game is pronounced. A girl entering the party room with a raft of rings calls the game a new sensation, drops the rings on the floor and claims that everybody who gets hold of a ring can choose a partner. The pairings resulting from this activity can consider themselves to be engaged for that evening.

The problem tackled in the second episode concerns the decision of a young couple to marry without having a firm financial base. Although loving feelings are there, as well as plans to have children, the film shows that these factors alone are insufficient to build a lasting future.

The third episode examines the non-reflective attitude and resignation to fate predestined for young women. The recurring theme that characterises this episode is things never turn out the way you expect'.<sup>99</sup> This is the reply from her fiancé whenever Gisela raises doubts about their common future.

In line with Oelschlägel's preference for filmic language that emphasises feature film stylistics, the renegotiation of morality in *Partner* relies heavily on genuinely filmic strategies. The filmic spaces in which these faulty perceptions emerge are created either around spaces particularly dedicated to young people such as dance halls, or in a natural setting away from society.

The depiction of dance halls, in combination with beat and jazz music, alcohol and smoking corresponded with perceptions of careless and immature behaviour among young people. The emphasis on the engagement game in the first episode underscored the immature behaviour of young people towards sex and

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<sup>99</sup> In the film the literal translation of the phrase would be 'first comes always differently and secondly, never as you think'. Original quote: 'Erstens kommt es anders, zweitens als du denkst'. Oelschlägel, *Partner*, 1965.

relationships. The pairings resulting from playing the game are shown as they embrace, dance and kiss each other. Shoulder close-up shots of satisfied faces exchanging tenderness support the emotionally charged atmosphere of physical attraction. Although the film in general does not take a negative stance towards youth sexuality, this scene shows immature and unreflective behaviour of young people towards partner bonding. Similarly, the third episode depicts the dancehall as a location for over-sexualised behaviours that tempt the protagonist Werner to cheat on his fiancée. The camera captures revealing décolletés, bare legs crossing, and smoking women on the lookout. A quick succession of images and a focus on close-ups give the impression of superficial, momentary erotic sensation.

Oelschlägel connected to stereotypical tropes of youth culture the Socialist Unity Party had regarded with suspicion since the 1950s. Youth culture was suspected of spreading 'Unkultur' (lack of culture) and threatening morals. Dancehalls in particular had been identified as hotbeds of moral decline where hot music and erotic dancing promoted promiscuous sexual behaviour. In 1957, a newly created Commission for Culture warned against the 'dangers of growing decadent influences'.<sup>100</sup> The fact that youth subcultures existed during the East German regime, pointed to the leadership's shortcomings in controlling leisure activities where dancehalls were suspicious places where sexuality was rampant.<sup>101</sup>

In contrast *Partner* frequently places scenes of romance in nature settings to show the unintended though 'natural' attitude of young people as being at odds with a premeditated consideration of the right choice of partners envisioned by the socialist morality. The scenes taking place in natural settings are

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<sup>100</sup> See Poiger, *Jazz*, p. 128.

<sup>101</sup> See Poiger's chapters on the GDR in Poiger, *Jazz*; Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', pp. 77-78; See the chapters 'Rock 'n' Roll' and 'Young Stars: Beat Music in the GDR' in: Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs*, pp. 132-155 and pp.168-173; Rauhut, 'DDR-Beatmusik', pp. 52-63; Bernd Lindner, *DDR Rock & Pop* (Komet Verlag: Köln 2008).

characterised by the absence of society and are void of moralising intervention. They are meant to demonstrate the naïve, unmediated attitude of young people's sexual experience.

In the story of Heike and Dieter the young couple decide to marry in a cornfield. The scenery is juxtaposed with the caring homes where their parents express concerns about the couple's plans. Cutting to the teenagers, the next scene shows the young couple standing in the rain. Dieter holds a coat above their heads to protect them from bad weather whilst talking about plans for the future once they are married. The *mise-en-scène* reads like a metaphor for the willingness of caring protection, but, since the rain leaks through onto their feet, captured by a respective close-up shot, it also shows how fragile this protection can be. In the following sequence, the shelter for the young married couple is the living room in the flat of the girl's mother, since neither Heike nor Dieter can raise money for their own home. An establishing shot reveals their confined living space, presenting a temporarily decorated kitchenette, a dining table and bed before the freshly married couple enter the filmic frame. This confined room, where family life takes place, turns into a conflict zone. It is crowded with books Dieter needs for his studies, piles of laundry that need to be ironed while dinner has to be prepared and a crying new-born baby, intensifying the cramped conditions. There is no space for recreation and the vicious circle of chores strains the partnership. In addition, Heike's interruption of her education, the extra work Dieter has to do in order to provide for his family, and sharing with Heike's mother raise the likelihood of conflict. Heike scrubbing the staircase, captured through the railing, gives the impression of her being in prison. It seems that the film means to make clear that it is not sufficient for a young couple to enter social space without having achieved a certain degree of maturity. Such an attempt is bound to lead to a dysfunctional marriage. The social space, in

contrast to the nature setting where the couple idealised marriage, serves as a vehicle to make the protagonists aware of their problematic situation. A key scene encapsulating the couple's realisation that their marriage might be on the brink of failure takes place in the conjugal bed. Effective low-key lighting underscores the impression of isolation to the point that the room almost resembles a prison cell. Set against a pitch-black background, Heike and Dieter are lying side by side in a brightly lit bed. Accompanied by high pitched, unsettling organ sounds, Heike turns to reluctant Dieter in an attempt to caress him. He brushes away her approach, saying 'let it be'. The camera zooms to a close up of Heike's face to highlight her disappointment. The frictions and tensions that had been shown up to this moment culminate in this scene of sexual rejection.

The fact that *Partner* encapsulates the seriousness of marital problems in a dysfunctional sex life shows that the film presents heterosexual conduct not only as a vital part of marriage but more importantly, that sex is a parameter for a successful, long-lasting marriage. However, that does not mean that pre-marital sex amongst young people was not accepted. On the contrary, surveys undertaken by the leading pedagogue Heinz Grassel showed that more than fifty per cent of young people in the GDR up to the age of eighteen had sex or, at least, adopted an affirmative stance toward it. The film takes this into account in the accompanying booklet and builds on it.<sup>102</sup> By accepting teenagers' sexual experience, the film indicated to young people that sex is not to be confused with love. This is best expressed in the episode of Ellen and Peter. After having met at a party taking part in the 'engagement game', guitarist and mechanic Peter

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<sup>102</sup> Heinz Grassel, 'Psychologische Probleme der Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft', *Pädagogische Forschung: Wissenschaftliche Nachrichten des DPZI* (Berlin 1965). Extracts from the survey are also published in the accompanying teaching booklet for *Partner*. Gerhard Witzlack, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht IV: Partner* (Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm), edited by Deutsches Pädagogisches Zentralinstitut (VEB Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1967), pp. 16-18.

enters a sexual relationship with student Ellen. On a trip to the countryside where Peter and Ellen enjoy their rural 'togetherness', they soon become intimate. Again, with nature as a sphere of an unmediated space, seemingly outside external influence, the premature decision to have sexual intercourse is made. The natural setting serves as a metaphor for emotional space. *Partner* thereby acknowledges romantic feelings as part of young people's realities.

However, when it comes to its visual representation, the depiction of pleasure and erotic feeling is subjected to filmic techniques of allusion and omission. In the scene, Peter carries Ellen and lies her down on a lakeshore surrounded by reeds. An establishing shot supports the impression of togetherness in a private, intimate space shielded from intruders. Swiftly the camera follows the protagonists' movements and zooms in to a shoulder close-up shot framing their faces and bare shoulders as Peter bends over Ellen. From now on, the film operates with close-up shots and defragments the bodies into kissing heads, touching hands and a female breast being uncovered. These filmic devices are used to give a glimpse of a few body parts, allowing for a depiction of eroticism. In doing so, erotic teasing is used to create the impression of bodily intimacy. However, since neither erotic teasing nor showing sexual arousal is the ultimate purpose of the film, the director uses markers and symbols that merely suggest sexual intercourse. In the case of Ellen and Peter, a whip pan away from Ellen's exposed breast induces an impression of a bashfully averted gaze while an atonal version of a nursery rhyme is played. Together with the subsequent cut to a long shot of reeds swayed by the wind, these are the filmic means by which sexual intercourse is expressed. However, these images are not obvious and it is in the context of the narrative that the meaning becomes clear. This stands in sharp contrast to conventional strategies in sex education films, which normally resort to biological images to resolve this thorny issue.

To conclude, *Partner*'s concept of visual morality emerges at the intersection of erotic, romantic love and social interaction. The filmic means of creating these aspects reveal the moral implications of contemporary discourses of socialist morality. By suggesting that sexual relations should only be fully unleashed in respectful, loving partnerships a tension develops in the depiction of erotic, romantic and social interaction which differs greatly from the monotonous biologist approach of *Helga*.<sup>103</sup>

*Partner* used and tolerated erotic images as it had set out to depict 'real life' situations. Depicting the exchange of sexual affections meant acknowledging the social reality of unmarried teenage couples having sex. The accompanying teaching booklet was very clear about the fact that young people engaged in sexual relationships before they had reached the age of legal maturity.<sup>104</sup> Hence, *Partner* depicted intimate relationships amongst teenagers in order to give an authentic insight into their problems. This view was not only reflected by Oelschlägel but also stressed by the pedagogue Heinz Grassel, in his role as reviewer of the teaching booklet for *Partner*.<sup>105</sup>

While filmic case studies were designed to be representative, the teaching booklet underscored the fact that the film did not intend to moralise, given that 'young people are very sensitive about direct instruction'.<sup>106</sup>

Another factor that accounted for the acceptance of teenage sex as social reality was the consciously drawn borderline to petty bourgeois morals. The film highlights this in the speech of a Navy officer. Werner, enlisted in the People's Navy for one and a half years, wanted to apply for a short leave of absence to

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<sup>103</sup> See for example Witzlack, *Partner*, p. 17.

<sup>104</sup> Witzlack, *Partner*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>105</sup> Senatsverwaltungn Berlin, Registrierbescheide PTA Lehrerausbildung- und Weiterbildung, T-IF 64: Heinz Grassel, 'Gutachten über das Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm 'Partner'', 8 May 1966.

<sup>106</sup> Witzlack, *Partner*, p. 13.

visit his fiancé, Gisela, as he worried she might not love him anymore. His superior officer reminded him of his double standard and petty bourgeois moral views (moralische Kleinbürgerei), since Werner himself had enjoyed a promiscuous life in Gisela's absence.

The acknowledgment of teenage sexuality did not mean that there were intentions to leave young people in the GDR in a moral void. The principles of the socialist morality expected teenagers to practice sexual abstinence for their own good in order to achieve a loving partnership based on mutual respect and the possibility of self-fulfilment.<sup>107</sup> As a consequence, love was not equated with marriage but assumed to precede it.<sup>108</sup> The film aimed at sensitising young people to the fact that love was not only an instinctive emotion but also a social category. Given the intention of the film to induce critical assessment of the presented case studies, it presented a relatively wide range of situations intended to raise the possibility of identification. The thought-provoking impulses should ideally translate to the audience's lives.

With this aim, the film argued sex and love could flourish be it in the form of designated spaces, emotions or social interaction with a partner, family member or work colleague. The protagonists embodied agency in these stories 'taken from of true life'.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> 'Kommuniqué', pp. 163-166; Bittighöfer, *Du und der Andere*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>108</sup> Witzlack, *Partner*, p. 16.

<sup>109</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe', p. 9.

#### 4.7. *Partner's* Protagonists

In order to reconcile moral codes and behaviour *Partner*, similarly to *Helga*, introduced its protagonists as templates to demonstrate techniques of self-management. Building on the idea of 'cultural scripts', introduced by Simon and Gagnon, the particular function the three role models embodied will be analysed in order to demonstrate how they conveyed identifiable meanings. The overarching theme in these stories is based on principles of self-management in a specifically socialist morality, which drew on education, work and character formation. *Partner* employed unfinished cultural scripts for self-management. These scripts are unfinished insofar as they do not show the resolution of problems but rather focus on demonstrating how the protagonists become aware of them.

Social maturity characterises all three protagonists. Social maturity together with physiological maturity described the idea of acceleration in puberty, which became a catchword for pedagogues to promote sex education beyond biology. 'Social' maturity, or to be more precise 'societal' maturity (gesellschaftliche Reife), as understood in the GDR, stressed the individual's moral responsibility toward society in addition to a maturely assumed state of social interaction. In answering the question as to how this societal maturity could be achieved, GDR pedagogic literature in the mid-1960s delivered precise notions. In the accompanying teaching booklet of *Partner*, for instance, Grassel emphasised the importance of the interconnectedness of occupational training, education and sexual behaviour.<sup>110</sup> The same links can be found in Bernd Bittighöfer's *Du und der andere neben Dir*.<sup>111</sup> The film *Partner* used the same tropes.

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<sup>110</sup> Registrierbescheide PTA Lehreraus- und Weiterbildung, T-IF 64 Partner IV: Heinz Grassel, Gutachten über das Beiheft 'Partner' (1966).

<sup>111</sup> Bittighöfer, *Du und der andere*, pp. 43-46.

To counter increasing divorce rates, *Partner* rejected the idea of early marriage and implored teenagers to complete their education and settle down in work before starting a partnership. This cultural scenario was expressed and exemplified by the protagonists who suggest different possibilities of coping with problematic situations in the film. *Partner's* protagonists are shown developing their own templates for life based on a particular situation they find themselves in. This personalised level of individual case studies allows the film to reveal doubts and hopes in partner bonding, which, according to the film can be overcome if a certain degree of societal maturity is achieved. This approach stands in stark contrast to *Helga* where templates, including the guidance of sexual behaviour, are not brought forward by the protagonist but take the form of institutionalised speech. Through several expert talks Helga receives authoritative advice on how to behave during pregnancy, which she unquestioningly follows.

In this respect a distinguishing feature in *Partner* is that the film operated with unfinished scripts. Due to the fact that *Partner* presented stories 'taken from life' giving insights into problems of teenagers in terms of love and romance, these unfinished scripts were recognisable. By not providing definitive solutions to problems, as seen in the first two episodes, the film intended to create situations that corresponded with individual situations in real life.<sup>112</sup> By giving concrete examples of right and wrong ideas in the formation of partnerships, *Partner* increased the possibility for identification.

If taken together, the three-episode set up, which separates the stories into stand-alone entities, build upon one another resulting in a third episode in which problems defined in the first two are solved. As such, the third was the only episode that yielded a finalised script. The overarching theme in these stories is

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<sup>112</sup> Oelschlägel, 'Ist Liebe', p. 9; Progress Film-Vertrieb (ed.), *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen*.

based on the principles of specifically socialist morality, which drew on education, work and character formation.

The first two episodes, the stories of Ellen and Heike, show how the interruption of work and education can damage relationships. Ellen, who is about to start her engineering studies, has to interrupt her education after falling pregnant following a love affair with Peter. She realises that she has mistaken her sexual affection for Peter for love. In the second episode, the interruption of the education of both Heike and Dieter, who have to earn money to live, considerably affects the partnership.

Both case studies show the extent to which work, education and partnership are dependent upon one other. In the process of acting self-consciously, a crucial feature for the development of maturity, Ellen and Heike evaluate the situation that hampers their happiness. At the end of both episodes, the protagonists face a crucial decision. The narrative reaches its climax by placing the protagonists before this decision. This dramaturgic state of suspense finds its expression in Ellen's final words 'I don't know whether I am going to marry you' and in Heike's warnings against Dieter's raised hand, 'If you beat me, I don't want anything to do with you any more'. However, the consequences are not presented in the film.

Two kinds of wrong decisions led to this limbo; first, Ellen mistook sexual affection for love and secondly, Heike took hasty decisions on purely emotionally grounds. Both stories show the process of becoming aware of a situation that had been imagined differently and inner conflicts that come with this process.

The interpersonal script, present in the interaction of the protagonist with her partner allows framing the growing conflict between the couple. In addition, the use of the personal scenario empowers the female protagonists to make their own choices. Hence, individual actions are stressed over pre-determined situations, and the process of character formation is emphasised.

According to the pedagogue Gerhard Witzlack, who evaluated the film's use in East German classrooms, *Partner* presents valuable codes of conduct for the search for the right partner to a teenage audience.<sup>113</sup> With this in mind, the film does not indoctrinate these codes but rather outlines the problems young people were dealing with. Hence, the film did not provide a solution in the sense of giving the young audience instructions but introduced moral parameters (education, work and character formation) young people should bear in mind. More importantly, young people should learn to take charge of their lives in order to achieve a satisfying future.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, the three interlinking aspects of work, education and character formation structure Gisela's love story. Gisela likewise is on the brink of making a wrong decision by remaining engaged to Werner, who she holds dear, but who cannot provide her with the future she imagines. When she expresses her dissatisfaction at being an unskilled worker working on a fish factory assembly line, her fiancé encourages her to stay in this job until they are married, since they need the money. After marriage, he suggests, she would not need to work, referring to her role as a housewife. Partnership is posited within the framework of work and education, even though a common future is imagined differently. The episode resumes the potential for conflict by Gisela drawing attention to her unsatisfactory work, but the episode does not stop with the protagonist becoming aware of a limiting situation. Instead it shows a maturing character. With the assistance of Bernd, who works nearby, Gisela overcomes her passive attitude to life and attends occupational training for an expert position in shipbuilding. Finally, she also breaks up with Werner, since her affection for Bernd has grown.

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<sup>113</sup> Senatsverwaltung Berlin, Registrierbescheide PTA Lehrer- und Weiterbildung, T-IF 64 *Partner*: Gerhard Witzlack, 'Gutachten zum Film "Partner"' (without date).

<sup>114</sup> Witzlack, *Partner*, pp. 10, 19.

Bernd induced the life-changing activities with which Gisela starts to overcome her dissatisfaction. His role impersonates the 'socialist consciousness' and accompanies Gisela in the process of achieving societal maturity. By weaving 'socialist consciousness' into the filmic narrative, *Partner* underpins the notion of interdependency between individual and society. While Gisela's agency is characterised in the form of emotional insights and social interactions with Werner and Bernd, cultural scripting is used as a motivational, and in Gisela's case, rewarding framework encompassing 'true' love and socialist consciousness. Gisela can achieve both deeply rooted socialist principles by making the right choice of partner. Under the Youth Communique's motto 'True love belongs to socialism as socialism belongs to youth', love, as presented in *Partner*, was not a matter of mere emotional affection but a moral and social form of interaction which only comes into being if two characters, each formed by education and work, consciously choose one another as partners.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

*Helga* and *Partner* reacted to social developments showing that moral codes and sexual behaviour had grown apart. In line with pedagogues' desire to broaden sex education to include moral guidance in reaction to a changing environment, both films aimed to provide templates for appropriate sexual conduct. In doing so, *Helga* and *Partner* emphasised the importance of the sexually educated and self-responsible citizen who made informed decisions to achieve sexual happiness. With its wider implications in sexual politics that increasingly made sexual decisions a private matter, sex education became an important instrument insofar as it needed to provide guidance on the choices the individual had to make. The concept of self-management was key to discussions of sexual morality in the 1960s. For sex education it became central to develop moral codes that were

transposed into moral behaviour. Self-management came into focus as a set of central techniques that should be learnt in order to cope with social changes.

This analysis has demonstrated that *Helga* understood social changes primarily as a problem in the way society dealt with sexuality. The filmmaker reasoned that since sexuality was natural, it was social taboos and inhibitions which prevented open speech on the topic. *Helga* deemed it necessary to speak openly about sexuality as young people faced many temptations and ran the risk of gaining their sexual knowledge from 'unclean', untrustworthy sources. On this point the film clearly connected to pedagogic demands and findings that stressed the need for sex education as a means of orientation for young people, as well as a countermeasure against a variety of negatively perceived social influences.

*Helga* not only propagated open and unbiased speaking about sexuality but also identified trustworthy sources of knowledge. As in biological sex education films, these sources medical and scientific experts as well as state institutions. Medical knowledge was presented as readily available for the interested citizen. The film's protagonist, Helga, embodied the informed citizen as she demonstrated where this trustworthy information could be gained. In the next step she put this knowledge into practice, following professional advice about behaviour during pregnancy. Helga showcases how expert knowledge is turned into techniques of self-management. By the end of the film she is 'rewarded' for doing so with a happy relationship and a child. She is presented as an executor of rational templates for self-management.

In contrast, *Partner* reflects that East Germany resorted to love as a guiding principle within a wider moral framework for young people. The film focused on discussing the right choice of partner, aiming to tackle rising divorce rates at their root. As a preventative measure, *Partner* set out to sensitise young people to the difference between sex and love. The moral framework that the film set up mainly

revolved around education, character formation and work, leading to true love. In doing so, *Partner*, by teaching awareness of the right choice of the partner, aimed at incorporating social templates into techniques of self-management. *Partner* also introduced protagonists to demonstrate techniques of self-management. It was characteristic that the protagonists were meant to showcase the process of raising awareness rather than offer a ready-made solution. The problems the protagonists encountered in the search of a partner mainly served to sensitise young people to the necessity to make informed choices. The moral knowledge that provided the basis for these choices was to be found in socialist morality introduced in the Youth Communiqué.

The analysis of both films has shown that sex education films played an important part in 1960s adjustment politics that valued sex education as a means of moral guidance. While *Partner* presented a moral framework in which individual choices were subject to the goals of socialism, *Helga* emphasised the individual happiness over state ideology. In order to live up to this goal, it resorted to providing so-called biological essentials as a prerequisite for informed choice. Biological knowledge, according to Strobel, was 'value-free' and as such reconcilable with pluralism of values.

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## 5. Gendering the Body: Sex, Gender and Sexual Politics

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Bodies differ in many ways physiologically, but they are completely transformed by social practises to fit into salient categories of a society, the most persuasive of which are “female” and “male” and “women” and “men”.<sup>1</sup>

Judith Lorber’s quote encapsulates factors that emerge from gender as an analytical category. Gender is about the construction of difference and uses physiological and social characteristics for political effect. Ultimately, it is not about distinguishing men from women but about the distribution of social roles within a framework of sexual politics. Gender has increasingly come to be seen as an analytical tool that assumes heterosexuality as the criterion to which diverse strands of knowledge and practices are applied, including biological knowledge of the sexes.<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, one of the fiercest critics of the essentialist notion of sex, postulates that

Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature [...].<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Lorber, ‘Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology’, *Gender and Society* 7, No 4 (1993), p. 569.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (Routledge: London, New York [1993] 2011); Moira Gatens, *Imaginary bodies: ethics, power, and corporeality* (Routledge: London, New York 1996); Elisabeth Grosz, *Volatile bodies: toward a corporeal feminism* (Indiana UP: Bloomington 1994); Candace West, Don H. Zimmerman, ‘Doing Gender’, *Gender and Society* 1, No 2 (1987), pp. 125-151; for a critical account on the inflationary use of gender, see Robert Nye, ‘How Sex Became Gender’, *Psychoanalysis and History* 12, No 2 (2010), pp. 195-209.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge: London, New York [1990] 1999), p. 11.

Approaching the gender/sex divide from Butler's viewpoint demonstrates reference to biological male and female sexes and gendered meanings of masculine and feminine bodies are subject to a cultural heteronormative imperative.<sup>4</sup> Based on an understanding that sex is not natural but culturally shaped, biology becomes a discursive and ideological category, contributing to a heteronormative normalisation of the sexes.<sup>5</sup> I take this as my research perspective because it allows tackling the contemporary view of a division between natural male and female sexes and social gender roles that is characteristic of sex education. Asking what purpose maintaining this division serves, I scrutinize a number of gender narratives in sex education films and assess their contribution to a sex/gender divide. I argue that enforcing difference between sex and gender was constitutive for sexual politics, and biology was used to scientifically justify the difference between men and women, thus having a regulative effect on gender roles.

What purposes did sex education films reveal with regard to gender and how was gender communicated? It is the aim of this chapter to cover how sex education films contributed to gendered politics using a representative sample of sex education films along biological, moral and social aspects of sexuality. It focuses on the entanglement of the diverse discursive strands to understand the films' gendered politics. Sex education films are learning aids and thus lay open the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-11.

<sup>5</sup> On the aspect of the ideological effects in the scientific construction of sex see in particular the following works: Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs*; Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of the Modern Science* (Rutgers UP [1993] 2004); Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender*; Anne Fausto-Sterling, 'The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough', *The Sciences* (March/April 1993), pp. 20-24; Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones* (Routledge: London, New York 1994); Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, London 2006); Suzanne Kessler, Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An ethnomethodological approach* (Wiley: New York 1978); Wendy Cealey Harrison, John Hood-Williams, *Beyond Sex and Gender* (SAGE Publications: London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2002); Heinz-Jürgen Voß, *Geschlecht: Wider die Natürlichkeit* (Schmetterling Verlag: Stuttgart 2011); Honegger, Claudia, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750-1850* (Campus Verlag: Frankfurt am Main 1991); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Mass. 1990).

process of learning gender. They allow insight into the learning process of 'seeing' gender.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, they arguably cultivate a gendered gaze to be cast on sexual bodies. They also teach the audience of how to 'do' gender by suggesting social roles and sexual scripts appropriate for shaping gender identities.<sup>7</sup> Seeing and doing gender therefore are formative processes in the production and consumption of gender relations.

In the first section 'Gendered Gazes and the Biological Body', how sex education films taught sexual difference will be scrutinised, using *Boy to Man* (1961), *Girl to Woman* (1964), and *Helga* (1967). These films focused on a biological reproductive body, and are representative of other biologically themed films such as *Biologie der Fortpflanzung* (GDR 1961-63) and *Der Weibliche Zyklus* (FRG 1965) that visualised the biological body without great variation.<sup>8</sup> These films also established a visual link to social conventions of what was meant by behaving like a boy or a girl. In contrast to other biologically themed sex education films, *Boy to Man*, *Girl to Woman* and *Helga* introduced protagonists who served as 'living' examples of imparted biological knowledge. Thus they explicitly addressed how biology served a regulative function for gender roles. In chapter 3 I argued that the presentation of biological male and female bodies in films was subordinated to a specific understanding of rationality and scientific objectivity. East and West German pedagogues and filmmakers likewise acknowledged their reliance on the films' presented objective facts. Building on these findings, I

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<sup>6</sup> On cognitive learning processes in children to learn to see gender difference see Carol Lynn Martin, Diane Ruble, 'Children's Search for Gender Cues: Cognitive Perspectives on Gender Development', in *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13, No 2 (2004), pp. 67-70.

<sup>7</sup> For sexual scripting theory see Gagnon, Simon, *Sexual Conduct*; For theoretical discussions on 'doing gender', see for instance, Butler, *Bodies That Matter*; Gatens, *Imaginary bodies*; Grosz, *Volatile bodies*; West, Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender', pp. 125-151; Stefan Hirschauer, 'Die interaktive Konstruktion von Geschlechtszugehörigkeit', *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 18, No 2 (1989), pp. 100-118. For empirical studies on 'doing gender', see for instance Kessler, McKenna, *Gender*; Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (Macmillan: London [1976] 1979; Marianne Wex, "Weibliche" und "männliche" Körpersprache als Folge patriarchalischer Machtverhältnisse (Verlag Marianne Wex: Berlin 1980); Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities: Second Edition* (Polity Press: Cambridge 1995); Sauerteig, 'Junge oder Mädchen', pp. 40-41;

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed discussion on biology in sex education films, see chapter 3.

argue that claims of rational presentation depended on whether a female or a male body was presented. In their translation of gender dichotomies such as male/female, active/passive, nature/culture into biological knowledge, films sought to naturalise sexual difference. In doing so, they aimed to raise boys to fathers and girls to mothers, thus contributing to East and West German politics of fertility. Sex education films perceived biological knowledge as a natural constant and contrasted it with more flexible gender roles.

In the second section 'Bodies in Interaction: Screening Gender Relations' I focus on how sex education films taught gender roles. Fictionalised scenes and protagonists served as templates for doing gender, offering sexual scripts and moral lessons for the self-control of one's body. Using the West German film *Helga* (1967), and Oelschlägel's East German tetralogy *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* (1963-65),<sup>9</sup> I will explore the various role models for the moral behaviour of girls and boys. By asking which gender roles the films sought to teach, the imbrication of a normative understanding of two sexes and their social roles is made clear. As outlined in chapter 4, teaching sexuality had changed from the 1940s to the 1960s to be part of a more holistic education teaching techniques of self-control and responsibility. However, biological instruction continued to be central. Gender roles in these films were thus tightly bound to a narrative of biological reproduction around which notions of manhood and womanhood were organised. In 'sex talks', the enlightening talk between adult and child, sex education films connected biological knowledge and gender roles as a biological effect. Role models, in contrast to biological sex difference, seemed to be more flexible and dynamic. If any differences can be discerned

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<sup>9</sup> Götz Oelschlägel, *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen* 1-4 (1963-65, East Germany), produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films. The titles of the individual episodes are *Sagst du's dem Kinde: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 1* (1963); *... weil ich kein Kind mehr bin...: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 2* (1963); *Partner: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 3* (1964) and *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 4* (1965).

between East and West German sex education, then it is in the way social roles were imagined.

## **5.1. Gendered Gazes and the Biological Body**

As demonstrated in chapter 3, the presentation of biological bodies was characterised by filmic techniques that fixed the frame and stabilised the image. In this arrangement images served to underline the documentary character to the spoken commentary. Narrative coherence was thus established by the narrator rather than the images. This visual arrangement supported objectified and authoritative notions of a factual biological body image. Yet, gender played a role in this biological setting. In arguing that the presentation of biological sex difference was a culturally embedded undertaking I will demonstrate how films initiated gendered gazes through which the viewer learned to identify and perceive as natural the sexual body. Two issues will guide the analysis. Firstly, how films constructed sex difference and secondly, the gendered meanings these constructions entailed.

### **5.1.1. Looking at the Body**

Biology films normally used simplified schematic graphics to classify male and female bodies. *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman*, however, used additional techniques to show gender differences. Both focused on the topic of puberty and discussed sexual anatomy in more detail than other biologically themed films such as *Der Weibliche Zyklus* (1963) and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (1965), which primarily dealt with pregnancy and menstruation. As can be seen in the titles *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman*, the films addressed the transition from childhood to adulthood separated by gender. *Boy to Man* focused on male

puberty, while *Girl to Woman* concentrated on the physiological development of the female body. Both films maintained a similar narrative structure throughout. Additionally they both made use of masculine and feminine postures and employed distinct camera work in looking at the male and female body.

In *Boy to Man* the attention to sexual anatomy is first drawn to break of voice, increased sweat production and the possible emergence of acne. *Girl to Woman* also presented increased sweating and oily and unclean skin as an effect of puberty. Using cross-section graphics of the skin, both films explain why and how sweat, blackheads and pimples on the face may develop. At this stage both sexes seem to be affected by the same bodily changes. Only when the films introduce the pituitary gland in the brain as an 'alarm clock' initiating the development of genitals, is there a change to a distinctive presentation of biological bodies.

In order to map the changes induced by the pituitary gland *Boy to Man* uses a graphic that outlines a man's shape from the front. The man sits sideward on a chair with his legs apart and looks back so as to expose his front. His hands are away from the body, exposing his torso. The symbolism of this posture is one of masculinity and patriarchal dominance.<sup>10</sup> It exhibits the body to the camera and audience, firmly occupying the centre of the frame. Sitting postures with the legs apart and arms held away from the body were culturally marked as typically male. As Marianne Wex has shown in her photographic study, masculine postures, as used in *Boy to Man*, were familiar in media and advertising. These gendered postures are also part of daily life.<sup>11</sup> With examples of random photos of men and women sitting on park benches, Wex demonstrates that women use less space

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<sup>10</sup> Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, Mike Featherstone, 'The Body in Consumer Culture', *Theory, Culture and Society* 1, No 2 (1982), pp. 18-33; Judith Williams, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (Marion Boyars: London 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Wex, *Weibliche und männliche Körpersprache*.

than men in public areas. Men often sit with legs apart and the arms stretched out on the backrest, while women tend to sit on one side of the bench and keep their legs together or crossed.<sup>12</sup> To her, these postures are expressions of hegemonic gender concepts prevalent in (Western) societies.<sup>13</sup> Masculine and feminine representations have a normative power, stabilising lived gender relations.

Apart from posture, camera work was significant in the masculinization of the male body graphic. After the graphic of the sitting man the camera zooms in to capture the upper part of the man's body, enlarging the view of certain body parts. Growth of beard and hair are characteristics that signified the biological transition from boy to man. The camera zooms out to again frame the male body in its entirety. By highlighting the genitals to indicate the growth of pubic hair, the degree of pubescent development is marked on the body surface. Together with masculine posture, anatomical markers captured the entrance into masculinity. While other anatomical details remain absent, for instance the face is only contoured, the genitals are detailed to support the narrative of the sexual man. Through an interplay of selection, abstraction and detail, the graphic of the sitting man expresses the complexity of gendered processes. Using a combination of conventional techniques of medico-scientific presentation, abstraction, camerawork and posture, a gendered gaze was enacted that urged learning to see sexual difference.

Apart from a difference in projecting female sexual anatomy, *Girl to Woman* parallels the narrative of *Boy to Man*. A schematic drawing of is used to symbolise pubertal changes in female bodies. As in *Boy to Man*, it lacks detail and only highlights the growth of hair under arm pits and genitals. In addition, the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 12-13, 20

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

growth of breasts is captured to characterise the process of becoming a woman. Similar to *Boy to Man*, the drawing first captures the upper body to highlight hair and breast growth. The breasts are quite detailed, with the nipples sketched out, the face, however, is presented as a plain surface. In a second frame the camera captures the lower part of the body from the belly to the feet. The genitals are detailed to draw attention to sexual difference. In both films anatomical symbols are used to set out distinctive features. The female posture, however, underlines these distinctions with gendered meaning.

Unlike the man, the woman is presented in a frontal standing position, slightly turned sideward. Her face leans to the left supporting her posture. Similar to *Boy to Man* the sexual anatomy is presented in two frames. The first features the body from head to chest. In order to make armpit hair visible the woman raises her arms and touches the back of her head. This suggests posing, contrasting with the almost natural and relaxed gesture of the sitting man. The girl's raised arms emphasise playful posing, while expressing a shy and bashful mood by looking away. This posture, also found in *Helga*, is similar to poses of cover girls and adds a voyeuristic beauty ideal. By using cultural connotations of femininity and masculinity, sex education films drew on gender stereotypes to underline the biological distinctiveness between men and women.

The camera work intensified the male voyeurism projected onto the female body. Following film theorist Laura Mulvey, I consider gazes to be central elements in the representation of gender hierarchies.<sup>14</sup> The way looks are organised in films not only connect the spectator to the representations of bodies but are 'coded in terms of gender'.<sup>15</sup> While *Boy to Man* captured the entire male body to expose his reassuring gesture, the body in *Girl to Woman* was represented as an object

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<sup>14</sup> Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen* 16, No 3 (1975), pp. 6-18.

<sup>15</sup> Elsaesser, Hagener, *Film Theory*, p. 94.

being looked at. By capturing the upper part of the body first, the camera pans downwards to expose the lower part. This subjective position of the viewer evokes the effect of a gaze that moves downwards. Posture and distinct camerawork give the effect that it is somehow 'forbidden' to show the naked female body in its entirety. As a result, visual access towards the female body stands in stark contrast to the view towards the male. Stevi Jackson claims that 'sex education is one of the most sexist subjects',<sup>16</sup> and representations of gender stereotypes, to Karl Grammer, are vital tools in popular representations. He claims men in advertising are 'represented as dominant, prosperous and nurturant', while women are captured 'as being of high reproductive value (i.e. attractive) and sexually receptive (nude) as male mate-selection criteria would predict'.<sup>17</sup> These remarks imply distinct gazes in objectifying the body on display.

This demonstrates that the creation of sex difference was firmly anchored in the cultural understanding of gender hierarchies, revealing patriarchal dominance over the way bodies were accessed. Masculinisation and feminisation of the bodies was particularly visualised by posture. In addition, camera work and editing initiated different and culturally shaped ways of looking at bodies, reflecting a cultural understanding of gender.

### **5.1.2. Looking Inside the Body**

It seems in biological discourse sexuality was firmly cast in a model that adhered to the distinction between men and women. This model was shaped by complex operations linking diverse characteristics such as the outside to the inside of the body and one sex to the other. In sex education films, these complex processes,

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<sup>16</sup> Stevi Jackson, *Heterosexuality in Question* (Sage Publications: London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 1999), pp. 58-59.

<sup>17</sup> Karl Grammer, 'Sex and Gender in Advertisement: Indoctrination and Exploitation', in Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Frank Salter (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict and Indoctrination: Altruism, and Identity in Evolutionary Perspective* (Berghahn: New York, Oxford 1998), p. 228.

were reduced, simplified and possible ambiguities eliminated. With *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman*, I will demonstrate how films underlined the notion of heterosexual bodies by creating distinct gazes towards the male and female body and maintaining sexual difference at the cost of biological-scientific inaccuracies.

In *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman* the pituitary gland appears as a visual and causal connection linking graphics featuring the body images described above to schematic graphics of the interior body. The films explain that the pituitary gland is located in the brain and is decisive for the production of sex(ed) hormones. Both depict the effect of pituitary gland on the development of the sexual organs and the body in a similar way. Initially, the gland is located and highlighted within a schematic graphic of a body. It is introduced as a producer of hormones which induce the sexual organs to grow and, in turn, release hormones that lead to bodily changes. Both films use an almost identical filmic strategy to display this narration of cause and effect. The location of the gland is visually highlighted with a white line, and the spread of hormones is symbolised by animated radiating lines and a dotted line establishing a connection between the gland and the sexual organs. These depictions remained in place in the 1990s remakes.<sup>18</sup> What changed was the denomination of the hormones on the commentary track in *Girl to Woman*. Whereas in the 1960s *Girl to Woman* the narrator spoke of an unnamed hormone that induced the development of the female body, the 1990s remake gave it the name oestrogen. The effect, however, remained the same. Both *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman*, including their remakes, neatly separated a male from a female hormone. That scientists had, for a number of reasons,

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<sup>18</sup> Melissa Jo Peltier, *Vom Jungen zum Mann*, produced by Churchill Film Production, Renee A. Bishop (remake, USA 1992); Melissa Jo Peltier, *Vom Mädchen zur Frau*, produced by Churchill Film Production, Renee A. Bishop (remake, USA 1992).

‘struggled with nomenclature, classification, and measurement’ of sex hormones,<sup>19</sup> was left out.

As Chandak Sengoopta and Nelly Oudshoorn have discerned, as early as the 1930s endocrinological (hormonal) findings revealed that male and female contain a certain amount of both hormones.<sup>20</sup> That testosterone and oestrogen had an impact on other body parts than the testicles and ovaries did not diminish scientific and popular notions of genuine sex hormones.<sup>21</sup> Anne Fausto-Sterling notes that ‘because of their [scientists] loyalty to two-gender system’, conflicting evidence about seemingly unique characteristics of male and female hormones has been neglected up until today.<sup>22</sup> As can be clearly demonstrated with these films, simplification, omission and gender adjustment lay at the core of sexual concepts in sex education films.

### 5.1.3. The Voyage of the Sperm: A Success Story

Stereotypical depictions of men and women were not only manifested in postures and simplified body maps, but also present in narratives of biological reproduction. Social characteristics of the self-aware active male were applied to the physiological body interior to strengthen the cause of a separated masculine

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<sup>19</sup> Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (Basic Books: New York 2000), p. 190.

<sup>20</sup> Chandak Sengoopta, *The Most Secret Quintessence of Life: Sex Glands, and Hormones, 1850-1950* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, London 2006), pp. 153-204.

<sup>21</sup> Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones* (Routledge: London, New York 1994), p. 36; Wendy Cealey Harrison, John Hood-Williams, *Beyond Sex and Gender* (SAGE Publications: London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2002), pp. 130-131.

<sup>22</sup> Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, p. 191; Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body*, p. 36; Harrison, Hood-Williams, *Beyond Sex and Gender*, pp. 130-131. For further studies into gender and science, see also Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs*; Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of the Modern Science* (Rutgers UP [1993] 2004); Anne Fausto-Sterling, ‘The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough’, *The Sciences* (March/April 1993), pp. 20-24; Suzanne Kessler, Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An ethnomethodological approach* (Wiley: New York 1978); Heinz-Jürgen Voß, *Geschlecht: Wider die Natürlichkeit* (Schmetterling Verlag: Stuttgart 2011); Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750–1850* (Campus Verlag: Frankfurt am Main 1991); Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Harvard UP: Cambridge, Mass. 1990).

and feminine reproductive body. In sex education films, these attributions were used to masculinise the sperm cell, who became the actor in the narration of sexual reproduction. Following the work of anthropologist Emily Martin, who analysed gender biased and metaphoric language in textbooks and scientific papers, I will show that the presentation of biological 'facts' carried assumptions about social gender stereotypes. By paying attention to one of the tiniest actors in the male reproductive system, the sperm, I shall analyse how filmic devices supported cultural assumptions of the active and self-confident male and made the sperm masculine.

In sex education films sperm cells were normally introduced in a biological context as part of the male reproductive system. Through a mixture of schematic graphics, trick animation and micro-cinematographic shots sperm cells were given considerable visual presence.<sup>23</sup> *Boy to Man* starts the journey of the sperm cell with an animated schematic graphic that shows the proliferation of sperm cells in the testicles in close-up. It depicts the breeding of the sperm cells by increasing their numbers. Following a cut to a cross-section drawing displaying the testicle together with the seminiferous tubules, white is used to demonstrate the fast proliferation of sperm cells toward the seminiferous tubules. To visualise the questing nature of the sperm, animation in the form of white colouring illustrates the progression of sperm cells through the seminal duct. While the narrator explains that bio-chemical fluids are added, the focus remains on sperm cells as they make their way through the body. This active staging stands in contrast to the more passive female body. The egg cell usually 'is carried to the uterus by fluids and muscles'.<sup>24</sup> Sperm cells thus are shown to enter the male reproductive parts rather than only being processed by bio-chemical fluids. The

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<sup>23</sup> See for example, Dick, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung I*; FWU, *Pubertät bei Jungen*, produced by FWU and the animation studio (Trickatelier) Brunsch Berlin (West Berlin 1966); Bender, *Helga*.

<sup>24</sup> Churchill, *Girl to Woman*; FWU, *Der weibliche Zyklus*, Dick, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung I*; Bender, *Helga*.

continuous progression of sperm cells only stops once, when the camera zooms in to depict the prostate. At this stage, the narrator explains that before the sperm cells leave the body, the penis becomes erect through increased blood accumulation. The visual correlation to this comment is indicated by red being added to a cross section drawing in profile. Here *Boy to Man* took a traditional approach, as other films of that time such as *Helga* and *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1* similarly indicated the penile erection with cross-section drawings.<sup>25</sup>

Narratives of masculinity and femininity were inextricably linked to the biological sexes, culminating in the belief that the child's body became a risky project as soon as it entered puberty.<sup>26</sup> Especially in connection with masturbation, risk management through restraint and abstinence had been widely echoed advice for boys in sex education literature since the eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Grassel noted that although masturbation was frequently practiced in adolescence, he considered it a temporary stage that was replaced by other forms of sexual activity as soon as the boy entered adulthood.<sup>28</sup> Using the pituitary gland's induction of sex(ed) hormones, sex education films verbalised the permanent productivity and urge by which sperms reared out of the male body. Pressurised by and subject to these biological processes boys, according to the film, could not help but get rid of them from time to time. The demands made toward these pressures, as seen in *Boy to Man*, was control and restraint. Showing a cross-section drawing of the male reproductive system, the voice-over narrator points out that due to the endless production of sperm, if not fertilised they would either unloose themselves automatically in nocturnal emission or some boys would

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<sup>25</sup> Bender, *Helga*; Dick, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1*.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance Dietrich, 'Sexuelle Erziehung', pp. 511-515; Grassel, 'Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Eder, *Kultur der Begierde*, pp. 91-127.

<sup>28</sup> Grassel, 'Geschlechtererziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', p. 7.

intentionally bring it about. While further remarks on masturbation remain unvoiced, the commentary sermonizes on the importance of self-control and a good life style as part of the maturation process. What is particularly significant here is that nothing is mentioned about erotic feelings. The narrator only emphasises the importance of control of a body that starts to 'feel tension and unrest'.

In this regard, the British sex education film *Growing Up* (1968), directed by Martin Cole, and released at around the same time, is an exception.<sup>29</sup> The director employed real actors instead of schematic graphics to explain in detail erection and masturbation. However, the film provoked great controversies over its masturbation scenes, leading to the immediate suspension of the female actor from her job as a school teacher.<sup>30</sup> This occurred despite the film trying to de-erotise images by keeping the masturbation scene in an antiseptic space and replacing the original audio track by a narrator explaining masturbation. The controversy shows any discussion of lust was taboo in sex education at that time. In West Germany, Günter Amendt's 1970 sex education book *SexFront* followed a similar approach to Cole.<sup>31</sup> The book aimed at describing lust, masturbation and sexual practices in youthful, current language. Critics of Amendt filed a complaint with the *Bundeszentrale für jugendgefährdende Schriften* in an attempt to have the book removed from the market.<sup>32</sup> This was unsuccessful and in 1979 Amendt released a sequel.<sup>33</sup> This demonstrates that, as Steinacher has pointed

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<sup>29</sup> Martin Cole, *Growing Up: A New Approach to Sex Education*, produced by Global Films, Arnold Louis Miller: in association with the Institute for Sex Education and Research (1971).

<sup>30</sup> David Limond, "I hope someone castrates you, you perverted bastard": Martin Cole's sex education film *Growing Up* Controversy and the Limits of School Sex Education in 1970s England", *Sex Education* 9, No 4 (2009), pp. 410 -41; David Limond, "I never imagined that the time would come": Martin Cole, the *Growing Up* Controversy and the Limits of School Sex Education in 1970s England", *History of Education* 37, No 3 (2008), p. 418.

<sup>31</sup> Günter Amendt, *SexFront* (März Verlag: Frankfurt/Main 1970).

<sup>32</sup> Alva Gehrman, 'Günter Amendt: Sex Front: Recht auf Sexualität', *fluter: Magazin der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, 29.7. 2003, online edition, <http://www.fluter.de/de/jungsundmaedchen/buecher/2088/> (last accessed in March 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Günter Amendt, *Das Sex Buch* (Globus Verlag: Wien 1979).

out, moral crusades and censorship or prohibition lost ground by the mid to the end of the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> By the 1970s, narratives of lust and sexual feelings slowly enriched teenage sex education.<sup>35</sup> Sex advice columns in popular youth magazines such as the West German *Bravo* frequently included these aspects in its sex advice column.<sup>36</sup>

In *Boy to Man*, given its everlasting production, the discharge of semen is presented as an inescapable biological reaction. Without a hint of how ejaculation is caused, nor any indication of pleasure or arousal, the narration states the process is called ejaculation and is how the semen enters the female body as part of human reproduction. Despite the omission of a depiction of sexual intercourse it is made clear that the sperm's destiny is reproduction.

Underscoring the vivid nature of the sperm cells in the process of proliferation, a cut to a micro-cinematographic shot of moving sperm cells is used to give evidence of their real life existence. The narrator concludes by claiming that as soon as sperm cells leave the testicles, supplemented by seminal fluid, they propel themselves forward. Taken together, this sequence supports the tale of active and aggressive sperm being endlessly produced to empower the male and conquer the female body.

After a sequence in which the female reproductive system is displayed with its biological features the journey of the sperm cell continues. As sperm cells appear in the Fallopian tube, the narrator states that fertilisation takes place when sexual intercourse happens at the time of ovulation. At this moment, the narrator notes, 'it is very likely that the egg cell encounters male sperm cells'. Sexual intercourse is omitted. Until the 1960s, fertilisation in sex education films usually abstained from depiction of any emotion or arousal in the context of sexual intercourse. This

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<sup>34</sup> Steinbacher, *Wie der Sex*, p. 294.

<sup>35</sup> For West Germany, see Sauerteig, 'Wie soll ich es nur anstellen', pp. 140-147.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

is why the restriction to schematic drawings showing the biological body interior can be seen as paradigmatic. The ideal-typical representation of the sperm cell propagated the domineering, active and sexually driven image of the potent man and settled the hegemonic relation between the sexes in their procreative capacities.

#### **5.1.4. The Story of the Menstrual Cycle: A Melodrama**

Similarly to sperm production, the menstrual cycle was usually represented in the context of human reproduction. Differing from the sperm cell story, the menstrual cycle was a story of fate. Similar to the male biological body, the female body was reduced to its procreative capacities. It was, however, furnished with feminine characteristics that made it a suitable counterpart to the male. Not sex-drive, dominance and activity but subjugation to the menstrual cycle defined the gendered status of the female biological being. The story of the menstrual cycle seen in *Girl to Woman* exemplifies a master narrative found across sex education films between 1945 and 1970. Films such as *Biologie der Fortpflanzung I* (1963), *Der Weibliche Zyklus* (1965) and *Helga* (1967) feature little plot variation.

In all these films, the menstrual cycle is introduced as being triggered by hormones and bio-chemical processes, which become functional at the onset of puberty. Concerning the female body in *Girl to Woman*, the narration starts with the maturation of the egg cell in the follicle, and continues with its journey through the Fallopian tube, where 'it is helped by muscles' to reach the uterus. Having arrived there are the options of menstruation or fertilisation. *Girl to Woman*, like other films focusing on menstruation, presents the cycle twice; first to explain menstruation, and then to explain fertilisation.

The first part, the story of menstruation, is visualised by animated cross section drawings showing the egg cell as it slowly moves through the Fallopian tube and

settles down in the uterus. This is similar to the visual style of the voyage of the sperm cell. However, the story of menstruation is not a story of success but of waste and discomfort. *Girl to Woman* introduces the development of the egg cell in the follicle and its release as a preparation for fertilisation. While the egg cell moves through the Fallopian tube, the endometrium is enriched with blood and the voice-over, explains 'if the egg cell has not been fertilised, it is shed together with blood and endometrium'.<sup>37</sup> Negative associations are already immanent in language describing menstruation as a failed undertaking since the egg cell has not been fertilised, and, in addition, the commentary associates the process with discomfort. The female voice-over used to appear empathic and compassionate to a pubescent girl and explains, 'it needs some time until she accustoms herself to menstruation. However, for many girls menstruation does not involve difficulties and only causes a bit of discomfort'. This gendered intimacy stresses that menstruation is a women's issue and consequently a social taboo not to be discussed (at least with the male half of the public). That descriptions on use recommended films on menstruation to be shown to a female rather than a male audience, underlines the contemporary understanding of menstruation as a moral taboo.<sup>38</sup>

The whole sequence is presented by an animated drawing. Red is used to highlight the accumulation and shedding of the endometrium through the vagina. No micro-cinematographic shots are used to give evidence of the 'real' existence of these physiological processes, as with sperm cells. Arguably, the omission of photographic evidence of menstrual blood in sex education, as Martin notes, was an attempt to avoid 'ideas that might acknowledge the link between menstruation,

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<sup>37</sup> See also Bender, *Helga*.

<sup>38</sup> For viewer recommendations of films, see Edmund Wiesböck, 'Werkraum: Tonbildreihen und Filme zur geschlechtlichen Erziehung', *Katechetische Blätter: Zeitschrift für Religionspädagogik und Jungendarbeit* 7 (1968), pp. 679-682.

sex and conception'.<sup>39</sup> Hence, the story of menstruation ends with conventional modes of visualisation consisting of animations and simplified cross-section drawings representing physiological processes.

After this sequence, an animated cross-section drawing is used to show the renewed journey of the egg cell from the Fallopian tube to the uterus. This time, however, the purpose of the journey is accomplished with the egg cell being fertilised. In contrast to the male body, the biological female body is much more closely associated with human reproduction. While the male body is presented as having a life on its own maintained by its sex drive, the view of the female body is of a less stable and incomplete system.<sup>40</sup> For Oudshoorn, the scientific conceptualisation of a repeating course of menstruation urged an understanding of menstruation as unstable and fluctuating, as the days of conception were reduced and dependent on the "biological clock".<sup>41</sup> Emily Martin notes that the image of the female reproductive body has to come to be seen that of a signalling system.<sup>42</sup> Making the egg cell the protagonist of the menstrual cycle underlines the notion of women as passive beings whose internal body is controlled by biochemical processes.<sup>43</sup> This is due to the egg cell not being granted individual movement but being transported and pushed.

In the 1960s, while the notion of the passive female was widely accepted within sex education and beyond, the introduction of the pill to the East and West German markets challenged the subordinate role of women and empowered them to decide whether they wanted children. The pill had originally been designed to regulate disease related variations of the cycle. After its introduction, however, women without health issues wanted it. In West Germany, its release

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<sup>39</sup> Martin, 'Periods, Parody', p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender*, pp. 90-110; Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, pp. 45-53.

<sup>41</sup> Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>42</sup> Martin, *The Woman in the Body*, p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> Martin, 'Periods, Parody', p. 23.

became a contentious topic. Fierce opposition came in particular from the conservative camp and the church, which considered chemical manipulation of the menstrual cycle as an amoral undertaking likely to evoke promiscuous behaviour.<sup>44</sup> In the GDR, however, the ‘father of the anti-baby pill’ Karl Heinz Mehlan advocated it as a ‘planned child pill’ (‘Wunschkindpille’), underlining its emancipatory character for GDR women.<sup>45</sup> The shift in public perception of women’s choices in reproduction not only induced many public debates but furthered a changing moral attitude. As a consequence, sex education from the 1970s on frequently tackled topics of contraception, conception and pleasure.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the representation of menstruation in sex education films in the 1960s continued to adhere to rationalised body displays to support the reproductive imperative.

Graphs and diagrams were further visual elements in the representation of the menstrual cycle which added an additional regulative component. These depictions expressed the menstrual cycle through time and made the body a location of time management. In the form of diagrams imposed over a graphic of the uterus and the Fallopian tube, *Girl to Woman* creates a semiotic connection between the drawing and the diagram. The diagram introduces a grid with vertical lines where each line represents a week. Every fourth line is highlighted. In total the grid covers five weeks. Three horizontal lines with red dots are laid over the grid to indicate the frequency of the period over five weeks. The first line at the top features the ideal-typical cycle of four weeks, the red dots corresponding with the highlighted horizontal line indicating each fourth week. The second line shows red dots on the horizontal line in greater intervals,

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<sup>44</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, pp. 150-151, 266-267.

<sup>45</sup> Ankum, ‘Political Bodies’ (1993), p. 128; Böttcher, ‘Karl-Heinz Mehlan: Mit Pille und Kondom für den Sozialismus’, *Der Spiegel online*, 17 June 2001, <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/karl-heinz-mehlan-mit-pille-und-kondom-fuer-den-sozialismus-a-145531.html> (retrieved on 4 August 2013).

<sup>46</sup> Sauerteig, ‘Representations’, p. 153.

indicating the start of menstruation every fifth week. The third line shows an interval of three weeks. Together with the voice-over the menstrual cycle of twenty-eight days is introduced as the biological norm. However, deviations between thirty-five and twenty-one days are also justified. The second and third lines represent normal deviation which, although differing from the ideal of twenty-eight days, would not bring any health risks.<sup>47</sup>

Diagrams and graphs not only have an enormous regulative power in defining sexuality but are indispensable tools for the communication of scientific knowledge.<sup>48</sup> Differing from schematic graphics, menstruation diagrams emphasised the regularity and the predictability of female sexuality, in which neither sex drive nor lust had any place.

In line with an understanding of the more passive nature of women, female sexuality was not considered as volatile but as predictable. The idea of recording menstruation over of time dates back to the 1930s. In the spirit of rationalisation, the Viennese gynaecologist Hermann Knaus argued that if menstruation was recorded over a longer period of time, the days in which the egg cell was capable of being fertilised could be calculated. The Knaus'sche method advised every schoolgirl to take records, so as to learn to keep control over her body.<sup>49</sup> Knaus saw the potential of recording menstruation not only in female self-control, but also in that it would induce a change in the power relation between men and

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<sup>47</sup> On graphics, graphs and diagrams and their normative power, see Jürgen Link 'The Normalistic Subject and its Curves: On the Symbolic Visualization of Orienteering Data', (translated by Mirko M. Hall), *Cultural Critique* 57 (Spring 2004), pp. 47-67.

<sup>48</sup> See for instance, Bruno Latour, 'Drawing Things Together', in Michael Lynch, Steve Woolgar (eds), *Representation in Scientific Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1990), pp. 19-68; Michael Lynch, 'Discipline and the Material Form of Images: An Analysis of Scientific Visibility', *Social Studies of Science* 15, No 1 (1985), pp. 37-66.; Perini, Laura, 'The Truth in Pictures', *Philosophy of Science* 72, No 1 (2005), pp. 262-286; Link, 'The Normalistic Subject', pp. 47-67, Galison, *Image and Logic*; Eder, 'Ideale Vergattung', pp. 129-192.

<sup>49</sup> Hermann Knaus, *Die Physiologie der Zeugung des Menschen* (Maudrich: Wien 1950, 3rd revised edition). pp. 148-149.

women, enabling women to decide on reproduction.<sup>50</sup> The predictability of the female body, as represented in diagrams of the menstrual cycle, not only shows that female sexuality was seen as being entirely governed by the body interior but became a calculable undertaking not only for experts but also for women themselves. Sexual urges were nothing a girl needed to be in control of or worry about. Rather, *Girl to Woman* emphasises a girl's responsible dealings with her body to serve the goal of preparation for her future role as a mother.

It can be concluded that sex education in the 1960s maintained an active/passive divide in explaining male and female sexes. Although, it can be argued that the more calculable nature of female sexuality allowed female control and power over reproduction, nevertheless, her social role was assumed within traditional poles of male production and female reproduction.

## **5.2. Bodies in Interaction: Screening Gender Relations**

This section deals with the concept of 'doing gender' and explores role models films offered to young men and women. The focus is not the extent to which biological images were socially shaped, but how biology was sought to underline social roles. By arguing that the reliance on a two-gendered model that was linked to human reproduction as part of the politics of fertility, it can be said that the 1960s saw few changes in traditional gender roles, referring the woman to the family home and the man to the workplace. However, it is evident that these traditional roles were subject to challenges linked to political principles and social change. In both states gender equality was a topic that surfaced.

In the GDR gender equality between men and women was declared in the 1950 'Law for the Protection of Mother and Child and the Rights of Women'. It

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<sup>50</sup> Hermann Knaus, 'Ein Entwurf für die Geburtenregelung der Zukunft', *Archiv für Gynäkologie* 156 (1934), p. 153.

guaranteed the same status to man and women and therefore, as the SED prided themselves, ruled out legal patriarchy.<sup>51</sup> Differing from the FRG, women's contribution to the workforce was welcomed and encouraged, and 1950s labour mobilisation, as Harsch suggests, primarily targeted women.<sup>52</sup> In the early 1960s, in an attempt to increase female labour again, the Politbüro's Women Communiqué praised women's engagement in the construction of socialism.<sup>53</sup> While the SED understood gender equality within socialist production, many housewives resisted taking up work.<sup>54</sup> The roles expected of men and women were situated between declarations such as these, and pronatalistic aspirations to increase birth-rates.<sup>55</sup> Tellingly, in 1956, Neubert wrote in *The Gender Question* that in women the desire to have children was natural and 'without children a life was empty and joyless'.<sup>56</sup> Representations of women in media were, however, far from homogeneous and juxtaposed between the poles of the 'proletarian working class woman' and the figure of caring mother placed within the home.<sup>57</sup>

In the FRG, gender equality was passed with the 1956 Basic Law but this legal status did not correspond with party politics. Across parties the perception that women were the natural carers of children prevailed during the 1950s and most of the 1960s.<sup>58</sup> This was true for conservative parties such as the CSU/CDU and

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<sup>51</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, pp. 62-63; Ina Merkel, 'Leitbilder und Lebensweisen von Frauen in der DDR', in Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka, Hartmut Zahr (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Klett Cotta: Stuttgart 1994), pp. 366-367; Ankum, 'Political Bodies', pp. 127-144

<sup>52</sup> Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic*, p. 133.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>55</sup> Merkel, 'Leitbilder und Lebensweisen', pp. 366-367; Donna Harsch, 'Squaring the circle: the dilemmas and evolution of women's policy', in Patrick Major, Jonathan Osmond (eds.), *The Workers' and the Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht 1945-1971* (Manchester UP: Manchester New York 2002), pp. 151-170.

<sup>56</sup> Neubert, *Die Geschlechterfrage*, p. 91

<sup>57</sup> See Merkel's article on popular representations of women in the GDR. Merkel, 'Leitbilder und Lebensweisen', pp. 366-367.

<sup>58</sup> Frevert, 'Umbruch der Geschlechterverhältnisse', pp. 642-660; Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, pp. 38-75; Timm, *Politics of Fertility*, pp. 305-308.

the socialist-democratic party (SPD).<sup>59</sup> For public opinion, working women often came to be seen as victims of economic and socio-political structures, forcing especially single mothers and single women into work.<sup>60</sup> Ute Frevert calls federal chancellor Willy Brandt (1969-74), the first politician to speak up for the employment of women. In his period of office he legally enforced the expansion of day nurseries to unburden working women.<sup>61</sup>

Looking for gender roles in sex education films therefore enters a contradictory field between social realities, political ideas and popular sentiments. In this subchapter I will trace how sex education films taught doing gender.

### 5.2.1. Talking about Sex

How children and young people should be sexually enlightened was debated in East and West Germany alike. Sex education became compulsory in schools during the 1960s<sup>62</sup> although East and West German pedagogues stressed the need for parents to sexually educate their children from an early age.<sup>63</sup> In this context schools had a supplementary role in sex education. In 1963, the West German author Friedrich Martin called for early sex education before it became part of the Federal school curricula. He recommended beginning as soon as children started asking questions and advised refraining from references to birds and the bees or God.<sup>64</sup> In his article *Sexualaufklärung und Ehevorbereitung* (Sex education and preparation for marriage), he scheduled the kind of knowledge children should receive at certain stages, so as to prepare them for marriage.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Moeller. *Protecting Motherhood*, pp. 64-68.

<sup>60</sup> Erica Carter, *How German is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (The University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor 1997), p. 47.

<sup>61</sup> Frevert, 'Umbruch der Geschlechterverhältnisse', pp. 646-647.

<sup>62</sup> On this aspect, see chapter 2.

<sup>63</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>64</sup> Martin, 'Sexualerziehung und Ehevorbereitung', pp. 72-75.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

The promotion of gradual education did not exclusively target parents, as pedagogues developed schedules for school sex education from the first form onwards.<sup>66</sup> These pedagogically informed concepts of gradual sex education sought to counteract the longstanding fear that sex education would incite premature sexual activity.<sup>67</sup>

Bender's *Helga* and Oelschlägel's *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* (Don't be afraid of delicate questions, 1965)<sup>68</sup> were two sex education films that addressed (future) parents and prepared them for the education of their children in sexual matters. The working title *Healthy Youth – Healthy Mothers – Healthy Children* (Gesunde Jugend – Gesunde Mütter – Gesunde Kinder) gives an understanding of the intended target group *Helga* was to address.<sup>69</sup> Bender initially wanted to produce a film on ante-natal care addressing an audience of mothers-to-be.<sup>70</sup> The film was also meant to be used as a teaching tool for teachers and students of final year classes.<sup>71</sup> Before its release in 1967 the film broadened its target group to the general public of sixteen and over.<sup>72</sup> This broadening during the preproduction and production phase is indicative of its aim of social impact.

Similarly, the East German film *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* was released for diverse target groups, indicative of its aim to make sex education as effective as possible. The East German *DZL*, which oversaw teaching material for school and

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<sup>66</sup> See Mehl, *Sexualerziehung in der Schule*.

<sup>67</sup> Sauerteig, 'Representations', p. 129.

<sup>68</sup> *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* (1965) was the fourth episode of Oelschlägel's series *Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen*, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films.

<sup>69</sup> BA B310/23: Schultze-Rhonhof (BZgA/Referat für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit) to Erich Bender, 3 August 1966.

<sup>70</sup> BA B310/23: Erich Bender to Prof. Dr. med. Fritsch (German Health Museum/Deutsches Gesundheitsmuseum), 29 May 1964. The German Health Museum was the forerunner institution of the BZgA to be found in July 1967.

<sup>71</sup> The BZgA distributed the school version of *Helga* in two parts. The first part was entitled *er-sie-es* and recommended from an age of twelve. The second part of the film, which included the real time shot of giving birth, entitled *Wir wollten es* was recommended to be of use in schools for students at an age of fourteen and over. BA B 310/24: 'Inhaltsangabe der beiden Lehrfilme der BZgA'; Wiesböck, 'Werkraum: Tonbildreihen und Filme', p. 682; Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 200.

<sup>72</sup> Schwarz, 'Helga', p. 198.

further education, allowed the distribution of the film to psychology, pedagogy and biology students and elementary teacher trainees.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the *DZL* recommended the film to parents.<sup>74</sup> In its teaching booklet pedagogue Heinz Grassel stressed that *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* needed to be shown to teenagers at an age of fifteen and sixteen to 'facilitate their future role as an parental educator'.<sup>75</sup> Following his recommendation, the department *HV Film*, a subordinate institution of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs responsible for cinema releases, admitted *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* for an audience of fourteen and over.<sup>76</sup> In the West, as in the East, sex education in the 1960s was primarily understood as preparation for parenthood.

In this context, the status of the child was double-edged; on the one hand, the child was understood as a natural sexual being, whereas, on the other, sexual activity was considered as a moral, physical and pathological danger. Both assumptions were vital in the process of what Foucault terms the 'pedagogization of the child's sex'.<sup>77</sup> Visualisation of sex talks played a vital part as they exemplified how to shape children's and students' understanding of sexuality and their own bodies without inducing premature sexual awakening. Both films emphasised it was natural for a child to ask questions, which, according to pedagogues, occurred out of general interest for their environment rather than specific sexual curiosity.

I will argue that in scenes of sex talks gender display came into action twice. First in staging the films used open space and nature settings to characterise the

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<sup>73</sup> Senatsverwaltung Berlin T-IF 57: Registrierbescheide-Tonfilme-T-IF13/14 30-58: *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen*.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.; Heinz Grassel, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 1: Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* (Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm), edited by the Deutsches Pädagogisches Zentralinstitut (VEB Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1967), pp. 25, 29-30.

<sup>75</sup> Grassel, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 1*, p. 31.

<sup>76</sup> BA DR1-Z/2247, Filmzulassungsprotokoll No. 0219/65: *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen*, 27 August 1965.

<sup>77</sup> Foucault, *Will to Knowledge*, p. 104.

active role of men in contrast to narrow framing in the domestic area to imply the caring and reserving nature of women. Secondly, the concept of the gradual sex education of children itself resumed traditional gender roles, in which boys were assumed to take on representative tasks, whereas women were idealised as housewives and child-rearers. Similar to the biological images discussed above, the staged sex talks also connected to the narrative of human reproduction and thus created a particular tension with the image of GDR women who legally stood on equal terms in productive work with men.

*Helga* demonstrates children's interest in sexual matters and exemplifies this pedagogic lesson in a scene showing a naked adult woman in the bathroom. Her back is turned to the audience and she reaches for a towel when her son of about three or four years enters. The boy looks at her vulva, points to it and notes the difference to his own body. He says 'You don't have a thing there, like I do, Mummy'. The mother answers, 'oh, you mean your little penis. No, you're right. Only little boys and grown up men have them.' By setting the scene in a bathroom in the normal surroundings of a family home the film stresses the normalcy of this conversation. According to educators the awakening interest of children in their own body and those of others was considered to be normal from four to five.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, the East German film *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen*, highlights the normalcy of a child's questions about sexuality by showing a mother at home hoovering the living room when her little boy of about four asks her where babies come from. Here the mother also gives a simple answer by explaining that a baby grows in the womb until it is big enough to be born. The next moment the boy asks whether he can switch on the Hoover. This scene stresses the interest of children in all questions of which sexuality is only one. By emphasising the natural curiosity of children, both films exemplify how sex talks

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<sup>78</sup> See for instance, Grassel, 'Geschlechterziehung in der sozialistischen Schule', p. 10; Mehl, *Sexualerziehung in der Schule*, pp. 29-33.

can be integrated in the general education of children without embarrassment. They convey a message that sex education should not start at school but should be considered as soon as children start asking questions. By placing the mother within the domestic area as carer the films underpin her role as a universal reference for younger children. Both films chose a male child to visualise the early interest of children in sexual matters, although the pedagogue Heinz Grassel pointed to the fact that boys and girls up to the age of ten would undergo similar development.<sup>79</sup> This staged gender difference hence is not meant to imply that only boys ask questions, but underlines the developmental stage of the child, where both sexes focus on the mother as the central attachment figure. The centrality of the mother for both boys and girls was thought to lose its significance when children grew older. Hence showing the mother interacting with her son serves to underpin her central role of for both sexes at this stage of the child's education. This creates a visual contrast to the conversation with children at an older age which the films present between father and son or mother and daughter.

The ability of a child to engage in honest dialogue with a trusted person, according to *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen*, would be the parent's reward for successful education. The booklet to the film emphasised that it was up to parents to build up a trustful and loving relationship with children from an early age on so as to give the child its own capacity to love.<sup>80</sup> *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* features two parent-to-child talks. It shows children aged about ten to twelve to illustrate that parents have formed a close and trusting relationship with their children over the years and have accomplished the task of becoming role models at a stage where children become 'sexual beings'. To visualise the

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<sup>79</sup> Heinz Grassel, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 2: Sagst Du's Deinem Kinde?* (Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm), edited by the Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel, (VEB Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1964), pp. 11-13.

<sup>80</sup> Grassel, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 1*, p. 13.

change from the universal role of mother to that of the chosen talking partner of the child, sex talks between parents and children at an older age are staged in the form of mother-daughter talks and father-son talks. This changed gender constellation, in contrast to the previous talks showing conversations with younger children serves to stress the changed role of the parent as a model for their child.

Similar to the talk between the young boy and his mother, *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* frames its mother-daughter talk in the domestic household to induce an atmosphere of intimacy. This talk takes place in the girl's bedroom to further emphasise this. When the mother enters the private space of her nine year old daughter to wish her good night, the girl asks what 'this menstruation' is. Typifying her caring role, the mother approaches the bed and sits down. In close up shots, we see her caressing her daughter's hand before explaining the biological process of the menarche and menstruation. Interestingly, she uses a negative connotation of by-product to describe the unfertilised egg and reassures her daughter that there is nothing to worry about. In this situation the camera largely captures the mother's face, intercut with facial close-up shots of the daughter's listening eagerly. The intimacy of the dialogue is intensified by using close-ups, keeping the filmic space as small as possible and narrowly focusing on the protagonists. The shot aims at establishing an atmosphere of intimacy and familiarity for the talk, underlining the supportive role of the mother.

In the concluding scene of the film the mother-girl talk is followed by an equally positive image of a trustful talk from man to boy. The initiation and facilitation of the talk, however is underlined differently than in the mother-daughter talk. Here the space of the intimate atmosphere is actively shaped, conquered and controlled by the son before the caring father is put into action. With the support of camera-work and editing greater activity is staged, supporting the role of the

active male in contrast to the passive staging of the mother-daughter talk. The establishing shot of this scene introduces the far less intimate space of the living room. Right at the beginning the camera pans along a sharply focussed bookshelf against a blurry background showing a radio playing music. Next to the radio the father sits in an armchair reading. A boy of about ten or twelve years, in focus, stands in the foreground by the bookshelf, nervously fumbling through a book. Through minimal depth sharpness, which leaves the father blurred against the background while the boy is in focus, the film symbolises a situation in which an intimate atmosphere where a delicate talk could take place has to be worked out. Without looking at his father the boy approaches him stammering: 'Papa? (pause), well, you won't tell me anyway.' After this first step, which can be seen as an attempt to control the situation, the father makes clear he will answer any question, as long as he knows the answer. The timid boy sits down on a step away from his father and bashfully looks at the floor while asking whether it is true that men make babies. A close up shot of the father still sitting in his armchair reveals a thoughtful facial expression, underlining the seriousness of the talk to come. Next, the father stands up, turns off the radio, and leaves his recreational space. A camera pan follows him to a table, indicating his desire to create a situation apt for this kind of talk. He then invites the son to sit down with him. When the father subsequently explains the role of men in sexual reproduction, he largely refers to biological terms and includes references to the animal kingdom. However, he also points to the distinction between animals and humans, centring on intellect as the distinctive feature that enables human beings to control their sexual drive. At this point the narrative of the powerful man who has to act responsibly is perpetuated. Thus, characteristics of dominance, activity and control shaping an image of the masculine man are combined with biologically informed content and sex talk staging, creating a semiotic link between gendered behaviour and biological sex.

Subsequently, the sex talk follows a similar visual pattern to the talk between mother and daughter by capturing the father in close-up shots, alternating with the close ups of the boy and shots of both of them sitting. Toward the end of the film the space for the two male actors is opened up again. Short inserts show scenes of father and son playing chess in the garden, washing the car and fishing at a lake, while the voice-over comments that they would have many such talks in the future. With this set-up the film closes with a social metaphor that men are active and in control of nature and the father is established as a role model. This dialogue stands in stark contrast to the one between mother and daughter, where the visual emphasis focuses on a familiar domestic environment. This shows that not only gendered roles in the organisation of sex talks are established, but more importantly, the location where these gender roles become fully unleashed is defined. As a result, gendered meaning is ascribed to social roles and spaces. In addition to filmic space and the configuration of gender relations, *Helga* and *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen* connect the social organization of sex with the biology of human reproduction by creating a semiotic link through the filmic use of image and sound. Gendered roles, the films argue, are the natural consequence of heterosexuality.

So far, I have introduced different settings in which sex education films applied gendered assumptions to the biology of the sexes. Biological images and sex talks aimed at showing that sex education could be conducted rationally and endorsed explanations of the biological distinctiveness of males and females. Centring on how bodies functioned, traditional gender roles of motherhood and fatherhood were presented as causally linked to the biology of reproduction. In the following, I will demonstrate how gender education in relation to the opposite sex has been visualised in sex education films and which cultural scripts were offered to teenagers for approaching the other sex.

### 5.2.2. Approaching the Other Sex

In interaction with the other sex the unbridled nature of the male body resurfaced as a biological foundation for social risk. The East German film *Sagst du's deinem Kinde* (1964) demonstrates this with a scene that shows a group of girls playing volleyball in the schoolyard. To discuss the awakening interest in the opposite sex, a pubescent boy is shown observing the girls. The voice-over comments that twelve year olds often are not able to make sense of the stimuli they receive, vaguely hinting to the danger of unmediated sex which needs to be learned to be controlled. Alternating from the boy's face to a low camera angle framing the girls' breasts and thighs in their tight shorts in close-up, the film emphasises the erotising effect on the young boy. The scene concludes with the boy crossing the volleyball court after the game. Later, a scene shows a group of schoolboys peeping through the window of the girl's changing room. Again, the motif of male voyeurism is used to emphasise the voice-over comment that girls are no longer perceived as sexually neutral but as something special and interesting. In West Germany, as exemplified in *Helga*, male voyeurism serves to underline the danger of unchannelled male sexuality. Depicting a group of young boys admiring a poster of a pin-up girl in front of a nightclub, the voice-over explains that such gazes could have been prevented if proper sex education had taken place.

After identifying voyeurism and emerging sexual interest as a potential risk for young male adolescents, Oelschlägel's films give detailed advice aimed at showing how to channel increasing sexual interest. Scenes of playful tussle between boys and girls in the classroom are examples in *Sagst du's deinem Kinde* hinting at the potential of the emerging sexual feelings. Between play and emerging sexual feelings, a gendered tension emerges that the film seeks to explain. Sexual drive constituted a risk for male adolescents that needed to be

guided in. However, a similar narrative of unbridled female sexuality was mostly absent.

In *Sagst du's deinem Kinde* female puberty appears more nuanced as Oelschlägel associates female adolescence with romantic musing and enthusiasm. Although the voice-over speaks about emotional feelings in general and does not associate them exclusively with female adolescents, the mise-en-scène that visualises the emerging emotions presents a girl. The visual language thus frames the emotional state of sexual beings as feminine. As part of the process of searching for her identity, the voice over explains, the girl skims through a diary and puts a flower between the pages while humming a melody. Emphasising the romantic nature of sexual feelings in young women forms the basis of a discussion of the female body as risky with emotions which should be guided. Hence two dominant gendered visions accompanied the guidance on sexual awakening. In men, control and restraint were linked to sexual drive, in women it was responsible dealings with emotion and body.

Oelschlägel's film *...weil ich kein Kind mehr bin...* is characterised by a number of scenes showing correct and incorrect examples for approaching the opposite sex for teenagers from thirteen to fifteen, thereby stipulating behavioural norms.<sup>81</sup> One scene showing dangerous aspects of female sexuality centres on fourteen year old Sylvia who discovers the effect her new feminine charms have on boys. The film illustrates how she puts them into action in a playful, erotic manner by walking with swinging hips in the street and flirting with passers-by. Similarly, fifteen-year-old Ria encouraged by her mother, discovers her attractive power and seduces a boy in order to show off in front of her female friends. In both episodes female vanity poses the problem of emerging girl power. In the

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<sup>81</sup> Gerhard Witzlack, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 3: Weil ich kein Kind mehr bin* (Beiheft zum Lehrerbildungsfilm), edited by Deutsches Zentralinstitut für Lehrmittel (VEB Volk und Wissen: Berlin 1965), p. 4.

following episode of Ulli and Thea, the young couple meet secretly due to Ulli's parents' disapproval of their relationship. Eventually Thea takes the initiative and invites Ulli to stay over when her parents go out. In another episode, Bianca undertakes a camping trip with her nineteen-year-old male friend who persuades her to have sex. In all these episodes, the initiative of girls was introduced as a problem. Lack of dignity or credulity, as presented in Bianca's case, frames the narrative on the problem of emerging female sexuality. Female sexuality and the dangers attached to it were similarly framed in West German sex education films. To discuss the ambiguous sexual state in adolescent women *Helga* points to the problem of acceleration. This term describes the gap between the mature looks of young people and their childlike emotional expressions. Combining two motifs, that of a gullible pubescent girl and a man driven by nature, a girl hitchhiking was used as worst case scenario of the immature unawareness of a girl's sexual charm. A further example of a West German sex education film where these motifs were used to remind young people of the dangers of sexual awakening is the episodic film *Hütet Eure Töchter!* (1963).<sup>82</sup> These gendered views that situated the female pubescent body as an object of the male gaze and lust were not only evident in sexual pedagogy in East and West Germany but reflect the cultural attitude of that time. As the West German magazine *Der Spiegel* critically reported, depictions and tales of seduced girls were motifs that comforted the sex-wave.<sup>83</sup> Considering the increasing public discussion on sex education, many filmmakers saw the potential in producing films on sex and young people. Often they reduced the educational aspect to the first few minutes and stressed the voyeuristic element, turning these films into big sellers. The films by Oswalt Kolle

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<sup>82</sup> *Hütet Eure Töchter! Ein dokumentarischer Spielfilm in sieben Fällen* (1962-63, West Germany), directed by Michael Blackwood, Wolf Hart, Eberhard Hauff, Rob Houwer, Karl Schedereit, Franz-Josef Spieker; and produced by Walter Kruettner, Walter Koppel; production company Cineropa-Filmproduktion Walter Kruettner on behalf of Real Film KG (Hamburg). For a short plot description see also Wiesböck, 'Werkraum: Tonbildreihen und Filme', p. 682;.

<sup>83</sup> Anonymus, 'Hütet Eure Töchter! (Deutschland): Film', *Der Spiegel* 25 (1964), pp. 84-85; Renate Kasche, Alexander Braumüller, 'Thema Nr. 1 (Film)', *Der Spiegel* 35 (1962), pp. 58-60.

and the series of 'Schulmädchen-Reporte' (Schoolgirls Reports) by Ernst Hofbauer, to name a few examples, belong to this category. Male sexuality, in Ullis and Thea's case is made visible by pressing the female to have sex, or, her not rejecting it. The risk in male sexuality was seen in the constant readiness for sex triggered by the natural sexual (male) drive.

In constituting distinctive female and male norms of interaction at the onset of puberty, Oelschlägel's films emphasise the unbridled natural state of male sexuality by linking it to images set in nature. As discussed in the film *Partner* (1965) in the previous chapter, nature, if not controlled is an arena where moral decline and seduction can flourish. Civilization and the human intellect stand in marked contrast to nature as they are capable of taming the natural state in men and women, by suppressing sexual drive or charm. With regard to the formation of gender identities, failed interactions between girls and boys were presented in outdoor space secluded from control and discipline. A key scene of failed interaction is the camping trip of Bianca and her older friend who persuades her to have sex with him. Bianca first brushes off his approaches and leaves the tent, then reconsiders the situation and returns. Bianca's assumption that she was going to innocently share a tent with her friend seems naïve, it was, however, rooted in the policy of co-education in schools and organised youth activities, such as the *Pioniere* for members from six to fourteen and *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ, Free German Youth) for older. In 1956, the youth magazine *Junge Welt* promoted the sharing of the same tents by boys and girls in the Free German Youth (FDJ) as long as relationships were 'clean' and 'decent'.<sup>84</sup> This partly resulted from the national tent shortage, as the historian Fenemore remarks, and interaction between boys and girls at all ages became a

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<sup>84</sup> Anonymus, 'Jungen und Mädchen in einem Zelt?', *Junge Welt*, 25 May 1956; cited in Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', p. 76.

cornerstone of GDR's education policy.<sup>85</sup> In an attempt to overcome gender discrimination, co-education was envisioned as minimizing previously restricted access to education for girls to lay the foundations for a unified East German community.<sup>86</sup> With these examples of how the other sex should not be approached Oelschlägel films did not suggest that the mixing of sexes in this liminal stage of growing-up was a problem, but identified a lack of guidance to conceive their relationships as natural.

Together with the psychologist Gerhard Witzlack, Oelschlägel identified what guidance should look like by not discouraging young people from having relationships, but by advising them on how to conduct them appropriately.<sup>87</sup> Oelschlägel's series gave a number of examples of how risks to sexually awakening females and males body could be avoided. His films conveyed a belief that education would have corrective effects. In showing how the domination of sexual nature can be learned, again, mostly outdoor space is used to emphasise the corrective power of education. State and pedagogy hence were instrumentalised as control panels to structure a dangerous and risky natural space. In the film *Sagst Du's deinem Kinde?* scenes of a number of outings organised by the *Pioniere* were used to exemplify how to interact responsibly with friends of the opposite sex. Emphasising that collaborative work, education and play foster favourable conditions for a positive attitude toward friendship and partnership, Oelschlägel, together with the pedagogue Heinz Grassel who wrote the accompanying booklet for the film, stressed the educative ideal of being part

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<sup>85</sup> Fenemore, 'Growing Pains', p. 76.

<sup>86</sup> A subtle discussion on the aspect of co-education and the tensions between gender ideals and reality can be found in Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom*, pp. 106-120.

<sup>87</sup> Witzlack, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 3*, p. 14.

of the socialist project.<sup>88</sup> Under the guidance of youth leaders young people were meant to learn to develop work ethics together.

A telling example in this respect is a scene where a girl and a boy are entrusted with finding the way home by map. The important and collaborative character of this task illustrates the GDR's idealism. The omniscient narrator comments that the mastering collective tasks yields joint benefits. He continues by saying it is crucial to demonstrate the meaning of collective work by means of common play, through which the meaning of life can be discovered. By doing so, children and young people learn ethical principles from an early age, principles that serve as benchmarks for their judgement in later life. With this rhetoric, sexual awakening in young people was tolerated as long as they became subject to the principles of mutual respect and work ethics. The credo of mutual respect and responsibility to be found in collective work seemed to transgress gender boundaries, opt for gender equality, and also aim at desexualising adolescents in favour of social manners. The exemplification of social manners indicating respectful behaviour between the sexes revealed traditional bourgeois gender assumptions drawing on old-school courtship. The class outing depicts many such behavioural attitudes, like the offer of a boy to carry a girl's backpack and lending his hand to her to cross a brook, and another boy offering his snack to the girl sitting next to him. In a final scene, we see how Peter, a boy of about eleven chivalrously fetches Anita's jacket and puts it upon her shoulders when he realises that she feels chilly. This scene had its precursor in a scene where Peter observed his father put a jacket over his mother's shoulders. These forms of male chivalry were indebted to socially shaped gender models akin to those in the Federal Republic.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Grassel, *Begegnung mit dem anderen Geschlecht 2*, p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Sauerteig, 'Representations', pp. 138-155.

Despite the focus on co-education in East German films as part of a larger socialist project which emphasised dealings with the opposite sex from an early age, traditional gender hierarchies, similar to those in West Germany were maintained. Conserving a narrative of an active male character who guides and controls forms of interaction, the passive female remained in the position of being courted. This adherence to traditional courtship gender roles produced a Janus-faced narrative in the GDR, bringing to the surface a tension-filled relationship with the promotion of gender equality which gave women rights to decide family issues and to work.<sup>90</sup> Although Oelschlägel's films partially attempted to bring the emancipated role of women to the screen, these scarcely used scenes, most of them in the film *Partner* (1965), did not depart from traditional patterns of male courtship and leadership. The preservation of bourgeois gendered hierarchies in East Germany correlated with a belief in heterosexuality as the natural and biological norm. Based on this, Oelschlägel's films, although mostly concerned with young people's social behaviours in partnerships, nevertheless aimed at sex education as preparation for parenthood and supported the narrative of the male and female sex as designed for human reproduction. This focus, although not expressed with typical biological images, was indicated by the fact that parents were introduced as role models for the young generation.

To conclude, these examples have demonstrated that initiation of sex talks and approaches towards the other sex were presented in a space void of erotic and sexual tension, creating an atmosphere where unwanted feelings could be mediated and guided. Behind this was a concept of sexual risk that rested on the biological foundation of the male and female body. Sex education films in the 1960s presented forms of social behaviours that were linked to the procreative

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<sup>90</sup> Gender equality in the GDR was first established in the law 'Gesetz über den Mutter- und Kinderschutz und die Rechte der Frau' of 27 September 1950 with several times being revised until its dissolution in 1990.

capacities of gendered bodies, in the belief that if social roles were taught early enough, excessive sexual attitudes could be avoided. This regulative idea of pedagogues did not entail concessions to a young person's erotic feelings, fantasies and practices, but focused on guidance on avoiding sexual activity at the onset of puberty and sustaining young people as 'preliminary sexual beings' well into the period of puberty. Therefore, the forms of courtship exemplified in Oelschlägel's films of school children who were not sexually active had a corrective, and more importantly preventative meaning. All these examples of the gendered pubescent body are concerned with a demonstration of how to master emerging sexual and erotic feelings by the allocation of gender roles for the purpose of reproduction.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

Gender was a ubiquitous category in sex education films which traversed biological imaging and moral strategies. Sex education films were important tools in this respect as they taught the symbols and markers essential to making oneself a man or a woman and recognising these differences in social life. In the context of the FRG and the GDR gendered views in sex education films served to establish a heteronormative understanding of sexuality as an activity geared towards procreation. Sex education in both states, as has been demonstrated, was understood as the preparation for marriage.

With the example of the staging of male and female postures and the depiction of sperm cells it is demonstrated that men were presented as active and ruled by a pressuring sexuality. The social demand that the films directed towards men was to control their natural urges and their sexual drive. By contrast women were presented as passive and caring. Clearly the social role that was expected of women was that of mothers, carers and housewives. This however, was

complicated for the GDR as the state expected of women to be workers and officially declared gender equality.

Besides biological images, educational dialogues between parent and child conveyed gendered meanings. The fact that the mother was introduced as the universal dialogue partner for children of an early age, regardless of sex, alludes to her role as caretaker. At a later age dialogues about sexuality were assigned to a partner of the corresponding sex. The father was responsible for talking to the son whereas the mother was meant to deal with the daughter's questions. This contributed to solidifying gender roles.

Both sexes were taught limits when it came to interaction. In men, control and restraint were linked to the sexual drive, whereas in women responsible dealings with emotion and body was taught. In the GDR a contradictory and tense situation developed as state ideology projected gender equality and the image of working women, while at the same time clinging to the bourgeois idea of women as mothers and carers.

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## 6. Conclusion

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This thesis has investigated East and West German sex education films as biopolitical instruments during the period from 1945 to 1970. This period saw profound changes in attitudes towards sexuality and morality as well as an increased commercialisation of sexuality and the introduction of sex education in schools in both German states. Against this background of fast changing sexual cultures, political interest in providing clear moral guidance on sexual behaviour for future citizens increased. In an attempt to adjust to this shifting context, the emphasis in sex education for the young changed from VD and biological instruction in the late 1940s and 1950s, to more comprehensive guidance addressing individual sexual well-being during the 1960s. Sex education films played a central role in these developments. On the one hand, as popular culture, films facilitated the exploitation of sexuality by disseminating erotic images. On the other hand, they were used as an educational instrument, providing young people with moral guidance. Many pedagogues, filmmakers and policymakers perceived film as an effective medium for the guidance on sexual knowledge.

With regard to West Germany, Elizabeth Heinemann and Ulrich Herbert described these changes in (sexual) behaviours and politics as effects of 'learning liberalism' in a state that only recently had based its foundations on the principles of free market economy.<sup>1</sup> The perspective of 'learning liberalism', however, is unsuitable for a study of East and West German sex education films for mainly two reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert, 'Liberalisierung als Lernprozeß', pp. 7-49; Heinemann, *Before Porn*.

Firstly, because it is too vague a concept to explain the significance of the increase of moral templates for sexual self-control that sex education films offered to their young audiences. Sexual liberalisation envisages a continuous process of individual empowerment in resuming self-responsibility and making choices for the personal sexual well-being. However, the question remains to what extent individuals were, indeed, freed from social, cultural and political constraints. On the one hand, it is true that personal choice making, self-responsibility and the importance of the individual self-governance of the body became important values in the management of sexuality. On the other, when focussing on the effects of technologies of the self and cultural scripts for the self-governance of the body in sex education films, it becomes clear that sexual liberalisation rather meant to renegotiate than to overcome social, cultural and political norms. Secondly, Herbert and Heinemann's notion of 'learning liberalism' presumes a liberal-democratic order that guarantees basic individual rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of travel and freedom of self-determination. Yet, socialist East Germany does not accommodate such a perspective. If one follows the master narrative of the GDR as a politically restrictive regime and the FRG as politically liberal but sexually inhibited, then on the one hand, a liberal capitalist body emerges in the FRG that showed flexibility when faced with social changes as it was on the road of 'learning liberalism'. On the other, one needs to detect a socialist body subdued to a restrictive political regime lacking fundamental democratic rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of travel. In this narrative the GDR lagged behind West Germany, was unable to 'learn liberalism' and did not show the same level of flexibility in response to social changes. Challenging claims by Herbert and Heinemann who argued for such a process of liberalisation in West Germany, in my study I suggested to use biopolitics as an analytical framework instead, allowing the films to be assessed in their specific contributions to fast changing East and West German sexual politics. The

concept of biopolitics proved to be invaluable for two reasons. The first decisive feature of a biopolitical analysis is its dynamic character. The application of a biopolitical perspective allowed for the identification of shifting emphasis in sexual politics. Instead of conceiving of these shifts as obstacles or endpoints to prior conceptions about sexuality, a biopolitical perspective allowed to integrate these shifts into a differentiated picture of sexual politics. Thereby, I could explain how sex education discourse combined different, sometimes competing, sexual values at the same time. Secondly, it is flexible enough to enable a comparison between East and West German sex education films that transcends ideological and national borders. Hence, biopolitics provides a fruitful approach in order to understand sex education films as representations of sexual knowledge as well as tools to make (sexual) politics.

From a biopolitical standpoint, sex education films are valuable historical sources. They provide insight into normative concepts of what was deemed appropriate sexual conduct. In this regulatory capacity sex education films elucidate what were perceived as contemporary sexual problems. In addition, they reflect projections of what was imagined to be an ideal society. They instruct on remedying perceived shortcomings in sexual manners and applying sexual knowledge to attain broader goals of sexual politics. In this way, sex education films are biopolitical instruments.

Focusing on sex education films as a means of instruction as well as sexual politics, I have explored the values films aimed to instil in their audiences and the forms of body government they suggested. My comparative analysis has demonstrated that how East and West German films portrayed the role of the individual in governing his/her body scarcely differed. Hence, one cannot speak of a genuine West German process of sexual liberalisation during these decades.

Interpreting sex education films as biopolitical instruments, I perceive striking similarities in the way East and West German films portrayed the biological body and conveyed gender roles. Constructing the body as a medico-scientific object, these films contributed to a heteronormative and rational view of sexuality. Exemplified by films such as *Befruchtung und Furchung des Kanincheneies*, *Biologie der Fortpflanzung*, *Boy to Man*, *Der weibliche Zyklus*, *Girl to Woman* and *Schwangerschaft und Geburt*, filmic strategies employed to achieve this effect reached back to a genealogy of the entanglement of film and science. In their pedagogic translation, these films unfolded a rational perception of the body connected to scientific visual conventions. They aimed at convincing the audience of the evidence of the so-called facts of life and mediated a de-erotised and heteronormative version of the reproductive body which intertwined sexuality and reproduction.

As regards sexual politics all such factors were important for a policy of fertility that sought to strengthen East and West Germany's populace. This was an important factor in the competition between the East and West during the Cold War. Rationality and scientificity contributed to this purpose. East and West German films shared a common tradition and belief in rationality as a normative concept of (modern) welfare states.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to a body based on morally constricted knowledge, the body that emerged from these films was validated by scientific authority and value free biology. This new value system was hardly ever questioned, allowing some films to survive over subsequent decades. The 1990s remakes of *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman* relied on the same biological narration and, in parts, used exactly the same images of their 1960s predecessors. Both remakes are still in circulation in Germany today.

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<sup>2</sup> Dickinson, 'Biopolitics', pp. 1-48.

Similarities between East and West German sex education films continue with pedagogues and policymakers in both systems seeking to adapt to changing emphasis in sexual politics. Wider and easier access to contraceptives and less restrictive abortion laws are just two examples demonstrating that the reproductive realm became integrated into the private sphere. Consequently, during the 1960s, private but informed choice and individual responsibility became crucial values in sex education. As West Germany's *Helga* and East Germany's *Partner* exemplified, it was a focus on body management that was characteristic for the shifting emphasis in sex education rather than changes in film content. Both films emphasised choice as an important factor in the decisions protagonists made. However, the way *Partner* and *Helga* staged the moral values upon which these choices were made differed significantly. *Helga* resorted to rational and biological strategies to resolve moral issues. To avoid any accusations of moral indoctrination, *Helga* resorted to a biological knowledge that appeared to be value free and thus served as legitimation for the intrusion into the private sphere. The film introduced its female protagonist as an eager executor of expert knowledge while taking care of herself during pregnancy. The underlying aim was to promote biological essentials that helped to guide young people through their encounters with sexuality. By contrast, the East German film *Partner* focused on socialist idealism. The protagonists' privacy became intermingled with socialist moral codes that were deemed necessary for a successful and happy life. A biopolitical view of both films show that while the trajectories for private choices differed, individual responsibility and informed choice characterised the administration of sexual knowledge in both states.

When taken together, the different layers of body knowledge and visual presentation constitute comprehensive and diversified body images. Could these be labelled as socialist and capitalist sexual bodies? I do not think so. An

analysis of the gendered body as a multi-layered entity which included biological and moral knowledge shows that the resulting bodies were too inconsistent and contradictory to allow them to be labelled as either socialist or capitalist. In the GDR, gender equality was a decisive factor in the self-understanding of a socialist society. However, in the FRG gender equality was enshrined in law, and, during the 1950s and 1960s, policymakers adhered to traditional gender roles, perceiving women as mothers and carers and men as breadwinners. Yet, the way East and West German sex education films taught seeing and doing gender revealed a firm attachment to heteronormative values backed up by biological “facts”. Looking for gender roles in sex education films, therefore, opens a contradictory field between social realities, political ideas and popular sentiments. In these films, gendered bodies were fluid entities that embodied the concurrency of traditional norms and political visions in sexual politics, and traditional gender roles were used to stabilise heterosexual dichotomies.

By reassembling these separate strands into one body it becomes clear that the events in the 1960s that have been labelled a sexual revolution, sex-wave, *Wendezeit* (turning point) or liberal interlude, were not a decisive fissure but traversed by old and new concepts. If there is a change to be discerned, I see it in methods that envisioned a sexuality managed by individuals in a self-responsible manner. Heteronormative concepts of sexuality were persistently used alongside rational biological images and templates for techniques of self-control designed to cope with a changing socio-sexual environment. In correspondence with theories of biopolitics, the events of the 1960s thus represent an ongoing, evolutionary process rather than a break. Therefore, I interpret the sexual politics of East and West Germany during the 1960s as adjustment policies that did not readjust and renegotiate sexuality in an all-encompassing sense, but rather pointed to the persistence of some aspects in

the dealings with sexuality. This dynamic was valid for East and West Germany although it entailed differences between the states.

The analysis of sex education films from the vantage point of biopolitics laid open multifaceted processes in the construction of normative body images. Biopolitics as a research perspective proved invaluable for the thesis, allowing to analyse and understand East and West German sex education films without referring to the notion of 'sexual liberalisation'.

The picture I have drawn in this comparative study of East and West German sex education films can be seen as a starting point for further studies. With better access to films and contextual material, a biopolitical approach can diversify and amplify the picture of how East and West German youth were imagined to manage their sexual lives. Moreover, such an approach, as I have indicated by the inclusions of a few international titles such as the US films *Boy to Man* and *Girl to Woman*, both distributed in West Germany, anticipates the potential of a biopolitical analysis of films not only from a comparative but also from a transnational perspective. In addition, the application of a biopolitical understanding on sex education films of a different period of time bears the potential for diversifying twentieth-century historiography of sexuality.

In this thesis, however, I maintain that a biopolitical analysis of sex education films can bring new insights into the current historiography on the history of East and West German sexuality and deepen our understanding of the diverse facets of two ideologically and politically different countries.

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### ***Internet Resources***

<http://www.defa-stiftung.de/filme> (DEFA Stiftung, Berlin)

<http://dbbm.fwu.de> (FWU media database)

<http://www.filmarchives-online.eu/> (MIDAS, Moving Image Database for Access and Re-use of European Film Collections, film database with a focus on non-fictional films)

<http://www.filmportal.de> (Deutsches Filminstitut - DIF e.V, database on German film)

<http://www.imdb.com> (International Movie Database)

Medienliste Sexualerziehung (media list of sex education material), Landesinstitut für Schule, Zentrum für Medienverleih Bremen, online:

<http://www.lis.bremen.de/sixcms/media.php/13/Sexualerziehung.pdf> (last accessed December 2012).

[http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/LWL-LMZ/Film\\_Tonarchiv/NRW\\_Schulmedienarchiv](http://www.lwl.org/LWL/Kultur/LWL-LMZ/Film_Tonarchiv/NRW_Schulmedienarchiv) (Schulmedienarchiv Westfalen)

<http://www.nibis.de/nli1/verleih/index.html> (Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung, Mediensammlung)

## Filmography

*Anhalter Bahnhof* (1952/53, West Germany)

Directed by Walter Wittke, produced by Walter Wittke (Hamburg), Alster Industrie

*Augen auf, Peter!* (before 1968, West Germany)

Directed by Herbert M. Franck, produced by Franck Film Produktion

\**Befruchtung und Furchung eines Kanincheneies* (1936, Germany)

Produced by Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm (RfdU)  
(Senatsverwaltung Berlin)

*Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen*, 4 parts (1963-65, East Germany)

Directed by Götz Oelschlägel, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films

\*Part 1: *Sagst du's dem Kinde: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 1* (1963)

\*Part 2: *... weil ich kein Kind mehr bin...: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 2* (1963)

\*Part 3: *Partner: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 3* (1964)

\*Part 4: *Keine Scheu vor heiklen Fragen: Beziehungen zwischen Jungen und Mädchen 4* (1965)

(Progress-Filmverleih)

*Biologie der Fortpflanzung*, 3 parts (1961-1963, East Germany)

Directed by Fritz Dick, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films (Senatsverwaltung Berlin)

\*Part 1: *Anatomie und Physiologie des menschlichen Geschlechtesystems: Biologie der Fortpflanzung 1* (1963/64)

Part 2: *Befruchtungsvorgang und Einbettung des Keimes: Biologie der Fortpflanzung 2* (1962/63)

Part 3: *Vorgeburtliche Entwicklung und Geburt: Biologie der Fortpflanzung 3* (1963)

*Das Größte aller Wunder* (1956/57, West Germany)

Directed by Gerhard A. Donner, produced by Domo Film-KG (München)

*Das Wesen und die Gefahren der Geschlechtskrankheiten* (1920, Germany)

Directed by Leo von Zumbusch, produced by Neue Kinomatographische GmbH (Munich)

*Denk bloss nicht, ich heule* (1965, East Germany)

(English: Just Don't Think I'll Cry)

Directed by Frank Vogel, produced by the DEFA film studio on feature films

*Der Mann mit den Bonbons* (1967, West Germany)

Directed by Mario Reinhardt, produced by Mario Reinhardt Produktion

\**Der weibliche Zyklus* (1963, West Germany)

Produced by FWU (Institut für Film in Wissenschaft und Unterricht)  
(Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv)

*Die natürliche Ernährung des Säuglings* (1963, West Germany)

Produced by FWU (Munich), Filmstudio Berlin

*Die Entstehung menschlichen Lebens*

*Erste Begegnung* (1956, West Germany)

Directed by Ernst Niederreither, produced by FWU and Ernst Niederreither  
Audax

*...erwachsen sein dagegen sehr* (1956, West Germany)

Directed by Wolf Hart, produced by Wolf Hart Film (Hamburg)

*Falsche Scham* (1925/26, Germany)

Directed by Rudolf Biebrach, produced by UFA Kulturabteilung in Berlin

*Feind im Blut* (1931, Germany, Switzerland)

Directed by Walter Ruttmann, produced by Praesens-Film in Berlin and Zurich

*Fleckfieber droht* (1946, Germany)

Directed by Hans Cürlis

*Frühhehen* (1966, West Germany)

Produced by FWU, Schongerfilm Hubert Schonger (Inning am Ammersee)

*Geschlechtskrankheiten und ihre Folgen* (1919/1920, Germany)

Directed by Curt Thomalla, produced by UFA Kulturabteilung (Berlin)

*Geschlechtskrankheiten und ihre Bekämpfung* (1923/24, Germany)

Directed by Hans Schulze, produced by Deulig Film AG (Berlin)

*Gesicht von der Stange* (1960/61, West Germany)

Directed by Raimond Ruehl, produced by Artfilm Graf Lennart Bernadotte & Co.  
(Munich); Graf Lennart Bernadotte

*Girl* (1969)

Produced by Mathias Film

*Growing Up: A New Approach to Sex Education* (1971, UK)

Directed by Martin Cole, produced by Global Films, Arnold Louis Miller; in  
association with the Institute for Sex Education and Research

*\*Helga: Vom Werden menschlichen Lebens* (1967, West Germany)

(Alternative titles for school release in two parts: *er-sie-es* (part 1), *Wir wollen es* (part 2))

Directed by Erich F. Bender, produced by Rinco-Film (Munich)

Commissioned by the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung  
(BZgA)

*Hütet Eure Töchter! Ein dokumentarischer Spielfilm in sieben Fällen* (1962-63, West Germany)

Directed by Michael Blackwood, Wolf Hart, Eberhard Hauff, Rob Houwer, Karl Schedereit, Franz-Josef Spieker; produced by Walter Kruettner, Walter Koppel; production company Cineropa-Filmproduktion Walter Kruettner on behalf of Real Film KG (Hamburg)

*Jungen in den Flegeljahren* (1955/56, West Germany)

Directed by Rudolf Werner Kipp, produced by R. K. F. Filmproduktion (Hamburg)

*Kernteilung (Mitose)* (1965, West Germany)

Produced by FWU and Rudolf Stölting (Munich)

*Keine Angst vor der Geburt* (1963, West Germany)

Distributed by Deutsches Gesundheitsmuseum, Cologne-Merheim, and the Landesfilmdienst Hessen

*Kinder als Zeugen* (1953, West Germany)

Directed by Walter Wittke, produced by Walter Wittke Alster Film (Hamburg)

*Phoebe* (1966, Canada)

Directed by Norman Taylor, produced by the National Film Board of Canada  
Translated and distributed in West Germany

*Pubertät bei Jungen* (1966, West Germany)

Produced by FWU and the animation studio (Trickatelier) Brunsch (West Berlin)

*Nicht allein sein* (1960, West Germany)

Directed by Karl Schedereit, produced by GKS-Film Karl Schedereit (Munich, Backnang/Württemberg)

*Oswalt Kolle: Das Wunder der Liebe* (1967/68, West Germany)

Directed by Franz Josef Gottlieb, produced by Oswalt Kolle, Arca-Winston Films Corporation GmbH & Co. KG (Berlin) (certified age 18)

*Reifeteilung (Meiose)* (1965, West Germany)

Produced by FWU and Rudolf Stölting (Munich)

*Schleichendes Gift* (1946, Austria)

Directed by Herrmann Wallbrück, produced by Standard-Steurer Filmproduktion

*Schüchternheit* (1953, West Germany)

Edited by FWU

*Schulmädchen Report: Was Eltern nicht für möglich halten* (1970, West Germany)

Directed by Ernst Hofbauer, produced by Wolf C. Hartwig

In the UK the film was released under the title *Confessions of a Sixth Form Girl*

\**Schwangerschaft und Geburt* (1965, West Germany)

Produced and commissioned by FWU

(Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv)

*Seuchengefahr* (1946, Soviet Military Zone, Germany)

Directed by Hans Cürdis, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films

*Station IV* (1948, Soviet Military Zone, Germany)

Directed by Richard Groschopp

*Straßenbekanntschaft* (1948, East Germany)

Directed by Peter Pewas, produced by DEFA film studio on feature films on behalf of the *Zentralverwaltung für Gesundheitswesen*

*The Story of Menstruation* (1946, USA)

Written by J. Spurlin, produced by Walt Disney Productions, International Cellucotton Company (through the courtesy of) (as Kotex Products)

*Unsere Straße* (1951, Our Street)

Directed by Karl Koch and produced by FWU

\**Vom Jungen zum Mann* (1961, USA)

(original title: Boy to Man)

Directed by Robert B. Churchill, produced by Churchill Wexler Film Production, German synchronisation by H.G. Zeiss Film on behalf of the Konferenz der Landesfilmdienste

(Landesfilmdienst Nordrhein-Westfalen)

\**Vom Jungen zum Mann* (remake, 1992, USA)

Directed by Melissa Jo Peltier, produced by Churchill Film Production, Renee A. Bishop; Synchronised for the use in Germany

(Medienforum Berlin, Senatsverwaltung)

\**Vom Mädchen zur Frau* (1964, USA)

(original title: Girl to Woman)

Directed by Robert B. Churchill, produced by Churchill Wexler Film Production, German synchronisation by H.G. Zeiss Film on behalf of the Konferenz der Landesfilmdienste

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\**Vom Mädchen zur Frau* (remake, 1992) USA)

Directed by Melissa Jo Peltier, produced by Churchill Film Production, Renee A. Bishop; Synchronised for the use in Germany

(Medienforum Berlin, Senatsverwaltung)

*Wunder der Menschwerdung* (1948, USA)

produced by McGraw Hill

*Zyklus der Frau, Teil 1, 2* (1954)

Directed by Fritz Dick, produced by the DEFA film studio on popular-scientific films, section medical film, distributed by the *Deutsches Institut für Film, Bild und Ton in Lehre und Forschung*

*\*Film titles indicated above with an asterisk have been screened for film analysis.*