

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN  
Lehrstuhl Für Geschichte der Technik  
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ulrich Wengenroth

Under the Sign of the Body:  
Technology, Commodification and Embodied Consciousness  
in Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Germany

Gwen Lisette Bingle

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Vorsitzende: Univ.-Prof. Jutta Roosen, Ph. D.

Prüfer der Dissertation:

1. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ulrich Wengenroth
2. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Karin Zachmann

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## **Abstracts**

### **English**

This study explores the hype surrounding the healthy lifestyle technologies most prominently pushed by the fitness and wellness ideologies. The framework of my investigation is (West-)Germany during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From a theoretical perspective, I show how the convergence between a broader understanding and increasing pervasiveness of technology, the increasing commodification of the sensuous and emotional realms as well as the revival (and redefinition) of the body as a holistic entity has paved the way for a new ethos of beautiful well-being. Methodologically, an analysis of the media discourse on food and cosmetics enables me to concretely demonstrate how a new form of internalised lifestyle discrimination has been historically negotiated in the German context.

### **German**

Diese Arbeit untersucht den Hype um die "healthy lifestyle technologies", die vor allem von Fitness- und Wellnessideologien propagiert werden. Der Untersuchungsrahmen ist (West-)Deutschland in den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts. Aus einer theoretischen Perspektive zeige ich, wie die Konvergenz eines weiteren Verständnisses und der Allgegenwart von Technik, der wachsenden Kommodifizierung sinnlicher und emotionaler Welten wie auch die Wiederbelebung (und Neudefinition) des Körpers als holistische Einheit den Weg zu einem neuen Ethos des Wohlbefindens in Schönheit bahnte. Methodisch erlaubt mir eine Analyse des Mediendiskurses zu Nahrung und Kosmetik konkret aufzuzeigen, wie sich eine neue internalisierte Zuspitzung der Lebensstildiskriminierung akzeptierten Lebensstile im deutschen Kontext herausgebildet hat.

*En souvenir de Jeanne Raeber  
[1917-2012]*

*Croire n'est plus croire en un autre monde, ni en un monde transformé. C'est seulement croire au corps, c'est rendre le discours au corps, et, pour cela, atteindre le corps avant le discours, avant les mots.*

Gilles Deleuze<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze, Gilles, *L'image-temps. Cinéma 2*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1985, p. 225: "*Believing is no longer believing in another world, in a transformed world. It is only believing in the body, it is giving discourse back to the body and therefore, attaining the body before discourse, before words.*" **Unless otherwise stated, all quotation translations in this study are mine.**

## FOREWORD

Over 11 years is a very long time to spend working on a dissertation, even if in my case it was often by fits and snatches framed by other existential imperatives...

In many respects, it is far too long: the initial impetus and purposefulness tend to dissolve, findings require regular updating, other people's research catches up or even overtakes one and the belief, patience and goodwill of all the kind individuals involved in the project is taxed to the limit.

It does offer some advantages though. Beyond a certain gain in expertise and wisdom garnered over the years, my intuition that the fitness and wellness craze was there to remain with us for a while has been confirmed. This is the intellectual aspect that probably sustained me in the often arduous completion of this study.

But more than anything it is the people involved in my project who have carried me through. Thus I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to:

-Ulrich Wengenroth, my supervisor. He took the risk of hiring an academic "mestiza", sparked my "history of technology" flame and –last but not least– believed in and supported me against all odds.

-My former colleagues at the "Fachgebiet Technikgeschichte" (the erstwhile "Zentralinstitut für Geschichte der Technik") of the Technische Universität München –most prominently Martina Blum, Andrea Spiegel, Heike Weber and Karin Zachmann. They welcomed me into the German academic world and nurtured me intellectually while providing priceless administrative and emotional support.

-The colleagues involved in the DFG research group "Wechselwirkungen zwischen Naturwissenschaft und Technik" at the Deutsches Museum. They gently forced me to define, clarify and justify my project in the framework of our very heterogeneous multidisciplinary group.

-The early members of the ESF-"Tensions of Europe" consumption network –most notably Mika Pantzar, Elizabeth Shove and Thomas Brandt. Their expertise and exciting insights in the consumption field opened up a whole new vista for me.

-The staff and students of the "History and Sociology of Science" department at the University of Pennsylvania, where I was privileged to spend 3 months as a visiting scholar in the autumn of 2003 – especially Ruth Schwartz-Cowan and Corinna Schlombs. They warmly welcomed me into their close-knit and very stimulating intellectual community.

-John Staudenmaier and the many attendees of the Annual "Society for the History of Science and Technology" conferences I attended over the years. In this context, a special mention goes to the staff and attendees of the SHOT Summer Writing and Publication Workshop in Cape Cod (MA) in 2004. They asked the right questions, pointed me to overlooked (re)sources, mentored me and provided countless shining examples of a rich and thorough American scholarship.

-My friends here and abroad. They shared the intellectual excitement, tided me over very troubled waters while affectionately goading me by repeatedly reminding me that "yes, you can do it!".

-And, last but certainly not least, my family. They have borne up with me and my eccentricities for so long... And yet, they have loved me, tolerated my patchwork life and provided countless hours of emotional and logistical support. Bless them!

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

### MAPPING THE HEALTHFUL PLANET

*Une métamorphose en définitive s'est produite, discrète et pourtant décisive: le corps "embelli" n'est plus seulement soumis aux soins du visage, ou aux mouvements physiques génériques, ou encore aux bains aminçissants, il est soumis à des applications correctives précises, à des massages, à des interventions topologiques variées. L'idéal premier est devenu celui d'un projet global, une promesse servie par la technique et l'instrumentation: celle d'une action sur soi.<sup>2</sup>*

Georges Vigarello

Over the last couple of decades, purchasing healthy lifestyle technologies in Germany has become an increasingly baffling pursuit. In the 1950s, shoppers could soundly base their rationales on straightforward functional claims, buttressed by "rock-solid" scientific expertise, as illustrated in an ad for *Edina*, a radioactive face-mask: *"\*natural, harmless skin rejuvenation \*for every skin type and every age \*breathtaking success even after the first application \*tested by scientific authorities and assessed as 'absolutely outstanding'".<sup>3</sup>* Nowadays however, the proliferation of health and beauty-related goods and services means that consumers are faced with choosing from a huge array of products –products that are mediated by an equally vast chorus of mainly self-proclaimed (hence often contradictory) experts. Grabbing a fitness bar between work and a hectic routine at the local gym means that one has to plan at least an extra five minutes to consider the comparative advantages of L-carnitine<sup>4</sup> or omega-3 fatty acids<sup>5</sup>. Even choosing between bath salts and a shower gel amounts to a quasi-spiritual conundrum since it appears to be a trade-off between a ravishingly transcendental experience:

Bathing with Kneipp Wellness bath salts is a bit like relaxing near the seaside. Pure salt crystals combined with highly aromatic essential oils and natural skin-toning oils in a dream-like symphony provide a unique bathing experience. Enjoy the magic fragrance that enhances well-being and harmony and experience how precious jojoba oil endows your skin with a silky smooth gloss, with softness and comfort. This is how bathing becomes a holistic wellness experience for body, mind and soul.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Vigarello, Georges, *Histoire de la beauté: Le corps et l'art d'embellir de la Renaissance à nos jours*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004, pp. 176-177 : *"Ultimately, a discreet but decisive metamorphosis has taken place: the "beautified" body is not only submitted to face care or generic physical movements or even slimming baths, it is submitted to precise corrective applications, to massages, to diverse topological interventions. The primary ideal is that of a global project, a promise upheld by technology and instrumentation: that of an action on the self."*

<sup>3</sup> Ad for Beier's *Edina* radioactive face mask (*Figaro Magazine*, 2/1951, p. 41): *"\*natürliche, unschädliche Hautverjüngung. \*für jede Haut, jedes Alter geeignet. \*auffallender Erfolg schon nach dem ersten Gebrauch. \*Von Autoritäten der Wissenschaft erprobt und „ganz hervorragend gut“ beurteilt."*

<sup>4</sup> Amino-acids that supports muscle-building. Cf. e.g. Molecule of the month, University of Bristol: <http://www.chm.bris.ac.uk/motm/carnitine/Carnitine.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>5</sup> Fatty acids that foster the smooth functioning of coronary processes. Cf. e.g. DHA•EPA Omega-3 Institute: <http://www.dhaomega3.org/Overview/Introduction-to-Omega-3> [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>6</sup> Caption found on a pack of Kneipp's Wellness Bath Salts Relax Care [in 2002]: *"Baden mit KNEIPP Wellness Badesalz Relax Care ist ein bisschen wie Erholung am Meer. Reine Salzkristalle in einer traumhaften Symphonie mit hocharomatischen, ätherischen Ölen und hautaktiven, natürlichen Pflegeölen verschaffen ein einzigartiges Baderlebnis. Geniessen Sie den bezaubernden Duft für Wohlbefinden und Harmonie und erleben Sie, wie*

and a more understated manifestation of enlightenment:

Palmolive Aromatherapy Anti-Stress contains essential oils of ylang-ylang, lavender and patchouli. It helps your skin stay soft and smooth whilst its relaxing fragrance immerses you in an aura of tranquillity and peace.<sup>7</sup>

What then has happened to German consumers along the way? Have they all forsaken discriminating “Protestant” rationality for a softly passive “Buddhist” path? Or are they simply the bewildered victims of crafty marketing gurus?

These bars and toiletries are but two emblematic examples of the type of “fitness & wellness” products that compete for the attention of health-conscious German shoppers. They are emblematic in the sense that they mark a significant shift in the type of products that are perceived as health- or appearance-enhancing. Fitness bars do not just provide a raw supply of carbohydrates to keep active individuals going before they can afford the luxury of a more leisurely meal. Similarly, salts or shower gel are no longer reduced to functional claims about cleaning, purifying, softening or deodorizing the skin, but are explicitly designed to trigger the *experience* of health and well-being. Moreover, they illustrate the extent to which experience is supposedly fostered: healthy feeling skin is no longer enough, since acting upon the skin is envisioned as impacting a holistic entity. The sensuous effect of skin-toning and essential oils penetrates way beyond the outer shell of the body to reach the emotions and even the soul...

If these examples appear somewhat far-fetched, they do illustrate what a perilous exercise it has become to precisely delineate the effect of “health & beauty” products on the body. Indeed these products are designed to appeal to subjective perception and experience and they are commonly inscribed in the “fitness” or “wellness” constellations. Without anticipating too much on the historical contextualisation of these ideologies,<sup>8</sup> the following remarks provide a cursory overview of their trajectories. Fitness is rooted in post-war preventive medicine trends but was only truly popularised in the 1970s in the U.S. and in the late 70s-early 80s in Germany. Its central pillars are regular cardio-vascular exercise and a healthy (i.e. low fat & low sugar) diet to counter the ills of a sedentary lifestyle. The emphasis here is on bodily control and performance. Wellness is also rooted in a post-war preventive health ethic but its popular dissemination was slower than that of fitness –the late 70s in the U.S. and the early 90s in Germany. It preaches a more holistic approach to body care than fitness to compensate for the wear and tear of everyday life. By including environmental, emotional and even spiritual components, wellness explicitly recognises that mind and body are mutually influential and that the boundaries between them are fluid. Harmony and pleasure thus become central tenets in the pursuit of mind-body health. Such a holistic understanding of health expands its definition well beyond either an absence of disease or injury or the attainment of an optimal level of metabolic functioning, based on

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*wertvolles Jojobaöl Ihrer Haut einen samtigeidigen Glanz, Geschmeidigkeit und ein wohliges Hautgefühl verleiht. So wird das Baden zum ganzheitlichen Wellness-Erlebnis für Körper, Geist und Seele.“*

<sup>7</sup> Caption found on a bottle of Palmolive Aromatherapy Anti-Stress Shower Gel [in 2002]: “Palmolive Aromatherapy Anti-Stress enthält ätherische Öle von Ylang-Ylang, Lavendel & Patchouli. Es hilft Ihre Haut besonders zart und geschmeidig zu pflegen, während sein entspannender Duft Sie mit einer Aura von Ruhe und Frieden umhüllt.“

<sup>8</sup> These are broached in Chapter 4 (History).

medically negotiated mean values that have become enshrined as norms. Indeed, already in the late 1940s, the World Health Organisation (WHO), defined health as “*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*”<sup>9</sup> Equating health with physical, mental and social well-being thus goes (well!) beyond optimal metabolic functioning and explicitly acknowledges an eminently subjective dimension, since stating that one feels well is ultimately the province of the individual rather than that of an external medical authority.<sup>10</sup>

Over time, by going beyond or even escaping medical oversight, both fitness and wellness have engendered a phenomenal commercial interest, translated into a huge array of often overlapping, supposedly health-enhancing technologies. This state of affairs has not only blurred the potential effects of these technologies but also their ideological affiliation. In a discussion on the success of “healthism”<sup>11</sup> (which does not explicitly refer to either fitness or wellness), the editors of *The Sociology of Health Promotion* perceive a marked historical shift in the perception of health-enhancing products:

In the 1960s a list of ‘health-related’ commodities would have included items such as aspirins, TCP, Dettol and plasters. Today, however, it would include: food and drink; myriad health promoting pills; private health; alternative medicine; exercise machines and videos; health insurance; membership of sport and health clubs; walking boots; running shoes; cosmetic surgery; shampoo (for ‘healthy looking hair’); sun oil; psychoanalysis; shell suits; and so on. The list is seemingly endless.<sup>12</sup>

This impressive dilation of the health constellation is linked to what Mike Featherstone referred to as “transvaluation” when analysing the multiple benefits of jogging:

Like slimming, jogging provides further insight into the transvaluation of use within consumer culture: everything has to be good for something else and the range of alleged benefits multiplies endlessly. Apart from reducing the chance for coronary heart disease, it is claimed jogging helps to cure impotency, increase confidence, psychological well-being, and puts ‘you in control of your body’. Jogging has also been claimed to result in prolonged cosmetic benefits – improving posture, reducing stomach sag, helping to burn off excessive fat.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948. Available online: <http://www.who.int/suggestions/faq/en/index.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>10</sup> This aspect leads to a difficult conundrum when discussing the “right to health” as investigated by Greco, Monica, “The politics of indeterminacy and the right to health”, *Theory, Culture & Society*. 21 (6), 2004, pp 1-22. Greco makes the point that the right to health is a very controversial right within the human rights framework because “health” as a notion is difficult to pin down. Indeed, even if there are a series of normative biomedical measures indicating “normalcy”, health is also a very subjectively experienced state, which means that biomedical policies and providing optimal “conditions” for health are only one aspect of working towards the “right to health”.

<sup>11</sup> For a good critical discussion of healthism, cf. Skrabanek, Petr, *The Death of Human Medicine and the Rise of Coercive Healthism*, Bury St Edmunds: St Edmundsbury Press Ltd, 1994. Also available online here: <http://bradtaylor.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/death-of-humane-medicine.pdf>. [website accessed Nov. 2011]

<sup>12</sup> *The sociology of health promotion : critical analyses of consumption, lifestyle and risk*, Eds Robin Bunton, Sarah Nettleton, and Roger Burrows, London & New York: Routledge, 1995, pp. 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Featherstone, Mike, “The Body in Consumer Culture” in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, Eds Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner, London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage, 1991, pp. 185-186.

Indeed, one could say that in late modernity,<sup>14</sup> most body-related practices or experiences have become “holisticised”. Thus, health –or more comprehensively well-being– no longer spells a form of passive freedom from physiological complaints that can be swiftly and mechanically “fixed” by using the appropriate (para-)medical technologies. Rather, health is a state that can, indeed *must* be actively pursued in virtually all the realms of everyday life. And it is inextricably linked to an economy that has commodified almost all the aspects of well-being: from the table to the bathroom, from the supermarket to the pharmacy or sports outlet, from leisure to soul care, and from insurance coverage to intrusive medical practices:

Commodities have been ‘transvalued’ in two directions. First, some have been subject to a process whereby their original use value has been transformed into one increasingly articulated in terms of ‘health’ (for example, the ‘greening’ of household cleaning products, the shift from decorative to health-enhancing cosmetics and various forms of leisure). Second, and perhaps more significantly, some have been ‘transvalued’ in the opposite direction, in that their original health use value has been transformed to take on a much wider social and cultural meaning (for example, running shoes, shell suits and body building).<sup>15</sup>

The transvaluation process thereby implies that health, fitness or wellness have not only become lucrative labels to market a range of loosely affiliated products and experiences but that many of these have become cultural icons. Sports gear is a particularly good example of this phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> Purchasing a pair of signature Air Jordan basketball trainers may not guarantee the average teenager any improvement in terms of health or physical performance.<sup>17</sup> But the aesthetic glamour embodied by the trainers may well reinforce self-confidence, peer group integration and provide a tangible trigger for emotions, dreams and fantasy –in sum contribute to a positive sense of (projected) identity. The same applies to a myriad of other products, from exclusive health supplements to Callanetics<sup>18</sup> videos or

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<sup>14</sup> In this study, I refer to “late modernity” as a continuation of (and not a complete rupture with) modernity, in the sense most prominently discussed by sociologists Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash. Cf. e.g. Beck, Ulrich, Giddens, Anthony and Lash, Scott, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. Another arresting way of conceptualising this period is that of Zygmunt Bauman’s transition from “solid” to “liquid modernity”: “a condition in which social forms (structures that limit individual choices, institutions that guard repetitions of routines, patterns of acceptable behaviour) can no longer (and are not expected) to keep their shape for long, because they decompose and melt faster than the time it takes to cast them, and once they are cast for them to set.” Cf. Bauman, Zygmunt, *Liquid Times: living in an age of uncertainty*, Cambridge & Malden (MA): Polity Press, 2007, p. 1. This slow disintegration or liquefaction of prior structures has significant consequences for both societies (especially in their nation-state incarnations) and individuals who are confronted with the increasing impossibility of long-term planning and endeavours but paradoxically have to bear the brunt of their “free” choices. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 1-4. Cf. also Chapter 3 (*Theory*).

<sup>15</sup> *The sociology of health promotion : critical analyses of consumption, lifestyle and risk*, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. Sassatelli, Roberta, *Fitness culture: gyms and the commercialisation of discipline and fun*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 6: “Furthermore, fitness culture can be said to be much broader than the people who actually and regularly train, as the growing market for sportswear clearly witnesses; indeed fitness outfits are not only increasingly sold to the fitness fan, they are also bought by casual consumers and have long influenced other types of clothes.”

<sup>17</sup> The Air Jordan line was launched by Nike in 1985 in collaboration with star basketball player Michael Jordan (Cf. [http://www.nikebiz.com/company\\_overview/history/1980s.html](http://www.nikebiz.com/company_overview/history/1980s.html)). For more on the history of the Jordan brand. Cf.: <http://www.nike.com/jumpman23/historyofflight/>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>18</sup> Callanetics is a non-cardio, low-impact, but in-depth workout developed by an American woman, Callan Pinckney, in the 1980s to tone and “sculpt” the body. She originally developed it to counter the effects of her

Pilates<sup>19</sup> equipment. Superficially considered, they may seem to state a healthy intent. But depending on the consumer subjectivity at stake, they might say a lot more about (good) taste, social belonging, purchasing power, etc. Just as in other realms of consumption, the sign often overrides the material function of the good.

The transvaluation of health has thus also led to what one could call an aestheticisation of health or conversely a healthicisation of aesthetics.<sup>20</sup> Concretely, this means that, to a large extent, health and appearance have become synonymous: a beautiful body is necessarily healthy and vice versa.<sup>21</sup> However, the potentially fascist *weltanschauung* entailed in the health-appearance equation is undermined –or rather subtly diluted– by transforming the

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own back and knee problems but the method was soon marketed extensively (through books and videos) as a fitness/beauty routine than enjoyed soaring popularity well into the late 1990s. Cf. <http://www.callanetics.com/about.php> and <http://www.callanetics.com/method.php>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>19</sup>Pilates can be described as a series of low-impact exercises inspired by gymnastics, dance and rehabilitation, performed with the help of various appliances, many of them invented or improved upon by a German man, named Joseph Hubertus Pilates [1880-1967]. His story classically begins as that of a frail unhealthy child, who managed to improve his condition through the practice of many sports, gymnastics and body-building. He started to develop his own method as a detainee in Britain during WWI, strongly emphasising the rehabilitation of his co-detainees. During a subsequent stint in Germany, he worked in close collaboration with the dance community before emigrating to the U.S. in 1926 and opening a fitness studio in NYC. A number of mainly dancer-pupils then opened their own studios in the 50s, 60s and 70s. But it was only when the clientele broadened to include Hollywood stars in the late 80s that the popularity of the method soared like never before and began to appeal to a broad range of the American population before re-conquering Europe. Cf. Pilates, Joseph, *Your health: a corrective system of exercising that revolutionizes the entire field of physical education*, Ashland OR: Presentation Dynamics, 1998 [originally published in 1934] or Pilates, Joseph, Miller, William, *Return to life through contrology*, Ashland OR: Presentation Dynamics, 2008 [originally published in 1945]. For more general information cf. e.g. Thompson, Bruce, "Biography of Joseph Hubertus Pilates (1880-1967)", online: [http://www.easyvigour.net.nz/pilates/h\\_biography.htm](http://www.easyvigour.net.nz/pilates/h_biography.htm). For a more critical view: Siff, Mel C., "Pilates Revealed", online article: [http://www.sportsci.com/SPORTSCI/JANUARY/pilates\\_revealed.htm](http://www.sportsci.com/SPORTSCI/JANUARY/pilates_revealed.htm). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>20</sup> After mentioning the shift from a culture of character to a culture of personality (based on Susman, 1979), Jennifer Maguire states that: "*The two motivations of health- and appearance-improvement are mutually reinforcing engines for the field of fitness. Improving one's health and appearance has become an obligation, linked to an ideology of individual responsibility as well as a logic of status display in promotional culture.*" She then links the rise of a promotional subjectivity to the transition to a service economy before concluding that: "*This change in the organization of the economy and work, from creating things to creating interactions and images, involves a shift in productive capacities. For service jobs, appearance and attitude are necessary skills, which – like any capacity – must be produced through training and discipline (Foucault 1977).*" Cf. Maguire, Jennifer, *Fit for consumption: sociology and the business of fitness*, Oxford & New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 51-52. Maguire even sees form as eclipsing function since, from a promotional perspective, the appearance of health is increasingly more important than actual health. Cf. *ibid.*, pp 194-195.

<sup>21</sup> Mike Featherstone distinguishes between the inner body ("*the concern with the health and optimum functioning of the body which demands maintenance and repair in the face of disease*") and the outer body ("*appearance as well as the movement and control of the body within social space*"), concluding that: "*Within consumer culture, the inner and outer body became conjoined: the prime purpose of the maintenance of the inner body becomes the enhancement of the appearance of the outer body.*" Cf. Featherstone, Mike, "The Body in Consumer Culture", *Theory, Culture & Society*, September 1982, Vol. 1 no. 2, pp. 18-33, p. 18. Baudrillard articulates both health and beauty as functions of the logic of prestige display: "*Health today is not so much a biological imperative linked to survival as a social imperative linked to status. It is not so much a basic 'value' as a form of prestige display. In the mystique of such display, fitness stands next to beauty. Their signs are exchanged within the framework of personalization, that anxious perfectionist manipulation of the sign function of the body.*" Cf. Baudrillard, Jean, *The consumer society: myths and structures*, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998 [1970], p. 139

dyad into a triangle through an association with the *subjective* notion of well-being.<sup>22</sup> It is well-being that lends a moral legitimacy to the pursuit of healthy beauty or beautiful health. To my mind, this interdependent triangle represents one of the most powerful dogmas of late modernity: striving towards beautiful health or healthy beauty in order to feel well – individually and socially – represents the core of successful contemporary identity management.<sup>23</sup>

The more or less conscious pursuit of this triangle through activities as varied as buying health-enhancing products, introducing more movement into one's daily routine or meditating means reinstating the holistic body as a common denominator for many realms of everyday life. Which is why I would like to suggest the term "healthy lifestyle technologies" (hereafter HLTs) to refer to these manifestations of commodified everyday health. This term also hints towards the fact that investing or working on the body is an ongoing daily venture, since the body is not a static entity:

Philosophical anthropology suggests that the body is always a project for individuals, in that humans are a peculiarly 'world open' species which requires for its survival that they complete themselves and their own environment. Building on Giddens's work, however, I suggest that in high modernity people have become unusually aware of their own unfinishedness. Furthermore, the emphasis that many modern individuals place on their bodies as constitutive of the self can be seen in many respects as a retreat from the world-building activity that is imperative to meaningful participation in social systems.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, for average consumers, "body-building" –not in a narrowly muscular acception– often supplants world-building, or becomes a crucial component of the latter. This recourse to the body no doubt indirectly points to the helplessness of citizens facing socio-politico-economic constellations that appear increasingly immune to democratic participation.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, because so much energy and money is invested in them, body projects can also count on the support of vast political and industrial networks. But the blurring of health boundaries entails huge discrepancies between the various estimates of fitness and wellness market weight and growth potential. These estimates are often a reflection of the institutional interests of the various state or marketing agencies and professional associations publishing them. For instance, estimated turnovers for the German wellness market in 1999-2000 ranged from 33 to 62 billion DM, depending on the sectors included.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> I emphasise the notion of "subjective well-being" to distinguish it from the populist national-socialist conception of "joy" as emblematised by the "*Strength through Joy*" [Kraft durch Freude] movement.

<sup>23</sup> For a stimulating discussion of beauty as an evolving cultural value and the increasing duty to produce it, cf. Böhme, Gernot, *Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, Zug: Die Graue Edition, 2003, pp. 189-207 ("Schönheitstherapie").

<sup>24</sup> Shilling, Chris, *The Body and Social Theory*, London: Sage, 1993, p. 182.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. e.g. Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*, London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publications 2002, esp. Chapter 2: "A Life of One's Own in a Runaway World: Individualization, Globalisation and Politics", pp. 22-29. Cf. also Bauman, Zygmunt, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the article entitled Hertel, Lutz, "Der Wellness-Markt: Entwicklung, Branchen, Daten und Prognosen", originally accessed here: [www.wellnessverband.de/infodienst/hertel\\_wellbizz2003.html](http://www.wellnessverband.de/infodienst/hertel_wellbizz2003.html) in the summer of 2003 but no longer available. In it, Lutz Hertel, the director of the German Wellness Association, emphasised the difficulty of appraising the market since, for example, cosmetics market statistics do not differentiate between goods clearly belonging to the fitness and health constellation (such as e.g. wellness bath salts) and more beauty-oriented goods such as nail polish remover.

Therefore, in order to sketch a slightly less confusing picture, I wish to provide just a few statistics drawn from individual sectors, which, when considered together, concretely display a growing interest in “healthy living”. Between 1995 and 1999 the market weight of natural cosmetics increased from DM 543 to 714 million<sup>27</sup> (approx. 7% increase p.a.). During the same period, the market volume of diet and wholefood products met with a 4% growth, i.e. a much more promising development than that of the food sector as a whole.<sup>28</sup> But a much more striking development is the rise in per capita bottled mineral water consumption: from 12.5 litres in 1970 to 103.4 litres in 2001<sup>29</sup> (an average of about 7.1% increase p.a.), and this despite decisive improvements in the microbiological quality of tap water in the interval.<sup>30</sup> Between 1990 and 2001, fitness club membership soared up from 1.70 to 5.39 million individuals<sup>31</sup> (approx. 11% growth p.a.). Finally, the success of the domestic wellness travel branch can be illustrated by the increase in arrivals registered at spa centres or “Kneipp” resorts: between 1997 and 2001, they rose from 6.46 to 8.28 million<sup>32</sup> (approx. 6.4% growth

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<sup>27</sup> Data drawn from the *BBE-Branchenreport Wellness*, Köln: BBE Handelsberatung GmbH, 2002: Tabelle 52, Entwicklung des Naturkosmetikmarktes in Mio. DM EVP”, p. 219. I would like to thank Ms Sophia Pohl for providing access to these statistics.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>29</sup> Source: Informationszentrale Deutsches Mineralwasser, as quoted in the Focus/Medialine study entitled “Der Markt für Fitness und Wellness: Daten, Fakten, Trends”, 2002, p. 27, online document originally accessed here: <http://medialine.focus.de/PM1D/PM1DD/PM1DDC/PM1DDCZ/pm1ddcz.htm> in 2002 but no longer available.

Cf. also “Zäsur auf dem Getränkemarkt: Die weltweit als Biertrinker bekannten Deutschen werden dieses Jahr voraussichtlich mehr Sprudel trinken als Gerstensaft. Wie die Nachrichtenagentur dpa meldet, dürfte 2003 der Pro-Kopf-Konsum an natürlichem Mineralwasser sowie Quell- und Tafelwasser über 120 Liter liegen, der Bierverbrauch gleichzeitig unter diese Marke fallen. Damit sind die Plätze 2 und 3 auf dem Getränkemarkt getauscht. Platz 1 hat bereits seit einigen Jahren der Kaffee inne. Jeder Bundesbürger trank davon im vergangenen Jahr statistisch gesehen 156,3 Liter.“ *Reformhauskurier*, December 2003, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. e.g. information originally accessed on the website of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in 2005 but no longer available: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse-e/presse-informationen-e/p1801-e.htm>; <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse-e/presse-informationen-e/pe02503.htm>; <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse-e/presse-informationen-e/pe03103.htm>; <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-presse/presse-informationen/pd1102.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> Data drawn from statistics on the website of the German Fitness Club Association (Deutscher Sportstudio Verband e.V.): “Allgemeine Eckdaten der Fitness-Anlagen in Deutschland 1990-2000”, accessed online from [http://www.dssv.de/dssv\\_hauptmneue\\_statistik/Eckdatenstudie.htm](http://www.dssv.de/dssv_hauptmneue_statistik/Eckdatenstudie.htm) in Sept. 2002 but no longer available. However, due to the multiple ways in which fitness and especially wellness are practised or, indeed even incorporated/incarnated, it is difficult to produce exact participation figures, to wit: “Accurate figures of the amount of people involved in fitness training across the population are not readily available, as workout routines may be exercised alone in front of the television set, at the workplace, on an urban sidewalk, in a class set up by a community leisure centre or indeed in a commercial fitness gym.” Cf. Sassatelli, Roberta, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, as quoted in the Focus/Medialine study, op.cit., „Besucher in Mineralbädern und Kneipp-Kurorten (Ankünfte in Mio.)“, p. 16. Kneipp spas or resorts have developed on the basis of the hydrotherapeutic tradition instigated by Sebastian Kneipp, one of the early forerunners of a German-style of healthier living. Kneipp [1821–1897, Germany] was a Catholic priest who promoted natural healing methods and thermal therapies based on five pillars: hydrotherapy, movement, phytotherapy, a healthy diet as well as a so-called “Ordnungstherapie”. The latter is defined as follows: „Ordnungstherapie als naturheilkundliches Heilverfahren umfasst alle indirekten (pädagogischen) und direkten (naturheilkundlich-ärztlichen) Maßnahmen, die geeignet sind, jene Ausgewogenheit zwischen Ressourcen und Anforderungen - und damit Gesundheit - zu erhalten oder wieder herzustellen. Hierzu nimmt sie ordnend Einfluss auf die biologischen, die psychosozialen und die spirituellen Regulationsvorgänge im Menschen.“ Cf. <http://www.kneippbund.de/sebastian-kneipp/die-5-elemente/lebensordnung/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

p.a.).<sup>33</sup> Additionally, during the last couple of decades, fitness and –with a slight time lag– wellness have proved the most ubiquitous labels on the market. There are wellness yogurts and fitness bars, wellness saunas and fitness routines, wellness shoes and fitness temples, wellness teas and fitness creams, and so on and so forth. In 2003, one could even find wellness packed lunches at the main train station in Munich.<sup>34</sup>

The object of this study then is to find out *how*, and hopefully some of the reasons *why*, technology, commodification and the quest for embodied consciousness have creatively converged in the elaboration of supposedly new and optimised “management” styles of the body. Concretely, I want to analyse how the innovative recycling and adaptation of historically evolved health rationales has enabled the emergence of the fitness and wellness ideologies. The context here is Germany during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period that corresponds to the peak dissemination phase of fitness as well as to the successful launching of wellness, along with the HLTs spawned by these movements.

Thus, Chapter 2 (*Methodology*) covers the issue of my positionality as a multidisciplinary researcher and provides justifications for a focus on a media discourse analysis using media-based sources as well as my choices of locale, time-frame and case-study areas. Indeed, I deliberately decided to concentrate on ideologies that, in Europe and more pointedly in Germany, focus on lay consumers’ agency in the sphere of individual health, be it in terms of monitoring, prevention and/or enhancement.<sup>35</sup> I wanted to focus on the diffuse sphere of “do-it-yourself” health because I am more interested in the subjective implications and perceptions of healthy living than in the professional elaboration of a “right living” canon or

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<sup>33</sup> To a large extent, these figures neatly mirror observations made in the American context in the 1980s, cf. e.g. Glassner, Barry, “Fitness and the Postmodern Self”, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 30, 1989, pp. 180-191, p. 180.

<sup>34</sup> At the time, *Rubensbauer’s Wellness Box* included a tomato & mozzarella sandwich, an apple and a bottle of Fürst Bismarck wellness water (with ginseng and herbal essences).

<sup>35</sup> This strategy, while it does explicitly bypass the nature of healthcare provided by officially sanctioned allopathic and (often more informally trained) alternative health practitioners, should not be read as an attempt to discount their role in the fostering of the fitness and wellness trends. In that respect, one should note the influence of increasing professionalisation in various body-centred sectors, linked to the development and ramifications of “body maintenance” imperatives. A good example of this professionalisation is the wide dissemination of nutritionists, fitness consultants, beauticians, naturopaths, etc. or body-oriented (psycho-)therapists working along principles developed by “traditional” healing systems such as Traditional Chinese Medicine or Ayurveda, “alternative” healing systems such as homeopathy or anthroposophy, or by pioneer practitioners such as Wilhelm Reich, Alexander Lowen or Moshe Feldenkrais, to name but a few examples. Gert Steffen in his opus entitled *Trendbranche Wellness – Fitness: Berufsporträts aus der Welt der Wohlfühlprofis* (Nürnberg: BW Bildung u. Wissen, 2004) identifies a number of new and not so new jobs associated with fitness and wellness such as „Diätassistent/in“, „Diplom-Ökotrophologe/in“, „Fitnesspädagogin/in“, „Gymnastiklehrer/in“, „Heilpraktiker/in“, „Kaufmann/frau im Gesundheitswesen“, „Kosmetiker/in“, „Physiotherapeut/in“, „staatlich geprüfte/r Masseur/se und Bademeister/in“, „Sport- und Fitnesskaufmann/frau“, „Sport- und Gesundheitstrainer/in“, „Wellnesstrainer/in“ not to mention further training as „Diplom Fitnessökonom/in“, „Gesundheitspädagogin/in“, „Medizinische/r Fitnesstrainer/in“, „Personal Health Trainer/in“, „Sportfachwirt/in“, or „Yogalehrer/in“. He emphasises the fact that many new professional orientations have emerged in the wake of fitness and wellness but that, more often than not, the fancy job titles flaunted by a number of individuals do not guarantee serious in-depth professional training. He then points to the growing role of the German Wellness Association [Deutscher Wellness Verband] in the quality assessment of wellness job training. Cf. also [http://wellnessverband.de/beruf\\_und\\_karriere/index.php](http://wellnessverband.de/beruf_und_karriere/index.php). For a more recent contribution to the professionalisation of wellness, cf. Scheller Jörg, “Wellness den Anfängen: Bemerkungen über Verfestigungspraktiken in der Verflüssigungsbranche”, *Weichspüler in Kunst und Konsum, Querformat*, Nr 3, 2010, pp. 36-39. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

sweeping public health measures. As we are about to see, the mediation and appropriation of “fitness & wellness” discourse presupposes that individuals are endowed with the skills to inform themselves as well as to choose and combine various health strategies. This consumer bias necessarily implies that, beyond producers and mediators’ guidance, individuals have the last say about what *feels* good.

However, in the course of my quest I soon found out that, due to a lack of appropriate sources, a user-centred perspective on LHTs could not really be envisaged from a historical perspective. De facto, their ambivalent relationship with the body is reflected in two discursive extremes: a relative absence –as a consequence of the normalisation of body-centred practices or the modesty surrounding them– or a stylised ostentation –characteristic of “health epiphany” narratives. This state of affairs led me to develop a more mediation-centred analysis, mainly grounded in advertising discourse, in a effort to come to grips with the zeitgeist –if not always the concrete actors– presiding over this ideological turn.

Paradoxically, even this relatively disembodied perspective highlighted the identity tensions experienced by individuals confronting a globalised, late-modern, technology-intensive economy:

If the experience of living in high modernity is like riding a juggernaut which is out of control, then at least the body provides individuals with a ‘last retreat’, an entity which appears to be a solid basis on which a reliable sense of self can be built. The problem with such investment is that the body has become an increasingly inadequate basis on which this project of the self can be built. This is because the body is itself implicated in technological developments, or ‘abstract systems’, which have called into question our sense of what the body is.<sup>36</sup>

This quote fittingly recaptures the main issue tackled in my study as it is articulated in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), i.e. how do socio-historical perceptions of the body intersect with the history of technology? And further, how do these dimensions articulate with the history of consumption and holism during the last two decades in Germany? Therefore, I formulated my working hypothesis as follows: the historical emergence and seemingly successful appropriation of the fitness and wellness ideologies is linked to a “new” perception of the body –a body that is no longer a given, but a perfectible entity. This perfectibility is driven by both increased technological feasibility and commodification processes that are virtually ubiquitous in the realm of consumption. In parallel though, late modernity has also fostered the re-cognition that the status of the body is essentially ambivalent and fragile: whether it is object or subject, natural or cultural/technological, flesh or sign/text, pure biology or holistic entity, machine/mechanics or consciousness, resource or ecosystem cannot be satisfactorily or definitively ascertained. The “irresolvability” of these tensions seems confirmed by the dead-end academic controversies over the status of the body – controversies involving factions as diverse as positivists, semioticians, phenomenologists, or gender theorists of various persuasions.

Surprisingly then, I found out that it was at the frontier between the humanities and the harder sciences that a more refreshing and promising perspective was evolving. Indeed, many strands of physiological and psychological research in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – such as psychosomatic medicine, biochemistry, psychophysiology, and cognitive

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<sup>36</sup> Shilling, Chris, op. cit., p. 182.

neurosciences— now seem to agree that the traditional mind/body divide is not a very fruitful working hypothesis. For instance, a number of studies on stress, so-called civilisation diseases, and neuropsychological disorders have demonstrated that there are close, traceable interactions not only between lifestyle and physiology but also between emotional, mental or even spiritual variables and the well- or ill-being of the body.<sup>37</sup> Even if a precise causality may be difficult to ascertain unequivocally, the co-occurrence of significant factors is at the very least striking. Thus, beyond its fleshiness, the body may be much more: not only the mediator but perhaps also the trigger or even the seat of thoughts, emotions, consciousness and faith. It is on this still shaky premise that ideologies such as fitness and especially wellness operate: they claim that a health-enhancing convergence of body, technology and consumption should be sealed by the endorsement of personal subjectivity – as emblematised in the success of holistic or even spiritual(ist) health practices.<sup>38</sup>

However, these relatively recent developments may falsely convey the impression that the acknowledgement of an embodied consciousness is a recent achievement, which is why Chapter 4 (*History*) delves into the historical roots of fitness and wellness, highlighting continuities and disruptions in both the German and American contexts. Instead of a linear appraisal of precursory movements, I articulate my historical narrative around the tension between work and leisure as they relate to health management since this tension still is at the heart of both the fitness and wellness ethics. The emphasis here is on the development of a new form of internalised lifestyle discrimination, a competitive intragenerational endeavour to attain beautiful health and wellbeing.

The case-studies developed in Chapters 5 (*Food Case-Study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*) represent in-depth micro-analyses of the discursive articulation of health in the domains of food and cosmetics from 1980 to 2000. This period is characterised by a fundamental reappraisal of the contributions of nutrition and cosmetics to the holistic health of the body. In the food realm, I have detected a clear move away from traditional staples and preparation methods towards increased internationalisation and convenience, with two seemingly contradictory offshoots, namely authentic food and functional food. In the cosmetics realm, the main tension resides in the ambivalent negotiation of the natural and technological spheres as they relate to the pursuit of youth, beauty and health.

Finally, Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*) provides a summary of my main conclusions highlighting the thread that has guided my reflection in this study. In it, I sum up the most popular strategies used to market healthy lifestyle technologies and how they contribute to a new moral economy of health.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. e.g. Selye, Hans, *The Stress of life*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956; Cassidy, Tony, *Stress, Cognition and Health*, London: Routledge, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Where embodied personal experience and emotion play a significant role. Cf. e.g. Csordas, Thomas J., *Body/Meaning/Healing*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, who investigates charismatic Christian and Navajo healing from an anthropological perspective. Another example, from a more popular perspective, is Dean Ornish's *Love & Survival: The Scientific Basis for the Healing Power of Intimacy*, New York: Harper Collins, 1997.

## CHAPTER 2

### TRACKING WHOLESOME EMBODIMENT: OF MEANS AND METHODS...

*For ignorance is the first requisite of the historian – ignorance, which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits, with a placid perfection unattainable by the highest art. [...] It is not by the direct method of a scrupulous narration that the explorer of the past can hope to depict that singular epoch. If he is wise, he will adopt a subtler strategy. He will attack his subject in unexpected places; he will fall upon the flank, or the rear; he will shoot a sudden, revealing searchlight into obscure recesses, hitherto undivined. He will row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity.<sup>39</sup>*

Lytton Strachey

#### Introduction

One may or may not agree with Lytton's Strachey's admittedly tongue-in-cheek assessment of historians' main asset as well as their methodology of choice. Nevertheless, Strachey aptly recaptures a fragmented subjectivity perilously fishing through a sea of information as the hallmark of any (late-)modern historical endeavour. Closer to us, Ulrich Wengenroth also suggests a sobering relationship between historians as "secondary witnesses" and their sources:

Thanks to the sources available to us, we can say something about the past but we cannot say everything, nor can we say with certainty what meaning it had for people in the past. But we can say what meaning it has for us. We create meaning from sources and thus our identity as participants and actors in a lengthy transformation process. This is the essence of history as a reflective science.<sup>40</sup>

But bounding the "meaningfulness" goals of historical inquiry may also represent a liberating step for historians. By limiting their scope and clarifying their politics of location –involving dimensions of both professional legitimacy and personal identity or authenticity, historians have gained a much greater credibility than by claiming a universalistic stance. Indeed, at least since the academic emergence of gender studies as well as postcolonial history and literature (not to mention the more general impact of "postmodern" thought on almost every academic discipline), it has become clear that any intellectual endeavour that eludes clarifying its politics of location is not only utopian but also plainly dishonest, in terms of

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<sup>39</sup> Strachey, Lytton, *Eminent Victorians*, Whitefish (MT): Kessinger Publishing, 2004 [1918], p. vii.

<sup>40</sup> Wengenroth, Ulrich, „Was ist Technikgeschichte?“, teaching material: working paper, cf. <http://www.fggg.edu.tum.de/personen/ulrich-wengenroth/wengenroth-lehrveranstaltungen/was-ist-technikgeschichte/>: "Dank der auf uns überkommenen Quellen können wir zwar etwas darüber sagen, was war, aber nicht, was alles war, und darum letztlich auch nicht mit Bestimmtheit, welche Bedeutung das, was war, für die Menschen der Vergangenheit hatte. Wohl aber können wir sagen, welche Bedeutung es für uns hat. Wir schöpfen aus den Quellen Bedeutung und damit Identität für uns als Teilhaber und Akteure in einem dauernden Wandlungsprozess. Das ist der Kern der Geschichte als Reflexionswissenschaft." [website accessed September 2011].

both perspective and scope.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, as will be discussed in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), tackling the history of the body enhances the perception of an additional phenomenological constraint, that of an individual bodily consciousness that inevitably flavours any narrative, albeit often unconsciously. In the preface to her study on the records of an 18th century physician writing about his female patients, Barbara Duden astutely sums up the paradox of historians' positionality, especially when it comes to accessing passed "lived bodies"<sup>42</sup>:

A critique of the school of thought, that denounces corporeality as unhistorical, is just as necessary as a critical screening of the concepts, the taxonomies and the analytical processes, through which a new and radical historicisation of the lived body, including its cultural representations and illustrations, may be achievable. As a historian, in order to understand the complaints of the Eisenach women, I must first be aware of my own self-evidences surrounding "the body" as cultural prejudices and maybe even learn to overcome them: indeed I cannot climb into the past over my own body.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, I want to define, or even denounce, my enterprise as limited. As I will be discussing it in the following section, these boundaries are multifaceted. The most obvious one is my own positionality, including my multidisciplinary orientation, my personal interests as well as my specific professional and personal experiences. Another seminal influence on the project is the decision to focus my analysis on media discourse and the stakes involved in primarily resorting to media-based sources. Finally, I define and justify the spatiotemporal framework of my study as well as the choice of my specific case-study areas.

### **Situating the author**

The fact that this dissertation is officially anchored in the history of technology may obscure the fact that its author does not boast a classical curriculum in this field.<sup>44</sup> In my case, enthusiasm for this domain has been flavoured by a rather eclectic background since after completing a degree involving English- and French-speaking literatures (specialising in English-speaking Caribbean women's literature) as well as history of art, I moved on to complete postgraduate study in the sociology of science and technology, while regularly teaching a variety of subjects in different schools. These disciplinary and professional affiliations have no doubt bequeathed me with a heightened awareness of linguistic,

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<sup>41</sup> A clearly defined politics of location becomes even more necessary when confronting postcolonial or "minority" history and literature combined with a gender dimension, as illustrated by the brilliantly taunting title of the following anthology: *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, Eds Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott & Barbara Smith, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982. Cf. also Rich, Adrienne, "Notes towards a Politics of Location" in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985*, New York: Norton, 1986, pp. 210-231.

<sup>42</sup> The body and its ambivalent status in various disciplines will be amply discussed in Chapter 3 (*Theory*)

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Duden, Barbara, Barbara Duden, *Geschichte unter der Haut. Ein Eisenacher Arzt und seine Patientinnen*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987 (and 1991), pp. 9-10: „Eine Kritik der Denktradition, in denen Körperlichkeit als etwas Unhistorisches dem geschichtlichen Feld gegenübergestellt wird, ist ebenso notwendig wie eine kritische Sichtung der Begriffe, Taxonomien und Analyseverfahren, durch die eine neue, radikale Historisierung des Leibes und seiner kulturellen Repräsentationen und Bilder möglich sein könnte. Um die Klage der Frauen in Eisenach verstehen zu können, muss ich zunächst als Historikerin die eigenen Selbstverständlichkeiten über „den Körper“ als kulturelles Vorurteil bewusstmachen, vielleicht sogar überwinden lernen: Über meinen Körper kann ich nicht in die Vergangenheit klettern.“

<sup>44</sup> However the relative youth of "history of technology" as an academic discipline means that few of its representatives can actually claim to have studied history of technology as undergraduates. As far as I can remember, during the time I spent working at the Technische Universität München and the Deutsches Museum, I only encountered one colleague with an undergraduate background in this discipline.

aesthetic and gender issues and they have certainly fostered an engagement with increasingly rapid scientific and technological change as well as the challenges of its appropriate mediation. On the other hand, my interest in health and well-being owes more to my non-academic professional and personal history. A seminal early influence was no doubt my Swiss grandmother, a passionate nurse and advocate of alternative therapies. Furthermore, growing up within the compound of a home for severely disabled adults and later working with elderly, physically and/or mentally handicapped individuals sharpened my sensitivity to the lived meanings of health and well-being and, more poignantly, their absence. Finally, a severe health challenge led me to an even more personal and embodied exploration of these meanings. But how does this information concretely relate to the choice and design of this study?

My personal background has clearly favoured a focus on healthy lifestyle technologies (HLTs) because they emphasise individual agency in the pursuit of health and boast an existential relevance to me. But my academic background also guided my choice. Indeed, I deliberately chose to concentrate on HLTs (instead of e.g. more strictly “medical” technologies) because their nebulous and ambivalent nature means that no single discipline is adequately equipped to come to grips with their far-reaching ramifications. In a sense, these phenomena beg to be analysed from a multi- or transdisciplinary perspective and I have freely indulged, drawing on and confronting inputs from history, sociology, anthropology, consumer studies or philosophy –to name but the most obvious and weighty borrowings. This approach, while it may suffer from the unavoidable impressionism entailed in collating broad and heterogeneous brush-strokes, presents the advantage of transcending a more linear disciplinary perspective that would fail to account for the hydra-like natures of fitness and wellness. Thus, I may not have done full justice to the insights I have borrowed by (partially) severing them from their often complex disciplinary or authorial moorings but I do hope that this transdisciplinary “poaching” tactic will provide readers with a more multi-faceted yet synthetic understanding of my topic.

### **Appropriating fitness and wellness through the media**

While I would have initially liked to broach my subject with a user-centred approach, it proved rather impractical due to the scarcity of unmediated sources on the one hand and, on the other, because of the methodological challenges entailed in relying on oral history accounts of body management. Indeed, there generally is a dearth of personal, first-hand accounts that can either be traced back to a reluctance to openly disclose private bodily practices or to such a naturalisation of these practises that specific accounting appears superfluous or even trite. Moreover, one may remember why and/or when one purchased one’s first car, evening gown or surf board and, with a bit of luck, one may also recall the emotions linked to the purchase. Perhaps one can even remember one’s first jogging or aerobics session. But who remembers when or why they bought their first “fitness” deodorant or brewed their first “wellness” tea, especially if it took place 5, 10 or 15 years ago? Unlike the exalted lyricism emanating from Proust’s famous encounter with the “madeleine”, contemporary written (or ex-post oral) sources emanating from users rarely emphasise the emotions and practices bound with the integration of these products in everyday life –even if this scarcity sporadically contrasts with the occasional exhibitionistic account of a personal health and beauty “epiphany”.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> It is worth noting that so-called “Web 2.0” phenomena such as various review websites, fora and blogs may well bring about a change in user discourse on body-centred products. A number of consumer review websites

This is why I decided to focus my analysis on media discourse, strengthened by Niklas Luhmann's statement whereby "*What we know about our society, indeed about the world itself in which we live, we know through the mass media*"<sup>46</sup> even if, as he hastens to add:

"[...] we know so much about the mass media that we cannot trust these sources. Suspecting manipulation, we resist, but this does not lead to significant consequences, since the knowledge acquired from the mass media seems –of its own accord– to merge into a self-reinforcing structure. One will stamp all knowledge with a sign of doubt but will still have to build upon it, to connect with it."<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, when it comes to appropriate body management, the media play a central if often ambivalent role. In Chapter 3 (*Theory*), in the "Under the sign of the body" section, I hint to the fact that the body, as a medium itself, is intimately tied to a broader media landscape – which both influences the perception of the body while being influenced by the body as medium. Indeed, the perception of bodily normalcy (be it in terms of health or aesthetics) is very often shaped through recourse to the media but, in parallel, the material embodiment of media users is increasingly acknowledged as a seminal influence on cognitive and emotional processes during media consumption. Hence, when it comes to the actual moulding of the body through ideologies and practices generated by the fitness and wellness movements, the media represent a privileged arena where health options are frequently and often hotly debated.<sup>48</sup> This should come as no surprise since in a late modern context – where traditional knowledge and expertise about the welfare of the body are increasingly difficult to access and/or contested and where self-realisation options dizzyingly abound– the media may provide a welcome sounding board for increasingly confused consumers:

My starting point is the view that, with the development of modern societies, the process of self-formation becomes more reflexive and open-ended, in the sense that individuals fall back increasingly on their own resources to construct a coherent identity for themselves. At the same time the process of self-formation is increasingly nourished by mediated symbolic

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such as e.g. *ciao* provide contemporary views on a number of consumer products that were rarely openly discussed before. Cf. e.g. [http://www.ciao.co.uk/Muller\\_Vitality\\_Yogurt\\_Drink\\_5607394](http://www.ciao.co.uk/Muller_Vitality_Yogurt_Drink_5607394) (U.K. version) or [http://www.ciao.de/Balea\\_Wellness\\_Dusche\\_Lemongras\\_1129608](http://www.ciao.de/Balea_Wellness_Dusche_Lemongras_1129608) (German version). However, I perceive at least two problems connected with the use of these reports as historical sources. The first obvious drawback is that the reports provided only review products temporarily available on the market and the second disadvantage is inherent to the internet as a medium in general, i.e. most reports are anonymous or published under a pseudonym, which means that it is almost impossible to ascertain authorship. Hence it is obviously quite conceivable that a number of reviews were actually written by the marketers of the products themselves. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>46</sup> Luhmann, Niklas, *Die Realität der Massenmedien*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009 [4th edition; originally published in 1995], p. 9: „*Was wir über unsere Gesellschaft, ja über die Welt, in der wir leben, wissen, wissen wir durch die Massenmedien.*“

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: „[...] *wissen wir soviel über die Massenmedien, daß wir diesen Quellen nicht vertrauen können. Wir wehren uns mit einem Manipulationsverdacht, der aber nicht zu nennenswerten Konsequenzen führt, da das den Massenmedien entnommene Wissen sich wie von selbst zu einem selbstverstärkende Gefüge zusammenschließt. Man wird alles Wissen mit dem Vorzeichen des Bezweifelbaren versehen – und trotzdem darauf aufbauen, daran anschließen müssen.*“

<sup>48</sup> To describe how users' experience of a technology is forestructured by media discourses, Tanja Kotro & Mika Pantzar introduced the term „hypermediation“, cf. Kotro, Tanja & Pantzar Mika, "Product Development and Changing Cultural Landscapes—Is Our Future in 'Snowboarding'?", *Design Issues*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, Spring 2003, pp. 30-45.

materials, greatly expanding the range of options available to individuals and loosening – without destroying– the connection between self-formation and shared locale.<sup>49</sup>

But as John Thompson further suggests, the recourse to media in the process of self-formation leads to two important shifts: first media content is increasingly globalised, hence often loses its rootedness in local knowledge, and second, the power relationship inherent in expertise is no longer configured in face-to-face interaction. Due to the non-reciprocal character of mediated relationships, media consumers may regain a form of autonomy and agency (hence also a form of expertise) that they may not experience when e.g. discussing health strategies with their GPs or their personal fitness trainers.<sup>50</sup>

However, Brian Pronger suggests that, when it comes to appropriate body management, the information propagated through a wide variety of media channels is not just designed as a “helpful” guideline but as a much more aggressive and controlling “salvation” doctrine inscribed within the paradigm of modern technology’s aggressive resource management:

We can see versions of the doctrine first in the position papers of government agencies. Second, versions appear in the scientific papers, textbooks, and manuals of academic exercise science. Third, the doctrine also circulates in popular books, magazines, and video tapes on exercise and physical fitness. Fourth, physical fitness appraisal, exercise prescriptions, regimens, procedures, equipment and exercise, and diet log books articulate this doctrine as well. And, fifth, popular representations of the fit body abound.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, good examples of the doctrinal, almost coercive quality of physical fitness mediation are plentiful in contemporary German media. A random sample of e.g. the weekly news magazine *stern* displays telling headlines such as “*Avoided and Despised: Smokers, The Nation’s Losers. Plus: this is how you get rid of the addiction at last*”,<sup>52</sup> or “*Purchasable Beauty. New Series: The right doctors, the best methods*”<sup>53</sup> and “*Muscles: sources of power for body and soul. Here is how you enhance well-being, fat loss and self-consciousness. The best exercises*”.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, while emphasising that mass communication is an essentially asymmetrical process involving “*unequal partners in the process of symbolic exchange*”,<sup>55</sup> John Thompson

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<sup>49</sup> Thompson, John, *The Media and Modernity: a social theory of the media*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 207.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, esp. p. 220.

<sup>51</sup> Pronger, Brian, *Body Fascism: Salvation in the Technology of Physical Fitness*, Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 2002, pp. 122-123.

<sup>52</sup> The special feature deals with the –at the time– planned or already enforced smoking ban in pubs and restaurants and the increasing marginalisation of smokers in the workplace and other public settings. Cf. „Gemieden und verachtet: Raucher. Die Verlierer der Nation/ Plus: So befreien Sie sich endlich von der Sucht“, *stern*, Heft Nr. 34, 16.08.2007, pp. 28-40. Cf. also: „*Sie sind die größte Randgruppe unserer Gesellschaft, und mit neuen Gesetzen rückt man ihnen zu Leibe. Raucher werden zu sozialen Außenseitern: gemieden von ihren Mitmenschen und mit schlechten Chancen im Job; sie stehen für Willensschwäche und Rücksichtslosigkeit. Gibt es eigentlich bessere Gründe sofort aufzuhören?*“.

<sup>53</sup> A long feature on the feasibility of cosmetic surgery: “Schönheit, die man Kaufen kann. Neue Serie: Die richtigen Ärzte, die besten Methoden”, *stern*, Heft Nr. 36, 31.08.2006, pp. 116-134.

<sup>54</sup> “Muskeln: Kraftquellen für Körper und Seele. So verbessern Sie Wohlbefinden, Fettabbau und Selbstbewusstsein. Die besten Übungen”, *stern*, Heft Nr. 46, 09.11.2006, pp. 188-205.

<sup>55</sup> Even though consumers do enjoy feedback channels, through e.g. letters to the editor, as well as, usually, the freedom not to consume particular media. Cf. Thompson, John, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

emphasises that a number of studies have demonstrated that reception is far from a passive activity. Instead:

“[...] individuals take hold of and work over the symbolic materials they receive. In the process of reception, individuals make use of symbolic materials for their own purposes, in ways that may be extremely varied but also relatively hidden, since these practices are not confined to a particular locale. Whereas production ‘fixes’ symbolic content in a material substratum, reception ‘unfixes’ it and frees it up to the ravages of time. Moreover, the uses that recipients make of symbolic materials may diverge considerably from the uses (if any) that the producers of these materials had in mind. Even if individuals may have relatively little control over the content of the symbolic materials made available to them, they can use these materials, rework and elaborate them in ways that are quite alien to the aims and intentions of the producers.<sup>56</sup>

Just as in the popular perception of technology –moving from an all-powerful quasi-independent nemesis towards a tool that is socially shaped and can be harnessed by society– there is a distinct shift in the perception of the media (and, linked to it, publicity). From the late 1950s onwards, with the emergence of the so-called “uses and gratifications” approach, the media and their contents were no longer perceived as an omnipotent power that moulds and conditions public opinion and decisions but as one societal force among others. Individuals and the societies they participate in were seen as actively engaging with the media, selecting, rejecting and appropriating what they need. As Elihu Katz put it, talking about the active audience within the context of the uses and gratifications approach: “[...] even the most potent of the mass media content cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has ‘no use’ for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. The ‘uses’ approach assumes that people’s values, their interests, their associations, their social roles, are pre-potent, and that people selectively ‘fashion’ what they see and hear to these interests”.<sup>57</sup> David Gauntlett quotes convincing examples of this “pick and mix” attitude from a qualitative interview carried out with female readers of womens’ magazines in a few (mainly westernised) countries. Among other aspects, respondents highlighted notions of time-killing, the attraction to a sensual layout or content, self-indulgence expressed as a need to relax in a virtual world, curiosity about new trends but also a marked reluctance to

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 39. These findings neatly parallel what the French sociologist Michel de Certeau called “subversive use” when discussing consumers and their tactics –an aspect I discuss in the “Technology” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*).

<sup>57</sup> Katz, Elihu, “Mass Communication Research and the Study of Culture”, *Studies in Public Communication*, 2, 1959, p. 1-6, p. 2. However, it should be noted that the “uses and gratifications” approach has evolved considerably since then especially in the direction of a more nuanced assessment of audience activeness, cf. e.g. Rubin, Alan M., “Uses and Gratifications Perspective on Media Effects”, *Media effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Eds Jennings Bryant & Mary Beth Oliver, New York & London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 165-184, p. 172: “A valid view of audience activeness lies on a continuum between being passive (and, perhaps, being more directly influenced by media or messages) and being active (and, perhaps, making more rational decisions in accepting or rejecting messages) (A.M. Rubin, 1993).” Also cf. *ibid.*, p. 173: “Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that differences in audience activity – as evidenced in ritualized and instrumental orientations – have important implications for media effects. In other words, as Windahl (1981) argued, using a medium instrumentally or ritualistically leads to different outcomes. Instrumental orientations may produce stronger attitudinal and behavioral effects than ritualized orientations because instrumental orientations incorporate greater motivation to use and involvement with messages. Involvement suggests a state of readiness to select, interpret, and respond to messages.” And finally, cf. *ibid.*, p. 175: “Differences in personality, cognition, social affiliation, and motivation affect exposure, cultivation, satisfaction, parasocial interaction, identification, and content attention and elaboration.”

straightforwardly identify with “superwomen”.<sup>58</sup> These findings seem correlated by the qualitative interviews carried out by Birgit Lawerenz in Germany, although, on the whole, her sample seems much more critical of women’s magazines as such.<sup>59</sup>

Kathrin Friederike-Müller in her study on the reception of *Brigitte*, one of the most enduringly popular, hence emblematic, women’s magazine in Germany, shows that regular long-term readers of the medium must be able to identify with the idea of women championed in the articles. Indeed, a sustainable relationship between reader and medium cannot feed on a permanently conflictual reading. There has to be a certain congruence between what readers are experiencing (or want to experience) in their particular lifestyle choices or phase of life and the inputs of the medium –regardless of whether the latter is used to broaden and differentiate the perspective on particular lifestyle issues or as a more “escapist” tool to ease the transition between the work and leisure realms.<sup>60</sup> This however does not mean that consumers who have settled for a particular medium passively concur with every aspect of the medium during the act of reception: “*They choose from the broad variety of themes, the articles that correspond to their current situation and provide information or thought-provoking impulses*”.<sup>61</sup> Beyond these initial choices, readers actively and creatively negotiate the relevance or even the veracity of certain features, based on their own professional or personal knowledge. In this process, women see and affirm themselves as more competent and/or critical than the journalistic source: “*A resistant interaction with the text thus mainly provides self-confidence and strengthens a positive self-image regarding progressive role attributions in the professional arena*”.<sup>62</sup> Personal taste or gender-conscious aesthetic sensitivities also fuel dissension when it comes to bodily ideals or what is perceived as fashion normativeness.

Most interestingly, from my perspective, Friederike-Müller aptly analyses the ambivalent relationship between readers and specialised feature articles as well as publicity in the cosmetics and fashion domains. Generally, there seems to be a certain scepticism regarding e.g. the cosmetics praised in beauty columns. Readers seem particularly conscious of other information sources that seem to contradict the medium’s advice and thus suspect collusion between the industry and the magazine. While readers admit to being potentially more sensitive to the advertising contained in *Brigitte* than in other media, they fear the potential manipulation of their consumer behaviour and the risks entailed in being badly advised:

This defiant reception shows that readers are quite capable of reflecting upon the links between magazines, advertisers and their own consumer behaviour –a capability often

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Gauntlett, David, *Media, Gender and Identity*, London & New York: Routledge, 2008 [2002], pp. 206-208.

<sup>59</sup> Lawerenz, Birgit, *Frauenzeitschriften und deren Leserinnen*, Magisterarbeit im Fach Soziologie, Fernuniversität Hagen, eingereicht 30.03.2004, available online: [http://www.ernaehrungsdenkwerkstatt.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/EDWText/TextElemente/Medien/Frauenzeitschriften\\_Lawerenz\\_Hagen\\_2004.pdf](http://www.ernaehrungsdenkwerkstatt.de/fileadmin/user_upload/EDWText/TextElemente/Medien/Frauenzeitschriften_Lawerenz_Hagen_2004.pdf), cf. especially pp. 73-90, and pp. 97-99 for a summary of attitudes.

<sup>60</sup> Müller, Kathrin Friederike, *Frauenzeitschriften aus der Sicht ihrer Leserinnen. Die Rezeption von »Brigitte« im Kontext von Biografie, Alltag und Doing Gender*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2010, cf. especially pp. 367-376.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 368: “*Sie wählen aus dem vielfältigen Themenangebot die Artikel aus, die zu ihrer Lebenssituation passen und ihnen Informationen oder Denkanstöße dazu geben.*” However it should be noted that beyond individual factors, structural and social aspects also influence the act of reception and only the interplay of these influences can do justice to the complex relationship between society, media use and the subject (cf. p. 370).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p. 359: “*Der widerständige Umgang mit dem Text gibt also in erster Linie Selbstbewusstsein und stärkt ein positives Selbstbild bezüglich progressive Rollenzuschreibungen aus dem beruflichen Kontext.*”

denied them in earlier studies. They have an ambivalent relationship with the magazine as a product: on the one hand, they accept it but on the other, they question it by confronting the content and looking for evidence of biased coverage. Thus, even if Brigitte might intend to influence its readers, the latter are not at its mercy. Instead, as in other cases, readers display media competence, resistance and critical faculties.<sup>63</sup>

Overall, it should be emphasised that the variety of reception strategies<sup>64</sup> is a condition of at least three main factors: first of all, the type of media –be it e.g. television, radio, films, dailies, weeklies, internet, etc.; second, the frequency and intensity of media-use; and, last but not least, the socio-historical and economic situatedness of consumers, involving unequal access to a number of resources as well as varying power relations, which both imply different types of exposure but also highly differentiated references, attitudes, expectations, purposes, uses and involvement –in short, what one could refer to as a form of Bourdieusian *habitus*.<sup>65</sup>

At this point, it seems appropriate to briefly dwell on Bourdieu's key-concepts of habitus and capital, since both terms are useful tools in the analysis of media users in particular and more broadly of consumers at large. Bourdieu defines the habitus as “*structured structures prone to function as structuring structures*”.<sup>66</sup> Concretely the dispositions constitutive of an individual's habitus are acquired through socialisation. In turn however, individuals can use their habitus to create new social practices. Thus, the habitus is not an entirely static and deterministic notion condemning users/consumers to entirely predictable behaviours. Indeed, even though habitus dispositions are heavily influenced by class, hence characterised by a certain permanence and ubiquity, and even though they may be perceived as so natural as to be used unconsciously, they can and usually do evolve in the course of a lifetime. This evolution is mainly a function of how individuals negotiate their acquisition of various types of capital –economic, cultural, social and symbolic–<sup>67</sup> within different social fields. Applied to the domains of media use or consumer culture in general, the interplay of habitus and capital acquisition thus articulate a complex web of influence and independence. In sum, however, as Michael Schenk concludes, the mass media hold a considerable influence in that they steer users' attention through informational orientation, by means of “*frame-setting and focusing on particular reality excerpts, themes and*

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 364-365: „Diese widerständige Lesart zeigt, dass die Leserinnen durchaus zu einer Reflexion des Zusammenhangs zwischen Zeitschriften, Anzeigenkunden und ihrem Konsumverhalten fähig sind, die ihnen in früheren Analysen häufig abgesprochen wurde. Sie haben zur Zeitschrift als Ware ein ambivalentes Verhältnis, das sie auf der einen Seite akzeptieren, auf der anderen aber auch hinterfragen indem sie sich mit dem Inhalt auseinander setzen und nach Indizien für eine einseitige Berichterstattung suchen. Selbst wenn Brigitte eine beeinflussende Wirkung auf die Leserinnen intendieren sollte, so stehen si dieser nicht schutzlos gegenüber, sondern beweisen auch in diesem Zusammenhang Medienkompetenz, Widerstand und Kritikfähigkeit.“

<sup>64</sup> For a detailed review of the successive trends in media effects studies, cf. e.g. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, op. cit. (especially chapter 8: Rubin, Alan M., “Uses-and-Gratifications Perspective on Media Effects”, pp. 165-184) or Schenk, Michael, *Medienwirkungsforschung*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2002 [2<sup>nd</sup> edition].

<sup>65</sup> I refer to the sociological acception of the term as suggested by Pierre Bourdieu, cf. especially: Bourdieu, Pierre, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Genève: Editions Droz, 1972 & Bourdieu, Pierre, *Le sens pratique*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, *Le Sens pratique*, op. cit., p. 88: « [...] structures structurées prédisposées à fonctionner comme structures structurantes. »

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979.

attributes". He adds: *"In many areas, the mass media convey a basic orientation, they guide and mould the perspectives, thoughts and representations of recipients."*<sup>68</sup>

But as emphasised in the Brian Pronger quote above, media messages in the affluent westernised world are relayed by such a wide variety of channels that consumers may feel bombarded with a form of "symbolic overload". This state of affairs forces individuals to develop strategies in the selection and appropriation of information, by relying on various types of expertise. Thompson sees these systems of expertise as hybrid since they may primarily rely on significant others' opinions but also on experts situated within the media, such as film or book critics, health gurus or television gourmets as well as role-models drawn from films or TV serials.<sup>69</sup>

In sum then, as opposed to real life experience, mediated experience differs in substantial ways in that it can be distant both spatially and temporally. Also, through media embedding, real life events become recontextualised in the mediated experience. Moreover, since individuals' particular self-fashioning projects are continuously reshaped, mediated experience displays a varying relevance, which means individuals may alternately find it irrelevant or so relevant as to blend it into their everyday lived experience. Finally mediated experience may be shared without being rooted in a common locale (as is the case with lived experience).<sup>70</sup> These characteristics as they team up with an increasingly fast and nomadic pace of life mean that mediated experience, even if it rarely supplants lived experience,<sup>71</sup> plays an increasingly important role in individuals' self-projects, even transforming the nature of the self. However the self is usually *"not dissolved or dispersed by media messages, but rather is opened up by them, in varying degrees, to influences which stem from distant locales"*.<sup>72</sup>

Specifically, in the case of fitness and wellness, their success seems to lie less in their contents, which can hardly be described as revolutionary, as in their skilful and ubiquitous mediation. Even if both phenomena are mostly confined to post-industrial societies, they are the first health management philosophies that can claim to have transcended neatly bounded national health ideologies and health-care systems through globalised marketing, whilst integrating –critics may say plundering– many "postcolonial" elements, such as a vulgarised patchwork of teachings drawn from various traditional health systems like Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine. Moreover, it is the media-fostered nature of

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<sup>68</sup> Schenk, Michael, op. cit., p. 710: *„Wir kommen zur Ergebnis, dass eine erhebliche – und noch gar nicht ausreichend erforschte – Wirkung der Massenmedien in der informationsorientierten Aufmerksamkeitslenkung zu sehen ist. Die eigentliche Wirkung der Massenmedien-Inhalte dürfte im Setzen von Bezugsrahmen („Frames“) und der Fokussierung von Realitätsauschnitten, Themen und Attributen liegen.\* In vielen Bereichen vermitteln die Massenmedien eine Grundorientierung, sie lenken und prägen die Blickrichtungen, Gedanken und Vorstellungen der Rezipienten.“*

<sup>69</sup> Thompson, John, op. cit., pp. 216-218. For a very interesting analysis of role-models' influence on identity formation, cf. Schroeter, Judith, "The Ally McBeal in us: The importance of role-models in identity formation", 2002, available online here: <http://www.theory.org.uk/ally.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>70</sup> Thompson, John, op. cit., pp. 228-231.

<sup>71</sup> David Gauntlett nicely sums up the question of power in the "media vs. consumers" exchange: *"[...] we have found, unsurprisingly, that the power relationship between media and the audience involves 'a bit of both', or to be more precise, a lot of both. The media disseminates a huge number of messages about identity and acceptable forms of self-expression, gender, sexuality and lifestyle. At the same time, the public have their own even more robust set of diverse feelings on these issues."* Cf. Gauntlett, David, op. cit., pp. 286-287.

<sup>72</sup> Thompson, John, op. cit., p. 233.

fitness and wellness that primarily accounts for their hydra-like, self-generating tendencies. This also explains the difficulties encountered when trying to detect their origins and contents as well as their authors/producers and consumers, since there is no centralised control over their development and diffusion.

### **Accessing fitness and wellness sources**

Given this state of affairs, I have had to rely on an eclectic collection of sources including artefacts, their packaging and instructions for use as well as retail recommendations, specialised catalogues, lifestyle magazines, newspapers, (para)medical, insurance and health policy guidelines, readers' letters to the editor, etc. It is through the intersections and overlaps of this wide spectrum of sources that I was gradually able to map out the likely outlines of projected uses and users. Concretely, the sources I was fruitfully able to draw upon were the following:

**-Commercial statistics** related to the market volume of various fitness and wellness products and services as well as marketing studies providing micro-analyses of various health-related sectors. These figures are obviously central, since they enable one to map out the development of health markets and concretely size up their success. However, as already pointed out in my introduction, these figures should also be handled with care since estimates vary widely, depending on what products and services are included in the sector under consideration, an aspect that usually betrays the true identity and interests of the organisations publishing the figures.<sup>73</sup>

**-Market/ing or business studies, reports, analyses.** Along with the above-mentioned statistics, these sources often provide detailed sectoral analyses that draw in not only purely economic considerations but also historical, sociological and psychological variables that may shed insights on particular developments. A frequent issue with these studies, however, is the difficulty to gain access to them, especially in terms of their often (very) high cost – making them primarily available to corporate users.<sup>74</sup>

**-Governmental and non-governmental studies and statistics** (especially as they relate to Public Health, preventive medicine, morbidity rates, civilisation diseases, alternative health practices, etc.) enable one to correlate health developments and policy imperatives with the evolution of the health market.

**-Insurance guidelines and reports** enable one to trace the evolution of particular health mentalities over time, especially the shift towards preventive instead of curative measures and increased consumer responsibility. They also provide a precious indicator of the shifting value of holistic prevention in ensuring global personal health.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Chapter 1 (Introduction).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. e.g. a telling contemporary example: *Branchenreport – Wellness 2010*, Köln: IBH Retail Consultants GmbH, August 2010, available online but costing “only” €1,450: [http://www.markt-studie.de/studien/branchenreport-wellness-2010-p-123994.html?gclid=CPz6hY3vtKcCFYMRfAodbwll\\_g](http://www.markt-studie.de/studien/branchenreport-wellness-2010-p-123994.html?gclid=CPz6hY3vtKcCFYMRfAodbwll_g). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>75</sup> A good example of this aspect is the huge coverage discrepancies even between so-called “compulsory health insurance funds” [gesetzliche Krankenkassen] when it comes to reimbursing alternative health practices or providing sponsored health education classes. Some insurances such as Securvita (cf. <http://www.securvita.de/index.php>) include acupuncture, homeopathy and anthroposophical medicine in their standard coverage (cf. <http://www.securvita.de/krankenkasse-securvita/leistungen/naturheilverfahren.html>), while also partially reimbursing e.g. Pilates, Nordic walking, qi gong, yoga or reiki classes (cf.

**-Various sources on or by fitness and wellness inventors, disseminators, heroes, lead-consumers/users**, such as e.g. (auto-)biographies, various health prevention/popularisation books, websites, etc. The danger in this case is that narratives are usually rather biased/uncritical and often display clear (self-)marketing purposes.

**-The actual/concrete products (including their packaging and instructions for use).**<sup>76</sup> The design of products, their descriptions and functioning often provide one with significant clues as to how producers envisage potential users. No detail is really innocent, be it the materials used, the colours, the shape, the ergonomics, the illustrations and diagrams, the explanations that are either highlighted or left out contribute to both the “script”<sup>77</sup> embedded or embodied in the object or its “affordances”.<sup>78</sup>

**-And last but certainly not least: women’s or lifestyle magazines, weekly news periodicals and occasionally daily newspapers.** For the period under consideration, i.e. the early 1980s to the late 1990s, there are virtually no newspapers or magazines that focus solely on fitness or wellness.<sup>79</sup> So, the most fruitful source has proved to be women’s magazines: *Brigitte*, *Für Sie*, *Freundin*, *Bunte* and *Frau im Spiegel*.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, most women’s magazines can be described as quintessential “healthy lifestyle” magazines, since they have long demonstrated an interest in the body, its technical management (i.e. its shaping or moulding through a focus on particular fashions, cosmetics, specific diets, sports or physical activities, and DIY health practices) as well as its environment (both natural and artificial). In contrast, before

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[http://www.securvita.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF-Dateien/krankenkasse/m-praevention-55.pdf](http://www.securvita.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-Dateien/krankenkasse/m-praevention-55.pdf)). Others, such as the AOK or Techniker Krankenkasse, while they do include some alternative health offers, are much more sceptical or reluctant to promote or reimburse alternative health therapies and usually require interested customers to take on additional coverage (cf. e.g. <http://www.aok.de/bayern/leistungen-service/alternative-therapien-34972.php> & <http://www.tk.de/tk/wahltarife-und-zusatzversicherung/alternative-medizin/tk-privat-natur-arznei/139750>). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>76</sup> In this respect, a few years ago, my former colleague -Heike Weber- and I designed a razor test that clearly highlights gendered user de-signs from the producer perspective. Cf. “Transgendering the Semiotics of Razor Design: a very close shave...”, Aug. 2002, online paper: <http://www.zigt.ze.tu-muenchen.de/users/> Papers. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Bingle, Gwen & Weber, Heike, op. cit., p. 28: Madeleine Akrich’s concept of scripts “assumes that conditions of usage -which usually correspond to certain user representations- are objectified in technologies. Akrich, as a researcher rooted in the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), interprets artefacts/ technologies as non-human actors that prescribe the behaviour of their (human) users. Thus, things AND people are shaped during the innovation process. Innovators inscribe their visions and predictions of the world in their objects, resulting in a ‘script’. The ‘script’ metaphor refers to a film script because both define a framework for future actions. For Akrich, ‘a technical artifact can be described as a scenario replete with a stage, roles, and directions governing the interactions between the actors (human and nonhuman) who are supposed to assume those roles’. Many design choices can thus be seen as ‘decisions about what should be delegated to the technology and what should be left to the initiative of human actors.’” Cf. also my discussion of scripts in Chapter 3 (Theory), “Technology” section.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 16: “James J. Gibson, in his theorising towards an ‘ecological psychology’ during the 60s and 70s, argued for the ‘affordances’ of an object, referring to the potential of an object that ‘affords’ or permits a certain action.”

<sup>79</sup> A notable exception being “Fit for Fun” launched in 1994. Cf. [http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/fit-for-fun-fuer-alle-die-gerne-etwas-fuer-ihr-spiegelbild-tun-wollen\\_aid\\_21.html](http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/fit-for-fun-fuer-alle-die-gerne-etwas-fuer-ihr-spiegelbild-tun-wollen_aid_21.html). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>80</sup> Marketing profiles of all magazine and newspaper sources can be found in the Appendix.

the lifestyle re-orientation of *GQ* [originally: Gentlemen's Quarterly] in 1983,<sup>81</sup> the launching of *FHM* [originally: For Him Magazine] in 1985,<sup>82</sup> or *Men's Health* in 1987,<sup>83</sup> men's magazines displayed a much less holistic interest in lifestyle and body matters than their female counterparts (except in terms of erotic content, that is...) and tended to focus on "laddish" interests such as cars, electronics, fishing or pornography.<sup>84</sup> In Germany, men's magazines seem to only really have taken off in the mid- to late 1990s.<sup>85</sup> Thus, as opposed to the very broad and often literally disembodied scope of general weekly periodicals and the very compartmented view of the body in older generation men's magazines, women's magazines were poised to become an obvious and essential resource. Nevertheless, I have punctually relied on articles drawn from a number of more general weekly periodicals such as *stern* and *Focus* –researched by keywords. In the course of the two decades considered, *stern* and *Focus* gradually began to feature more articles on body trends, food, sports and alternative health concerns and also to display ads for cosmetics, etc.

While I had not initially planned to provide a consciously gender-specific focus in my study, gender has become a non-negligible dimension in my narrative on at least three counts. Firstly, because a focus on the body and its shaping or management means that gender provides an essential lens with which to view the evolving status of discourse on bodies –as discussed in the "Under the sign of the body" section in Chapter 3 (*Theory*). Secondly, a focus on "food" and "cosmetics" as case-study areas has a built-in gender bias. Indeed, due to traditional divisions of labour and differentiated grooming cultures, both domains have long been mainly the province of women even if –as we shall see in the case-studies themselves– one can detect a slow but seminal change in gender roles and grooming stereotypes in the course of the decades under consideration.<sup>86</sup> Thirdly, this last aspect obviously limits the types of relevant sources. Thus, my account is perforce gender-flavoured since my main sources are women's magazines.

In general, all the sources quoted provided three different types of archival material, as detailed below:

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<sup>81</sup> Originally launched in the U.S. in 1931 under the title *Apparel Arts* as a men's fashion, it was only in 1983 that it was revamped as a men's lifestyle magazine (cf. e.g. <http://www.magsdirect.com/ggentlemansquarterly-magazine.html>). Much later, i.e. in 1997, it was launched in Germany as a revamp of the ailing *MännerVogue* (cf. Werkmeister, Meike, "Men's Magazines in Germany", 2003, online article: <http://www.theoryhead.com/gender/germany.htm>). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>82</sup> *FHM* was launched in the U.K. in 1985 (cf. e.g. <http://hubpages.com/hub/FHM>) and in Germany in 2001 (cf. Werkmeister, Meike, op. cit.). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>83</sup> *Men's Health* was launched in the U.S. in 1987, the German version in 1995. Cf. <http://www.menshealth.com/mediakit/>; <http://www.magsdirect.com/menshealth-magazine.html>; <http://www.menshealth.de/ihre-werbung-bei-uns.1987.htm>; <http://www.motorpresse.de/de/marken/lifestyle/mens-health/1351>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>84</sup> For an overview of the emergence of lifestyle men's magazines in the U.S. and the U.K., cf. Gauntlett, David, "Men's Magazines and Modern Masculinities", op. cit., pp. 164-189.

<sup>85</sup> For an overview of the emergence of lifestyle magazines in Germany, cf. Werkmeister, Meike, op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> A quick perusal of the cosmetics offer for men in 1980, as reflected in the *Für Sie* women's magazine, still displays a rather limited array of grooming products, mainly aftershave (such as the classics Roger & Gallet, Old Spice or Tabac Original). More often, women are more or less explicitly pictured as mediators, as in an ad for Labello lip salve with a line drawing picturing a woman about to apply the salve on her husband's lips in front of a country house (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1980).

**-General and specialised press articles on fitness and wellness as socio-cultural phenomena.** If they do not provide a true reflection of the popular appropriation of these ideologies, the increasing density/frequency of these articles nevertheless enables one to take stock of the social hype surrounding these trends at particular points in time.

**-Articles on particular aspects of these movements** (especially e.g. functional food, various fitness disciplines, alternative therapies, non-Western medical systems such as Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine, health oases, etc.). Depending on their elaborateness, their tone and critical stance, these articles may help one to also gauge the degree of likely popular familiarity with new or exotic products and processes.

These two types of material have proved essential to determine a relevant period of investigation.

-Finally, **advertising for products, practices and services.** These sources are extremely interesting and challenging but remain controversial. Indeed, depending on the contextualisation of the ad, they offer a privileged vista into producers' and mediators' projected visions of users and the use of specific products. However, these visions remain projections: they may not match or may even heavily distort both real use practices and genuine user profiles. Moreover, it proves extremely challenging to track the concrete effects of advertising on consumers:

The problem, of course, is that the effects of marketing communications are due to a myriad of factors, some related to the characteristics of the communication itself (and, therefore, under the control of the marketer) and some to relatively uncontrollable factors, such as consumer characteristics, marketing communications of competitors, and so forth. Further complicating the problem is the fact that the effects of marketing communications are not necessarily direct. That is, it is exceedingly difficult to separate the effects of media from message variables effects, both in the day-to-day practice of communications management and in empirical research on media effects. Communications and consumer characteristics also interact: it is difficult to partial out the unique effects of communication from the prior attitudes and experiences of consumers who see or hear it.<sup>87</sup>

While there seems to be some conclusive research on the effects of advertising on personal and public health behaviour, especially as it pertains to the consumption of cigarettes and alcohol, there is little on the effects of "healthy living" advertising in general and, when the subject is tackled –as in research on the role between obesity and media consumption– it often focuses on the behaviour of children and teenagers.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Stewart, David W. & Pavlou, Paul A., "The Effects of Media on Marketing Communications", *Media effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Eds Jennings Bryant & Mary Beth Oliver, New York & London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 362-401. Compared to the corresponding chapter in an earlier edition [Stewart, David W. & Ward, Scott, "Media Effects on Advertising", in: *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Eds Jennings Bryant & Dolf Zillman, Hillsdale NJ & Hove UK: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1994, pp. 315-363], the more recent one provides a broader overview of marketing communications than just traditional advertising since it includes insights on newer forms of producer-user interactions, especially since the advent of Web 2.0.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. e.g. Walsh-Childers, Kim & Brown, Jane D., "Effects of Media on Personal and Public Health", *Media effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Eds Jennings Bryant & Mary Beth Oliver, New York & London: Routledge, 2009, pp. 469- 489.

Whereas for some researchers these points may suffice to disqualify the recourse to advertising sources, there seems to be a growing consensus among consumption scholars that publicity is a valuable source to interpret both the cultural context of a product and its use(s). In the absence (or scarcity) of numerous and accessibly unmediated consumer reports, advertising discourse can be seen as a privileged strategy to access a form of culture concentrate that reflects the societal climate of a particular period. As Kathrin Bonacker contends, even if publicity standardises, exaggerates and simplifies real life constellations, by virtue of its primary mission, it must seek to not alienate a contemporary audience, hence potential purchasers. It can thus be analysed as a form of stage-setting device that can only suggest new trends and ideas that are strongly embedded in accepted norms and values. Hence publicity designers *do not create* the ritualised expressions they work with but basically draw from a popular repertoire of representations and idioms since the virtuality of advertising images is bound by the necessity of cultural intelligibility in order to secure commercial success.<sup>89</sup> As Bonacker pointedly sums it up:

This means that due to advertising images' immanent intelligibility imperative, whimsical fantasy is and can only be found in these sources to the extent that normal consumers can make sense of them within their intellectual worlds, hence advertising images (must) have recourse to already available patterns and images.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, it should be noted that the role and effect of advertising is not limited to the pre-purchase phase, it also provides a cultural frame for the consumption of the product once the latter has left the market. By emphasising the value of the product in society, it may serve to remind confused consumers or those plagued with second thoughts that they have made the right choice.

From the justifications I have provided to support a media-based analysis to the description of my sources, the attempt to produce a contained analysis of body ideologies in Germany in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century may appear rather illusory. But my contention is that by limiting the geographical scope and the time bracket of my investigation, what appears to be elusively global phenomena may instead be framed as eminently meaningful trends that dialogue between the local and the global while evolving in an intelligibly cross-fertilizing manner. The following two sections thus aim to both qualify and justify the spatiotemporal dimensions of my study.

### **Geography: why Germany?**

When the time came to choose my dissertation topic, I was particularly intrigued by the prominence of the "wellness wave" in Germany, which seemed to be increasingly overshadowing the "fitness craze". I had become acquainted with both movements in Switzerland, where similar developments had been taking place over the course of the 1980s-90s. But in Germany, the wellness concept seemed even more ubiquitous: not a week elapsed without it making the headlines of a mainstream newspaper and I started noticing the boom of wellness products that went far beyond the realm of health-food shops to

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<sup>89</sup> The ideas in this paragraph are freely quoted from Kathrin Bonacker's *Hyperkörper in der Anzeigenwerbung des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2002, p. 7-8.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8: „Das heisst, dass durch die den Werbebildern immanente Notwendigkeit des Verstanden-Werdens phantasievoll Fiktion nur insoweit dort zu finden ist und sein kann, als sie den Normalverbrauchenden in ihren Gedankenwelten bereits verständlich ist, dass sie also auf vorhandene Grundmuster und Bilder zurückgreift und zurückgreifen muss.“

conquer mainstream supermarkets. Furthermore, according to economic statistics, the turnover generated by this new branch –building on the prior success of fitness– was stupendous.<sup>91</sup> I thus wondered what could motivate contemporary consumers to be so taken in by this new fad.

In parallel, I was reminded of the long-standing tradition of “body cultivation” [Körperkultur] in Germany emerging as early as the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This aspect then led me to question how this historical trajectory might have conditioned the readiness of contemporary German consumers to assimilate a brand of health management that heavily feeds off many of the themes that were already raised in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, the enthusiastic adoption of fitness and wellness in Germany may be read as a form of catching up or as a compensatory measure to modernise the body, after the failure of previous attempts –from the disciplining of industrial bodies to a perverse focus on racially naturalised bodies. Concretely, in the late modern German context, fitness and wellness offer seemingly more individualised and less threatening methods of disciplining the body. These self-designing strategies can be used irrespective of consumers’ ideological background in order to comply with an underlying “neo-Protestant” ethic of everyday life management that still privileges efficient streamlining. Thus, as briefly mentioned in my introduction, I developed my working hypothesis around Germany<sup>93</sup> after having briefly assessed the indigenous market trajectory of body-related technological developments in comparison with other European countries.

In the course of this assessment, I noted that fitness and its implements had been readily assimilated in the whole of Europe, including in the newly liberalised Eastern economies. This was reflected most obviously in the straightforward linguistic adoption of the term in virtually every European language but also in similarities within official and corporate health policies as well as in the range of commodities and services generally offered in these markets. Wellness on the other hand, met with varying success in the late 1990s-early 2000s. In Switzerland (as mentioned above), as well as in Austria and North-Western Europe (that is mainly Britain and Scandinavia) the concept seemed to be relatively ubiquitous. Until recently, however, other countries such as France or Spain, seemed rather reluctant to adopt the buzzword even if many aspects of the trend were readily incorporated into contemporary “body management” without the benefit of an overarching label or ideology.<sup>94</sup> In France, for example, since the 1980s, spas and seaside resorts have been

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Chapter 1 (*Introduction*) for a short discussion on the volume of the wellness market in the early 2000s.

<sup>92</sup> I discuss some of the historical aspects of fitness and wellness in relation with Germany in Chapter 4 (*History*).

<sup>93</sup> More specifically, I have focused on former West Germany before reunification and on the entire Republic after reunification.

<sup>94</sup> For instance, in the early 2000s, any personal inquiries about the popularity of wellness in France within a broad circle of French researchers and acquaintances invariably led to the following counter-question: “*mais c’est quoi le ‘ouellness’?*”. One can perhaps argue that countries with a Latin culture generally tend to show more linguistic scepticism and cultural resistance when it comes to adopting Anglo-Saxon terminology and trends. Another hypothesis could be a more overt resistance to body disciplining or the existence of such an implicit culture of *well-being* in southern European countries –evident in the worship of good food and subtle fragrances, the recourse to traditional remedies or the practice of “farniente”...– that a theoretical conceptualisation of wellness may simply seem superfluous. But these are just speculations... Italy seems to have translated wellness into the more locally comprehensible „benessere“ but I do not know if it completely overlaps with the wellness constellation as envisioned further north. Cf. e.g. “Dalla salute al benessere: i

witnessing the soaring popularity of “talassothérapie” –a type of spa therapy based on the benefits of seawater and maritime climate as well as various types of massage, cosmetic treatments, healthy diet and some movement– not to mention other holistic body therapies. As in other manifestations of wellness, however, thalassothérapie is not really revolutionary since “taking the waters” has as rich a tradition in France as in other European countries. The situation seems rather different in Eastern European countries, where until the early 2000s, wellness did not really seem to have found a niche. At this point, it is still too early to tell whether this was due to an understandable time lag (the more “luxurious” or “esoteric” tenets of wellness –as opposed to the more straightforward fitness postulates– would obviously not be a priority in economies bearing the brunt of a difficult transition) or whether there are also deeper cultural undercurrents that might have initially hindered its adoption in these countries.<sup>95</sup>

Thus on the basis of these findings –not to mention more obvious practical reasons such as the physical and linguistic accessibility of sources– I decided to focus on Germany because of its particular body history and its enthusiastic reception of both fitness and wellness technologies. However, even though I have primarily focused on Germany, whenever appropriate in the course of my narrative, I have also freely drawn on sources from the wider German-speaking community, that is mainly Austria and the (Swiss)-German speaking part of Switzerland where developments have often evolved in close connection, due to cultural bonds influenced by both language and media.<sup>96</sup>

This said, I should however emphasise that the North American context has provided a welcome and necessary counterpoint in my examination of both fitness and wellness, since these phenomena cannot be divorced from the quasi permanent cross-pollination that took and still takes place between both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, one observes striking parallelisms between the two locations, often with a time lag. In the earlier days, Europe seems to have taken the lead in terms of healthy sporting developments whereas, especially since WWII, North America now often seems to be

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contributi istituzionali”, online: [http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/essere\\_benessere/salute3.shtml](http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/essere_benessere/salute3.shtml) [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>95</sup> My current knowledge of this context is extremely limited. However, wellness seems to be gradually leaving its mark, at least in terms of tourism offers. Cf. e.g. “The fitness and wellness industry is also growing in eastern Europe!”, *Fitness Tribune*, 84, June-July 2003, pp. 22-23, online: [http://www.fitnesstribune.com/arc/ift84\\_1.htm](http://www.fitnesstribune.com/arc/ift84_1.htm); Merholz, Anne-Christine & Schulze, Kristin „Entspannen in Osteuropa: Luxus-Wellness für den schmalen Geldbeutel“, *Bild*, 30.02.2008, online: <http://www.bild.de/reise/2008/schmal/wellness-in-osteuropa-4113992.bild.html>; or “Slovakia: Wellness is the word in the alps of the east”, *The Independent*, 20.09.2009, online: <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/slovakia-wellness-is-the-word-in-the-alps-of-the-east-1790281.html>: “The term “wellness” is widely used in the High Tatras”. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that what may represent an attractively cheap alternative for western visitors or the new eastern European elite most probably remains an unattainable luxury for the average eastern European consumer. The link between wellness and purchasing power is discussed for the case of the former East German territory, ironically emphasising the danger of prejudices and foregone conclusions, without coming to definite conclusions in the following: Dassler, Anna, “Ayurveda und Hartz IV. Rainald Grebe besingt die Ostdeutschen Wellnessregionen”, *Weichspüler in Kunst und Konsum, Querformat*, op. cit., pp. 90-95. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>96</sup> Even if institutionalised health-care structures display considerable national variations, media interpenetration between the three countries is well-established through newspapers (e.g. the German weekly *Die Zeit* or the Swiss daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* can count on a readership that spills over into the neighbouring countries), TV channels, as well as transnational publishing and distribution structures.

providing the seminal impulses –in fact so much so that the casual European observer may be tempted to dismiss both fitness and wellness as purely American fads.<sup>97</sup> This perception thus mirrors the widespread popular impression that “novelty” and “progress” travel mainly eastwards. But, as I am about to show in the following section as well as in Chapter 4 (*History*), fitness and wellness are truly transatlantic ideologies, even if their understanding and appropriation have proved differentiated depending on the cultural context.<sup>98</sup>

### **Time frame: why focus on the “late twentieth century”?**

The “Late Twentieth Century” in my dissertation’s title points to the time frame of my study. I have mainly concentrated on the period spanning from the early 1980s to the late 1990s, i.e. approximately two decades. I decided to focus on this period because to my mind it neatly frames a conscious crystallisation –some might argue for a “turning point” or an “acme”– of many lifestyle health trends that (re-)emerged in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and evolved at different paces in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the one hand, this crystallisation is characterised by a renewed focus on the body. As hinted at in Chapter 3 (*Theory*) and shown in Chapter 5 (*Food Case-study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*), one witnesses a convergence of various interests in body design –a body seen both as a source and a bearer of identity, an entity with multifarious overlapping needs that can only be met by implementing a wide variety of strategies. On the other hand, the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century display a striking, increasingly seamless merger between “natural” and “technological” perspectives on body design, two realms that long appeared unbridgeable.<sup>99</sup> Last but not least, the most decisive criterion for my temporal focus is the transition to a quasi-unbridled commercialisation of health and beauty practices as well as a commodification of health and beauty values –an aspect I discuss at length in the “Commodification” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*), especially as it pertains to the “recombinance” metaphor.

This gradual paradigm change was ushered in by transformations that would prove crucial for the late modern focus on appropriate body management. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the most prominent early developments are:

- the emergence of a new vision of sports, emphasising individual endeavour as a form of personal health promotion and moving away from group (or national) cohesion and character-building towards the active promotion of individual achievement, aesthetics, fun and satisfaction or pleasure.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> In my opinion, this is due in no small part to the linguistic roots of fitness and wellness as overarching commercial labels. This aspect, however, obscures the fact that there are a number of closely connected concepts in the various European languages that point to similar phenomena such as “benessere” in Italian, which I have discussed in a prior footnote.

<sup>98</sup> A good comparative perspective is provided in the following: *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, Ed Karin A. E. Volkwein, Münster, New York, München, Berlin: Waxmann, 1998.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. the “Technology” section in Chapter 3 (*Theory*) for a more in-depth analysis of the cultural trends underlying this phenomenon.

<sup>100</sup> On this trend, cf. e.g. Becker, Peter, „Verheißungen der Körpers: bewegungskulturelle Praxen im Prozess der fortschreitenden Modernisierung“, *Neue Sportkultur*, Ed. Rainer Pawelke, Regensburg: Projekt Traumfabrik & Lichtenau: AOL-Verlag, 1995, pp. 143-150; as well as Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., esp. Chapter 2 “The Roots of Fitness”. However, it should be emphasised here that the new trend obviously did not replace or even overshadow the practice of group sports.

- a new consciousness of the body –a good example of which is women’s appropriation of bicycling or more generally “sports” clothing, which fostered a feeling of increased freedom.<sup>101</sup> Significantly, from the 1920s in Germany, the sportsman was described as the epitome of the “modern person”.<sup>102</sup>
- the generalisation of retail outlets specialising in “DIY health”, such as *Reformhäuser* [German health-food shops],<sup>103</sup> drugstores, health fairs, etc.

For the period after WWII, but with earlier roots, the following factors should be taken into account:

- added free-time and a new conception of leisure management.<sup>104</sup>
- the generalisation of private bathrooms in individual homes<sup>105</sup>, therefore implying a new privileged space to perform acts of daily or weekly hygiene and body care. Linked to this phenomenon, the increasingly frequent/regular use of common mass-produced cosmetics (soap, shampoo, deodorant, after-shave, perfume, face cream, etc.), leading to a transformation of personal care and hygiene patterns.<sup>106</sup>
- in the wake of the “post-war binge” [the so-called “Freßwelle”], the gradual emergence of a new food and drink culture<sup>107</sup>, initially moving away from regional,

<sup>101</sup> Cf. e.g. Ebert, Anne-Katrin, *Radelnde Nationen, Die Geschichte des Fahrrads in Deutschland und den Niederlanden bis 1940*, Frankfurt a/M: Campus, 2010.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Becker, Frank, „Der Sportler als „moderner Menschentyp“. Entwürfe für eine neue Körperlichkeit in der Weimarer Republik“, in *Körper mit Geschichte: der menschliche Körper als Ort der Selbst- und Weltdeutung*, Eds Clemens Wischermann & Stefan Haas, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, pp. 223-243. Cf. also *Fitness in American Culture: images of health, sport and the body, 1830-1940*, Ed. Kathryn Grover, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.

<sup>103</sup> On the history of so-called „Reformhäuser“, cf.: „Im Jahr 1900 eröffnete in Wuppertal das erste „Reformhaus®“, das auch so hieß: „Reformhaus® Jungbrunnen“. Der Name Reformhaus® wurde seit dieser Zeit für solche Geschäfte verwendet, in denen nicht nur Ware verkauft, sondern auch das Ideengut der Lebensreformer auf vielfältige Weise verbreitet wurde.“ This quote was initially accessed on this website: <http://www.neuform.de/branche/geschichte.htm> in March 2011; it is now unavailable there but accessible on another website: [http://www.natuerlich-magazin.de/natuerlich\\_md\\_2008.pdf](http://www.natuerlich-magazin.de/natuerlich_md_2008.pdf), p. 2. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>104</sup> An *Allensbacher Bericht* [poll report published by the Allensbacher Institut für Demoskopie, in Allensbach am Bodensee] dating back to 1990 and entitled “Einstellung zu Arbeit und Freizeit in der Bundesrepublik und in der DDR“ (Nr. 9) [attitude towards work and free time in the Federal Republic and the GDR] states that Germans’ estimation of their average free time in 1952 was 1 hour and 33 minutes, increasing to 3 hours and 59 minutes in 1990. Unfortunately, a potential gender differentiation is not quoted in the statistics (which is perhaps a good indication of the conservative stance of this particular polling agency...).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. e.g. Trupat, Christina, „Bade Zu Hause! Zur Geschichte des Badezimmers in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts“, *Technikgeschichte*, Band 63, 1996, Heft 3, pp. 219-236 and Kramer, Klaus, *Das private Hausbad 1850 - 1950 und die Entwicklung des Sanitärhandwerks*, Schiltach: Hans Grohe GmbH & Co. KG/ Museum, 1997.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. e.g. Brede, Christina, *Das Instrument der Sauberkeit. Die Entwicklung der Massenproduktion von Feinseifen in Deutschland 1850 bis 2000*, Münster: Waxmann, 2005, esp. chapters 6, 7 & 8; Cf. also Smith, Virginia, *Clean: A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, esp. Chapter 10; “The Body Beautiful”; or a more popular account: Ashenburg, Katherine, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized - History*, Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2007 & New York: North Point Press, 2007, esp. Chapter 9 “The Household Shrine: 1950 to the Present”.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. e.g. Wildt, Michael, „Abschied von der ‚Freßwelle‘ oder: die Pluralisierung des Geschmacks. Essen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der fünfziger Jahre“, *Kulturthema Essen. Ansichten einer neuen Wissenschaft*, Eds Alois Wierlacher, Gerhard Neumann & Hans Jürgen Teuteberg, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993, pp. 211-225 or Andersen, Arne, *Der Traum vom guten Leben. Alltags- und Konsumgeschichte vom Wirtschaftswunder bis heute*, Frankfurt a/Main & New York: Campus Verlag, 1997, esp. „Die Freßwelle“, pp. 35-89.

traditional produce towards convenience and exotic meals (at first mainly Mediterranean or American before moving on to more global flavours);<sup>108</sup> the emergence of light or diet products in the 1980s (linked to the popularisation of artificial sweetener brands); and the boom of functional foods (e.g. special margarines, yogurts, drinks, cereal bars, etc.) from the late 1990s onwards in parallel with a gradual return to more regional & authentic “slow food”.<sup>109</sup>

- As a reaction to the excesses generated by the post-war binge, new public health imperatives shaped to address the German population’s overweight, lack of movement, etc. that are perceived as triggering so-called lifestyle or civilisation diseases (e.g. gradual fat and sugar anathema, consciousness of the bodily strain engendered by office work and ensuing lack of movement).<sup>110</sup>

The radical questioning of traditional values –such as the feminist reclaiming of the body or the birthing of a new ecological consciousness to counter the post-war techno-craze– that characterised the cultural climate of westernised societies from the mid-1960s, paved the way for a cognitive framework that would allow for:

- a growing distrust in mainstream medicine as a cure-all and a shift towards preventive and alternative medical practices.<sup>111</sup>
- the increasingly aggressive marketing of holistic and so-called “natural” products.<sup>112</sup>

From the 1980s onwards, the following trends can be observed:

- the gradual acknowledgement of an aging AND demanding population segment (i.e. the so-called “baby boomer” generation) and linked to it, the promising health market vista it uncovers.
- a growing individualisation<sup>113</sup> and dissemination of predominantly “disciplinary” movement practices (e.g. various fitness classes, jogging, the rougher martial arts, etc.) in parallel with the regular practice of more “contemplative/curative” movement practices (e.g. yoga, qi-gong, guided relaxation, etc.).<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> The popularity of the so-called “Toast Hawaii” (involving such “modern” ingredients as pre-sliced bread [Toastbrot], a slice of canned pineapple, a slice of industrially processed cheese and a ruby-red candied cherry) in the German-speaking world is a good example of this trend. Cf. e.g. Iken, Katja, “Deutschlands Erster Fernsehkoch: Mister Toast Hawaii”, *einestages Zeitgeschichten auf Spiegelonline*, 04.04.2008: [http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/1716/mister\\_toast\\_hawaii.html](http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/1716/mister_toast_hawaii.html). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>109</sup> Most of these developments are analysed in Chapter 5 (*Food Case-Study*).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Chapter 3 (*History*).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Both trends are obvious in Chapters 5 (*Food Case-Study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. e.g. Pellin, „Elio, Leitbild und Zerrbild. Der sportlich-dynamische Körper“, *Fitness: Schönheit kommt von aussen*, Eds Andreas Schwab & Ronny Trachsel, Bern: Palma 3 Verlag, 2003, p. 94: „Seit den 1950er Jahren bildeten sich immer wieder Bewegungspraktiken wie etwa das Surfen, Skateboard- oder Mountainbikefahren heraus, die nicht zu sozialer Disziplinierung führten, sondern die im Gegenteil zumindest in ihren Anfangsphasen als Praxis widerspenstiger Individualität verstanden wurden.“

<sup>114</sup> Surprisingly, given their great popularity, there is next to no serious large-scale historical or sociological/anthropological study on the appropriation of East Asian martial arts in the western world. The only book –which I have found– that tackles some aspects is: *Martial Arts in the Modern World*, Eds Thomas A. Green & Joseph R. Svinth, Westport (CT) & London: Praeger, 2003. Moreover, I have not been able to access any reliable statistics on their dissemination, be it in Germany or western countries. However, martial arts’ popularity in Germany, and more broadly in Europe, can be empirically assessed by surveying the number of

- linked to the above, the exponential dissemination of commercial health clubs, gyms, studios, etc.<sup>115</sup>
- the consolidation and mainstreaming of a bicephalous trend in the field of cosmetics with “sci-tech” goods on the one hand and “natural” products on the other, even though their intrinsic nature can be contested and the divide between them is increasingly and consciously bridged by a number of cosmetic companies.<sup>116</sup>
- the ready availability (and increasing affordability) of high-tech health appliances that can be enrolled in everyday body practices (e.g. pulse or body fat monitors).
- a more widespread acceptance of invasive cosmetic treatment and surgery enrolled to custom-design bodies.<sup>117</sup>

Having sweepingly and superficially condensed a number of trends here, I should however emphasise that many of them have earlier roots than suggested by my chronology. For example, a heightened interest in dieting fads can be detected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century already.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, an early “fitness” craze can be detected in the course of the 1970s in Germany with the very popular *Trimm Dich* programme.<sup>119</sup> But there again a less myopic glance takes

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dojos or studios offering a variety of traditional and hybrid/modern arts, cf. e.g. the databank of <http://www.kampfkunst.de/> under “DOJOS” and “n. Stilen”, there I have counted 5167 listed dojos. In contrast, there were only 2305 dojos listed on [http://www.kampfkunst-board.info/index.php?page=schulen&bk\\_land=1&bk\\_choice=land](http://www.kampfkunst-board.info/index.php?page=schulen&bk_land=1&bk_choice=land). The discrepancy between figures provided can be explained by the fact that different disciplines were included (or not), that a number of dojos are not registered in these directories (my former karate and aikido dojos appear on neither...) and the fact that these non-official websites cannot be expected to list every martial art and associated dojos as well as update them regularly. Even martial arts associations cannot be counted on as comprehensive sources since, there again, many styles hence dojos are not affiliated with an “official” association. Furthermore many associations include more than one discipline: there are e.g. 62 associations listed under “karate” here: <http://www.kampfkunst.de/verband/verbaendemKarate.cfm>. Nevertheless, even these rather nebulous figures do provide some measure of martial art popularity in Germany. As to yoga, even though it is just as difficult to estimate the current number of practitioners in Germany –for reasons similar to those listed above for martial arts, there is at least considerably more literature to be obtained: cf. e.g. Baier, Karl, *Yoga auf dem Weg nach Westen*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998 [a history of yoga reception from Antiquity to the 1930s], De Michelis, Elizabeth, *A History of Modern Yoga*, London & New York: Continuum, 2005 [a history of modern yoga from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century]; Singleton, Mark, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2010 [a more controversial history of modern posture practice seen as the product of a broad and rather recent cultural admixture]; A more popular overview is provided in: Cushman, Anne, “The New Yoga”, *Yoga Journal*, no date, online edition available here: <http://www.yogajournal.com/lifestyle/281>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>115</sup> However, it should be born in mind that commercial clubs [Turnanstalten] –i.e. boasting no overt political or religious affiliation– were already being founded in Germany in the 1820s and were well disseminated by the 1930s, with many entrepreneurs even boasting fitness franchises in many countries. Cf. e.g. Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd, „Zwischen ‚Beruf‘ und ‚Berufung‘. Zur Geschichte der Kommerziellen Fitnessanbieter“, *Fitness: Schönheit kommt von aussen*, op. cit., esp. pp. 37-46. Thus what is implied here is that from the 1970s in the U.S. and the 1980s in Germany, they have become ubiquitous.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*). Cf. also Maasen, Sabine, „Schönheitschirurgie. Schnittflächen flexiblen Selbstmanagements“, in: *Artifizielle Körper – Lebendige Technik. Technische Modellierungen des Körpers in historischer Perspektive*, Ed. Barbara Orland, Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2005, pp. 239-260.

<sup>118</sup> Indeed, if one considers dieting not just under the slimming perspective then dieting is as old as humanity itself, since all aboriginal peoples made and still make specific food and fasting choices according to season, gender, age, physical condition, religious or spiritual orientation, etc. Cf. also Chapter 3 (*History*).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Mörath, Verena, *Die Trimm-Aktionen des Deutschen Sportbundes zur Bewegungs- und Sportförderung in der BRD 1970 bis 1994*, Berlin: Veröffentlichungsreihe der Forschungsgruppe Public Health Forschungsschwerpunkt Arbeit, Sozialstruktur und Sozialstaat Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

us back to the nation-building sports obsessions championed by the Nazi movement or even further back to the so-called *Lebensreform*, the hygienist movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the exercise regimen propounded by *Turnvater Jahn*, the father of modern German gymnastics –and, beyond that, to Roman and Greek authors.<sup>120</sup> Organisationally and ideologically as well, a number of practices and ideas that appear very contemporary have been present for a long time –albeit in often watered-down or more marginal forms.<sup>121</sup> For example, Thus, depending on my readers' perspectives, my consciously limited focus may seem guilty of some arbitrariness.

Nevertheless, to summarise my argument until now: these turning points can be seen as underlying the main hypothesis of my dissertation, namely that, during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, technology, commodification and embodied consciousness –none of them new phenomena– came together to redefine the healthy body in ways that, if not unknown, had remained rather marginal until then. In the course of these years, one witnesses the crystallisation of a new vision, the vision of a holistic body perceived as a locus of individual expertise and pro-active agency harnessed to consciously construct the self within a culture increasingly defined by consumption and the conscious creation of individual lifestyles:

By providing a series of ‚expert knowledges‘, for instance in relation to lifestyle, health, fashion and beauty, consumer culture is understood from a postmodern perspective to have contributed to an increasingly reflexive understanding of the self, an awareness that identity is chosen and constructed. As Giddens (1991) has pointed out, the self in ‚late modernity‘ has become a reflexive project; it is created (and re-created) through a plurality of consumer choices and lifestyle decisions. In his view, individuals can now draw on a wide repertoire of symbolic goods with which to fashion and display their own identities. According to Featherstone (1991a), the ‚new heroes‘ of consumer culture display their individuality in the

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(WZB), Februar 2005. Available online here: <http://skylla.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2005/i05-302.pdf>. As a child and teenager growing up in the Switzerland of the 1970s-80s, I became acquainted with the Swiss version of the „Trimm-Dich-Pfad“, (literally “keep fit trail”) –one of the most popular components of the “Trimm Dich” campaign– known as a “vitaparcours”, “parcoursvita” or “percorsovita” (in the Swiss-German, -French and -Italian speaking parts respectively) and sponsored by the *Zurich* insurance company. Cf. <http://www.vitaparcours.ch/d/html/>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>120</sup> Cf. For a more in-depth discussion of some of these movements and their impacts cf. Chapter 3 (*History*).

<sup>121</sup> On fitness as lifestyle and its holistic effects, cf. e.g. Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd, „Zwischen ‚Beruf‘ und ‚Berufung‘. Zur Geschichte der Kommerziellen Fitnessanbieter“, *Fitness: Schönheit kommt von aussen*, op. cit., p. 43: „So ging die Fitnessbranche der Zeit um 1900 mit einem Körperbild hausieren, das auch die Funktion eines Alltagsratgebers besass und Lebensstilelemente vermittelte. Dabei hofften die Sportschulenbesitzer und die Autoren der Fitnessbroschüren zwar auch auf einen steigenden Umsatz, wen sie betonten, dass die Ausübung eines Trainingssystems gleichzeitig auch half, den Alltag generell zu bewältigen und noch dazu Erfolg im Leben zu haben. Aber darüber hinaus war man auch von der „sozialen“ Aufgabe erfüllt, den jeweiligen Anhängern den Weg zum „richtigen“ Leben zu weisen: Hier gingen ‚Beruf‘ und ‚Berufung‘ Hand in Hand. Die Argumentationskette der Fitnessbranche richtet sich dabei auf die Behauptung, dass eine umfassende Fitness nicht nur zu mehr Kraft, Elastizität, Durchhaltevermögen, Attraktivität und Gesundheit des Körpers führe, sondern auch psychische Befindlichkeiten wie Disziplin, Ausgeglichenheit und Selbstbehauptung fördere. Damit sei man jedem untrainierten Rivalen im Kampf um privaten und beruflichen Erfolg in der Ära des Hochkapitalismus weit überlegen.“ On body work and the blending of fitness strategies, cf. Trachsel, Ronny, „Fitness und Körperkult. Entwicklungen des Körperbewusstseins im 20. Jahrhundert“, *ibid.*, p. 18 & Möhring, Maren, „Das Müllern. Systematisches Fitness-Training zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts“, *ibid.*, p. 82. On self-surveillance and self-control, cf. Möhring, Maren, *ibid.*, p. 82.

particular way they assemble goods, clothes, practices and appearances and design them together into a lifestyle.<sup>122</sup>

It is in this context that I wanted to explore the significance of fitness and wellness as they contribute to the creation of lifestyles, and ultimately identities. But why did I focus on food and cosmetics in my case-studies instead of on fitness merchandising or the alpine wellness resort boom?

### Food and cosmetics as healthy lifestyle technologies

There are, of course, a number of angles I could have chosen in order to apprehend the contemporary impact of fitness and wellness –including the above. For example, authors such as e.g. Jennifer Maguire<sup>123</sup> or Roberta Sassatelli<sup>124</sup> have provided us with seminal studies on the more straightforward “physical culture” aspect of fitness, as it is practised in health clubs or gyms. But in my case-studies, I decided to focus on food and cosmetics precisely because they did not emerge with either fitness or wellness. As key domains of everyday life –which, admittedly, are also linked to the more or less conscious cultivation of the body– they function as good barometers to gauge the quasi-ubiquitous penetration of these ideologies and provide us with a much broader picture of their stakes.<sup>125</sup>

Compared to more obvious “social identity goods” such as sports cars or designer dresses, which have long lost a purely functional association with mobility and protection in order to catalyse distinction, food and cosmetics may not initially strike one as quintessential “lifestyle products”. However when considering the findings of my case-studies and taking into account the definition provided by Mika Pantzar, the link may appear more obvious:

[...] lifestyle products are purposefully created for specific lifestyles by explicit marketing efforts [...] lifestyle products are historical outcomes of transformation processes where functions of goods change in time. Original needs and functions of products transform when products diffuse widely, and when consumers and producers meet each other. [...] a lifestyle product tends to integrate different practices, actors and material objects in one site and place (or product), both on a microscopic level of individual household and on the macroscopic level of society.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Jagger, Elizabeth, “Consumer Bodies”, in: *The Body, Culture and Society: an introduction*, Eds Philip Hancock, Bill Hughes, Elizabeth Jagger & al., Buckingham & Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2000, p. 52

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Sassatelli, Roberta, op. cit., pp. 3-4.. Roberta Sassatelli wishes it to clearly distinguish her venture from that of Barry Glassner or the aforementioned Jennifer Maguire in that her aim is to provide an ethnographic narrative of lived culture “to account for the lived experiences –of fun and frustration- of fitness gyms’ participants”. Inevitably, these experiences negotiate with images of social classification, such as class and gender. But my emphasis is on the *negotiation* of distinction rather than on *objectified distinctions*.”

<sup>125</sup> As Anja Kirig, a German “futuurologist” neatly puts it when talking about the LOHAS (lifestyles of health and sustainability) trend: „Und ganz oft kann man eben auch sagen, dass Foodmärkte wie Seismographen für andere Branchen sind.“ Cf. „Sind wir nicht alle ein bisschen LOHAS?“ [Interview mit Zukunftsforscherin Anja Kirig von Bettina Dunkel], ON3, Bayerischer Rundfunk, 01.04.2010, available online here: <http://on3.de/element/6471/interview-mit-zukunftsforscherin-anja-kirig-sind-wir-nicht-alle-ein-bisschen-lohas#/element/6471/interview-mit-zukunftsforscherin-anja-kirig-sind-wir-nicht-alle-ein-bisschen-lohas>.

[Website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>126</sup> Pantzar, Mika, “Towards Innovations of Leisure: Manufactured Leisure”, Preparatory Comments for the workshop (Vierumäki, Finland, September 6–7th 2004), p. 7. [unpublished]

Pantzar's definition first implies that lifestyle products are the fruit of a conscious conceptualisation that is steered by marketers –as obvious in the shower gel discourses I quoted in Chapter 1 (*Introduction*). But these efforts do not take place in a cultural void: new product meanings must build onto older meanings in order to modify them. This is particularly obvious in the case of food, where contemporary advertising discourse is replete with references to past diets and tastes but usually emphasises the need for new (usually lighter) products. Moreover, the wide –increasingly global– commercial dissemination of food and cosmetics also means that the arena of interpretation around them grows to include the perspectives of a number of actors, i.e. not just producers' visions but also those of various mediators, such as lifestyle magazines, and, even more crucially, those of consumers. Thus, in order to establish economically fruitful communication between producers and consumers, mediation has to build on the cultural capital and experience of consumers, linking (and contrasting) their previous practices with older products to new products and practices. As Pantzar puts it: *“One important passage point of product meanings moving from producers to consumers (and occasionally from consumers to producers) is the mediasphere where both consumers and producers ‘learn’ about modern lifestyle.*<sup>127</sup> The media sphere thus reflects continuities but also disruptions or tensions in the negotiation of new trends.<sup>128</sup>

In this sense, the trajectories of food and cosmetics are particularly emblematic. In the case of food, meanings have evolved considerably: a traditional orientation has been gradually replaced by an exotic curiosity as well as the “need” for convenience, functional and natural products, reflecting increasingly taxing lifestyles. Cosmetics were much earlier embedded in lifestyle issues since preserving the health and beauty of the skin has long been perceived as a multifaceted enterprise but, even in this case, a discourse and image analysis uncovers the increasing tension between rationally disciplined skincare and a more pampering approach.<sup>129</sup> Finally, beyond the fitness and wellness dimensions, food and cosmetics have proved to be key fields to analyse the merging of technology, commodification and embodied consciousness under the sign of the body –four dimensions I analyse closely in the following *Theory* chapter.

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<sup>127</sup> Pantzar, Mika, *ibid.*, p. 8. [emphasis in original]

<sup>128</sup> My discussion of Mika Pantzar's concepts is partly drawn from a previous paper: Bingle, Gwen, “Working out for well-being: how fitness and wellness have reframed the paradoxes of body leisure”, *Manufacturing Leisure*, Helsinki: National Consumer Research Centre, 2005, pp. 235-255, esp. 245-246, online publication: [http://www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/files/4717/2005\\_01\\_publications\\_manufacturingleisure.pdf](http://www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/files/4717/2005_01_publications_manufacturingleisure.pdf). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Jones, Geoffrey, “Blonde and blue-eyed? Globalizing beauty, c. 1945-c. 1980”, *Economic History Review*, 61, 1, 2008, pp. 125–154, p. 125: *“The beauty industry has a number of distinctive characteristics which make it of unusual interest, however, including the fact that it appeared relatively late, that most of its products were marketed initially to women, that it became characterized by large advertising budgets, that it spanned the health/science and aesthetics/beauty arenas, that demand was shaped by deep-seated cultural and societal norms, and that its products affect—in an intimate fashion—how individuals perceive themselves and others. There is compelling research from a range of social sciences that there is a ‘beauty premium’. Physical attractiveness, which may be enhanced by the products of this industry, exercises a major impact on individual lifestyles, ranging from the ability to attract sexual partners to lifetime career opportunities and earnings.”*

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORY AT THE INTERSECTION

*Weil der Körper sich nicht selber auszudrücken vermag, bedürfen alle Menschen einer Sprache, um das mitzuteilen, was diesen betrifft, was sie mit diesem in Zusammenhang bringen, was sie, vermittelt über ihre körperlichen Wahrnehmungen und Empfindungen, bewegt.*<sup>130</sup>

*Philipp Sarasin & Jakob Tanner*

#### Introduction

The time span (two decades: 1980s & 1990s) of my investigation is relatively brief and it is anchored in very recent history. Moreover, the geographical context (Germany) is relatively contained. However, the decision to frame my study at the crossroads between four vast domains –body, technology, commodification and consciousness- necessarily entails that I will neither be able to draw on a homogeneous set of theoretical backgrounds, nor do justice to the large bodies of literature generated in each of these realms. Moreover, my framework will necessarily have to be transdisciplinary since the body, technology, commodification or consciousness have never been the sole province of a particular discipline. Indeed, history, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy, to name but a few, all boast fertile –if sometimes relatively young– traditions in these fields. I will therefore use the words of my title as a thread to lead the way into the heterogeneous theoretical framing of my study.

Another important caveat I should mention before examining “under the sign of the body”, “technology”, “commodification” and “embodied consciousness” is that, due to the focus of my dissertation, these fields are very densely intertwined. Indeed, the construction of my title suggests that the three last terms are subordinated or at least coloured by the first one: “the sign of the body”. It is thus difficult to define one of the domains without at least alluding to the other(s) since, by ascribing them to a sign, I aim to show how the concreteness of bodies, technology and consumption –in a sense the hardware– is flavoured, steered and made slippery by a symbolic quest for “healthy” meaning or at least sense-building. Commodification, for instance, takes on a special aura when linked to the body: even without going to the extremes of slavery or venal sex, the extreme marketing of bodily health is still perceived as ethically disturbing if not obscene. Furthermore, radical commodification is hardly conceivable outside of a (post-)industrial, hence technology-intensive everyday realm. And bodies in the late modern period have merged so conspicuously and inextricably with (high)-technology<sup>131</sup> that explaining the former without

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<sup>130</sup> *Physiologie und industrielle Gesellschaft: Studien zur Verwissenschaftlichung des Körpers im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Eds Philipp Sarasin & Jakob Tanner, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1998, p. 20: “Because the body is unable to express itself verbally, all humans require a language in order to communicate what pertains to it, what they associate with it, what affects them as it is mediated by bodily perceptions and sensations.”

<sup>131</sup> Of course, one can argue that during humankind’s entire (pre-)history, technology has always been used to modify and condition the body: e.g. earrings, neck-rings, scalp shaping, circumcision and genital shaping or mutilation, piercing, scarification etc. as well as all manner of bodily disciplines including hunting, sailing, agricultural or warfare techniques, etc. However, what is meant here is what –from our limited perspective at least– can be described as a more ubiquitous, commodified and relatively mindless relationship with industrially-produced everyday technologies (such as computers, toothbrushes or shoes) on the one hand and,

referring to the latter has become simply impossible, just as it has become difficult to separate technology from its experiential ramifications, or debates around the body as sign or text from discussions about embodied consciousness. I will nevertheless try to make the articulations between these fields as clear as possible.

To some extent, I would also like to belie the *Theory* heading of this chapter. Indeed, even though I will be drawing on a number of theoretical sources to develop useful definitions, interpretations and analytical strategies and categories, the following sub-chapters will also include a number of contemporary examples or mini case-studies to illustrate points whenever appropriate, especially in the “Commodification” section. Besides contributing to a less stodgy narrative, this strategy is aimed at assessing current developments, before moving on to a historical contextualisation that will be provided in Chapter 4 (*History*) as well as to Chapters 5 (*Food Case-Study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*). My initial shunning of historical depth should not be read as an attempt to subsequently impose contemporary or seemingly a-historical categories and rationales on historical material instead of evolving categories and rationales empirically through a slow accretion of findings. Rather, because my moorings are self-consciously transdisciplinary and thus entail a potentially dangerous blurring of definitions, theoretical references and analytical tools, I want the reader to be aware of the particular situative elements of my study before applying fuzzy concepts indiscriminately upon historical sources.

On a more personal note, as a transdisciplinary researcher, history primarily matters to me when I can relate it to contemporary developments and questionings. The sequence of my text thus reflects the sequence of my intellectual enquiry into the health field: I first became aware of fitness and wellness through a personal and contemporary encounter. The products on my supermarket shelves, the flyers in my letter box, the articles in so many newspapers, conversations with friends, private health challenges, etc. were the elements that motivated my research. Only subsequently, did I deepen a superficial awareness of the historical roots because I wanted to know where all this “body madness” stemmed from and how it had evolved.

### **Under the sign of the body**

*There are many different (and even conflicting) reasons for the resurrection of the body as a site of diverse and almost devotional attention in contemporary culture. It can be explained as a product of social conformity (to acquire certain socially endorsed and well-advertised body forms) but also as the result of heightened individualism. It can be seen as the gift of technological freedom but also as a reaction to our technological enslavement and our consequent fear of body atrophy. Loss of religious sentiment is no doubt a major cause of the body boom, but heightened religious interest is also responsible for much of the New Age fascination with somatics, particularly with Asian approaches.<sup>132</sup>*

Why has the westernized world become so obsessed with bodies and their management? In the above quote, Richard Shusterman enumerates some of the most popular reasons that

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on the other, the increasingly self-reflexive recourse to so-called high-tech procedures to consciously modify, enhance or even design the body such as plastic surgery, IVF or gene therapy. In both cases, I would contend that in westernised late modern economies, these technological webs have become increasingly difficult to escape since they even encroach on the conception and antenatal phases.

<sup>132</sup> Shusterman, Richard, *Performing Live*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 157.

are commonly put forth both in the European and the North American media as well as scholarly contributions.<sup>133</sup> There is no doubt that all of these factors do contribute to the body phenomenon and I will try to unravel how they are articulated into a new body ethic. But I will also emphasise the historical continuities and disruptions underlying this development, showing that most of these ideas have roots that can be traced back to the alternative health movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century or the hygienic theories of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that exploited concepts already promoted during the Enlightenment - thus harkening back to motifs rooted in Antiquity or even beyond.

Indeed, at this point it should be emphasised that, historically and sociologically speaking, the only characteristic constant in the perception and treatment of the body seems to be flux:

In sum, the body has been, and still is, constructed in almost as many ways as there are individuals; it seems to be all things to all people. Thus the body is defined as good and bad, tomb and temple, machine and garden, cloak and prison, sacred and secular, friend and enemy, cosmic and mystical, one with mind and soul or separate, private or public, personal or the property of the state, clock or car, to varying degrees plastic, bionic, communal, selected from a catalogue or engineered, a corpse or the self. Any construction of the body, however, is also a construction of the self as embodied; and as such influences not only how the body is treated but also life is lived. Some love the body, some hate it; some hide it, some flaunt it; some 'bruise' it (Saint Paul) and others pamper it with 'nice, large pike and good Rhine wine' (Luther). One may be a libertine or a puritan, a mechanic or a gardener. Indeed the implications are immense, affecting virtually all areas of one's life.<sup>134</sup>

Anthony Synott states that *"In sum, the body has no intrinsic meaning."*<sup>135</sup> So why focus on the *sign* of the body if the body itself means everything and nothing? Is it not a waste of time? But Synott goes on to conclude that *"Populations create their own meanings, and thus their own bodies; but how they create, and then change them, and why, reflects the social body."*<sup>136</sup> Thus, in the context of my dissertation, both "body" and "sign" are central, since they refer to the tension between an entity that can both perceive and be perceived sensorially –i.e. see/n, hear/d, touch/ed, smell/ed and even taste/d- without the mediation of words, but also as a bearer or crystallisation of socially significant information or symbols that can be, so to speak, read off it.<sup>137</sup> This tension seems to lead to the following dilemma:

[...] either the human body is conceived wholly in terms of Nature and, in its universal givenness, to be of no interest to sociology or history; or the human body is understood

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. e.g. *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, op. cit. Synott, Anthony, "Tomb, Temple, Machine and Self: The Social Construction of the Body", *British Journal of Sociology*, 1992, 43 (1), pp. 79-110. Gugutzer, Robert, „Zur Körperthematization in einer individualisierenden Gesellschaft“, *Kultursoziologie*, 1998, Heft 2, 33-54. *Auf den Spuren des Körpers in einer technologischen Welt* (Schriftenreihe der internationalen Frauenuniversität "Technik und Kultur" Bd. 4), Eds Barbara Duden & Dorothe Noeres, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002.

<sup>134</sup> Synott, Anthony, "Tomb, Temple, Machine and Self: The Social Construction of the Body", *British Journal of Sociology*, 43 (1), 1992, pp. 79-110, p. 105.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Cf. e.g. Balsamo, Anne, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: reading cyborg women*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, p. 4: *"The process of elaborating an informed 'perception' of the body in contemporary culture must simultaneously abstract a discourse of the body and construct an interpretation of it. 'Reading' as a cultural and interpretive practice is the central mechanism of my discursive production."*

exclusively in terms of Culture and, assimilated to a general semiotics, loses its distinctiveness.<sup>138</sup>

Especially since the so-called “linguistic turn”<sup>139</sup>, the humanities have been engaged in an enduring battle over whether the body should be considered as pure text or whether it will always remain a messy –at once fleshy, multifarious, contradictory and irreducible–ensemble<sup>140</sup> that will continue to both court and elude “textualisation”. The struggle has proved all the more bitter because semiotics<sup>141</sup> has provided an extremely stimulating theoretical impetus, especially in the body realm as apprehended by feminist or gender studies.<sup>142</sup> At stake here is the rift between essentialist (biological) and social-symbolic (textual) theories of gender constitution. The latter have provided a very strong impetus for feminist movements in the political arena, while also spawning “queer theory”. Joy Annamma and Venkatesh Alladi provide a succinct portrayal of the stakes entailed in feminists’ problematisation of the body:

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<sup>138</sup> Ferguson, Harvie, *Modernity and Subjectivity: body, soul, spirit*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000, p. 22.

<sup>139</sup> The German roots of the linguistic turn can be traced back to the 18th century with the work of Johann Georg Hamann, Johann Gottfried von Herder, and Wilhelm von Humboldt. But in the 20th century it was particularly expounded upon by the likes of Heidegger or Gadamer and more recently Apel and Habermas. In parallel, a number of Anglo-Saxon and French thinkers have been influenced by or have wrestled with linguistic turn concepts, e.g. Richard Rorty, Jacques Derrida as well a number of feminist scholars such as Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray or Julia Kristeva. Cf. e.g. Lafont, Cristina, *The Linguistic Turn in Hermeneutic Philosophy*, Boston: MIT Press, 1999 & Rorty, Richard, *The Linguistic Turn*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. In a nutshell, the linguistic turn can be summed up as the realisation that language does not describe the world and the experience of the subject in the world but actually structures and constitutes them. Consequently, in Rorty’s words, it would seem to imply that “[...] philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use.” In: Rorty, Richard, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> Suggesting the concept of “embodiment” as e.g. developed from a phenomenological perspective (perception) by Maurice Merleau-Ponty or from an anthropological slant (practice) by Pierre Bourdieu. However “embodiment” and its relationship with the subject will be examined in more detail in the “Embodied Consciousness” section of this chapter.

<sup>141</sup> For a good and compact overview of the field, cf. Chandler, Daniel, *Semiotics for Beginners: Introduction*, online (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem01.html>): “Semiotics began to become a major approach to cultural studies in the late 1960s, partly as a result of the work of Roland Barthes. The translation into English of his popular essays in a collection entitled *Mythologies* (Barthes 1957), followed in the 1970s and 1980s by many of his other writings, greatly increased scholarly awareness of this approach. Writing in 1964, Barthes declared that ‘semiology aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits; images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all of these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification’ (Barthes 1967, 9). The adoption of semiotics in Britain was influenced by its prominence in the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham whilst the centre was under the direction of the neo-Marxist sociologist Stuart Hall (director 1969-79). Although semiotics may be less central now within cultural and media studies (at least in its earlier, more structuralist form), it remains essential for anyone in the field to understand it. What individual scholars have to assess, of course, is whether and how semiotics may be useful in shedding light on any aspect of their concerns. Note that Saussure’s term, ‘semiology’ is sometimes used to refer to the Saussurean tradition, whilst ‘semiotics’ sometimes refers to the Peircean tradition, but that nowadays the term ‘semiotics’ is more likely to be used as an umbrella term to embrace the whole field (Nöth 1990, 14).” [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>142</sup> However “the body” as symbolically produced text has also shown its limits, as in David Reimer’s famous case. Cf. e.g. “David Reimer, 38, Subject of the John/Joan Case”, *New York Times*, 12.05.2004, online edition: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/12/international/americas/12REIM.html?ex=1399694400&en=8f0108b49acb766b&ei=5007&partner=USERLAND>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

The focus on the body is significant because of its centrality to feminist discourse. It also provides a critique of Enlightenment philosophy which emphasizes a mind-centered theory of knowledge that marginalizes the body as the chief enemy of objectivity. Although not all feminist discourse acknowledges the body, “writing the body” is an important aspect of it. In promoting dualist oppositions such as culture&nature, rational/irrational, subject/object, and mind/body, and by privileging the first of each of these oppositions over the other, Enlightenment philosophy admits only one vision – that of the constitutive male subject.<sup>143</sup>

Moreover, body-centred research has also enriched the investigation of virtually all the arenas of everyday life, such as consumption for example – a field crucial to this study. In this domain, paralleling the design of commodities, the design of the body (through the use of health-enhancing technologies) is not only envisioned as a way to heighten its functional potential (that is as a means to an end). Instead, “[under] the sign of medical and technological feasibility [the body] became a promise of eternal youth, beauty, health and even eternal life – a shapeless/shapeable object of lust.<sup>144</sup> Body design is thus increasingly perceived as an end in itself. It transforms the body into an entity that can be customised according to taste or into a *signifier*<sup>145</sup> that welcomes any *signified*<sup>146</sup> (such as health, youth, beauty, etc.) one might want to conjoin it with. The increasingly weak link –or even the divorce– between the body as *signifier* and the body as *signified* transforms body design into one of many strategies to shape as well as advertise identities and lifestyles: “[The body’s] superfluity is the pre-condition for its becoming a commodity. It is the ultimate commodity because it is the most difficult to obtain.”<sup>147</sup> Indeed, shaping and modifying the body still remain more resource-intensive (in terms of time, energy and/or money invested) than buying a distinctive hat, dishwasher or stereo. Paradoxically though, it seems that the “mediatisation” of bodies –or their use as a form of “identity billboard” – is what has triggered more interest in their “reality” among the social sciences:

Oddly, a sociology of the body has emerged at the very moment in which the human reality of the body seems to have diminished in significance or even dissolved into a confusing flux of partial experiences. In fact, we might suppose that the body has become available as a

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. Annamma, Joy & Alladi, Venkatesh, “Postmodernism, feminism and the body: The visible and the invisible in consumer research”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 11, 1994, pp. 333-357, p. 334.

<sup>144</sup> Patzel-Mattern, Katja, “Schöne neue Körperwelt? Der menschliche Körper als Erlebnisraum des Ich“, *Körper mit Geschichte: der menschliche Körper als Ort der Selbst- und Weltdeutung*, Eds Clemens Wischermann & Stefan Haas, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000, p. 65: „Im Zeichen medizinischer und technologischer Machbarkeit wurde er zum Versprechen ewiger Jugend, Schönheit, Gesundheit und sogar ewigen Lebens – ein formloses/formbares Objekt der Begierde.“

<sup>145</sup> The signifier refers to the plane of expression or form, i.e. the physical materials of the medium (e.g. photographs or printed words). The distinction between signifier and signified was originally made by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (cf. especially: De Saussure, Ferdinand, *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, Eds Charles Bally et Albert Séchehaye, Paris & Lausanne: Payot, 1916, [numerous reprints/translations available]) and later amplified by the French philosopher Roland Barthes to other domains such as fashion or photography or more generally consumption (Cf. especially: Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, Paris: Seuil, 1957 [numerous reprints/translations available]). For a compact overview of the Saussurian sign, cf. Steve Hoenisch’s article here: “Saussure’s sign”, 18.11.2005, online: [http://www.criticism.com/md/the\\_sign.html#section-THE-SIGN,-THE-SIGNIFIER,-AND-THE-SIGNIFIED](http://www.criticism.com/md/the_sign.html#section-THE-SIGN,-THE-SIGNIFIER,-AND-THE-SIGNIFIED). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>146</sup> The signified refers to the plane of content, i.e. the subject matter, concept, thought, etc. Cf. previous footnote.

<sup>147</sup> Pauser, Wolfgang, & Penz, Otto, *Schönheit des Körpers: ein theoretischer Streit über Bodybuilding, Diät und Schönheitschirurgie*. Wien: Rhombus Verlag, 1995, p. 75.

sociological topic only to the extent that it is conceptualized as something other than a living human presence.<sup>148</sup>

In that sense, Harvie Ferguson's interpretation of the birth of body sociology concurs with Richard Shusterman's assessment of the body-media issue: "*Despite mediatic dematerialization, bodies seem to matter more*".<sup>149</sup> But the latter's diagnosis goes further since he confronts external media with the body perceived as a medium:

...the media revolution so transformed the notions of medium and reality that our body – formerly declassified as merely a medium of, or means to, the real (hence subordinate, reflective, distortive) – now gets elevated, as our central medium, to the status of constructor and locus of the real. Hence it becomes a real value in itself. Once reality is seen as a construction, the media that construct it can no longer be disdained.<sup>150</sup>

Nevertheless, even if the media have created a privileged space for bodies to reassert control over reality construction, bodies cannot completely relinquish their function as channels. Their makeover definitely influences world-building but they are in turn defined and controlled by broader force fields such as discourses, social relations and practices – from within and without the media– which often impede the development of a cohesive identity. Moreover, by staging bodies as sites of permanent modification and amelioration, the media may have permanently blurred the boundaries between fiction and reality, between *signifier* and *signified* just as they have contributed to further adulterate neat distinctions between "natural" and "cultural/technological" bodies.

Thus, just as it is inescapable in any historical study, the media question is central to my dissertation. However, trailing a slippery body (or rather its ambiguous signs) through the 1980s and 1990s in order to historicize it today presents me with an additional challenge, since I have decided to explicitly associate the body with three other dimensions. By definition, the object of my research, the "body-technology-commodification-consciousness" nexus of this period, is no longer directly accessible in its contemporary form/s so I have to rely on the media to try and recapture at least some of the salient aspects of this constellation. As can be inferred from my analysis until now, my media sources will present me with signs, or rather *signifiers* of the bodies, technologies, consumption practices and states of mind prevailing and changing over a certain period. But, just as with most body images in today's media, I will have no way of ascertaining what are the actual *signifieds* lurking behind these signifiers. I will therefore have to rely on convergences between various media *signifiers* in the hope of accessing at least a form of "culture concentrate"<sup>151</sup> that might provide a plausible outline of the *signifieds* involved. However, it is not just in terms of sources that providing a history of the body is problematic. Ferguson sees the challenge in terms of finding appropriate theoretical resources or an analytic framework to interpret historical developments connected to the body:

<sup>148</sup> Ferguson, Harvie, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>149</sup> Shusterman, Richard, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>151</sup> As far as I am aware, the expression was coined by Kathrin Bonacker in her book *Hyperkörper in der Anzeigenwerbung des 20. Jahrhunderts*, op. cit. The question of sources has been broached more in-depth in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*).

Thus in spite of recent influential developments (which in fact owe more to the highly original and important works of Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault than they do to the originating works of modern sociological traditions), a historical understanding of modern forms of embodiment remains to be fully developed and is, perhaps, best approached indirectly through philosophical and scientific movements that are themselves grounded in such images.<sup>152</sup>

This is the eclectic strategy I have chosen in order to buttress the theoretical “body framework” of my dissertation, since I have freely drawn on the traditions bequeathed by Marcel Mauss, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, etc. (and criticised/modified by their heirs), recent inputs from the philosophy of science, the social studies of science and technology or STS traditions, from Bruno Latour, through Don Ihde, to Donna Haraway and Judy Wajcman, and feminist/gender scholarship including Mary Douglas, Anne Balsamo or collective ventures.<sup>153</sup> But I did not neglect the more sociologically flavoured writings of Pierre Bourdieu, Jean Baudrillard, Mike Featherstone, Bryan Turner or Ulrich Beck. However, in terms of historical understanding, I am tempted to agree with Ferguson in the sense that even if I do draw on a number of historians of (public) health and medicine for my historical contextualisation of body management in Chapter 4 (*History*), I have rarely encountered a very self-reflexive theoretical embedding in these studies.

But I cannot discount at least one crucial technological-historical contribution on the history of the body between 1765 and 1914, namely that of Philipp Sarasin with his book *“Reizbare Maschinen”* [Excitable Machines].<sup>154</sup> His study aims at spotlighting hygienic thought from the legacy of the Enlightenment’s *Encyclopédie* (as compiled by Diderot and & d’Alembert in 1765) to the decline of its central tenets, or rather just before their sinister hijacking by eugenic (or racial-hygienic) ideologies at the dawn of the 20th century. Sarasin begins his study with the provocative question *“Does the body have a history?”*<sup>155</sup> And by the end of the first paragraph, he has concluded that, yes, individual bodies do have a history (they are born, grow, age and die) and so does our genotype in terms of evolution (climatic

<sup>152</sup> Ferguson, Harvie, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>153</sup> Such as *Our Bodies, Our Ourselves: a book by and for women*, Ed. Boston Women's Health Book Collective, New York : Simon and Schuster, 1973 [first commercial edition of a manuscript, originally circulated by the New England Free Press: cf. <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/about/timeline.asp>. [website accessed Feb. 2011]

<sup>154</sup> Sarasin, Philipp, *Reizbare Maschinen: Eine Geschichte des Körpers 1765-1914*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 11: *„Hat der Körper eine Geschichte?“*. In recent years this question has been echoed by a number of historians. Cf. e.g. Duden, Barbara, op. cit., p. 8: *„Um an die innere, also unsichtbare Leibhaftigkeit dieser klagenden Frauen heranzukommen, musste ich mich als Historikerin über eine Grenze wagen, jene Grenze nämlich, die den Körper und insbesondere das Körperinnere hinter der Haut von der umgebenden Umwelt scheidet und sie epistemologisch, wissenschaftsgeschichtlich, mentalitätsgeschichtlich in gegensätzlichen Domänen verwiesen hat: hier der Körper, die „Natur“, die „Biologie“, dort die soziale Umwelt, die Geschichte. Hier jene letztlich unveränderbar vorgestellte Leiblichkeit „des Menschen“, dort das weite Feld des Geschichtlichen in seiner grundsätzlichen Wandelbarkeit. Diese Grenzziehung hat historisch sowohl den Körper aus der Geschichte herauskatapultiert als auch die Vorstellung über ihn als einen blinden Fleck jenseits des Randes der sozialhistorischen Perspektive unerhellte gelassen.“* And Leslie Addelson meditating on the same question, exclaims: *“And yet what is history if not the accounts of human bodies in and over time? History without bodies is unimaginable. How odd then that the grand abstraction of history would seem to obliterate the very concrete stuff of which it is made. But just how concrete or real are the bodies of history?”* Cf. Addelson, Leslie A, *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, p. 1. Over, the following pages, she then goes on to retrace the intellectual history and philosophy of the body in the twentieth century history, pertinently analysing the shortcomings and contradictions of inputs by the Frankfurt School, Foucault, deconstruction and psychoanalysis, etc.

adaptation, immune resistance, size, etc.). Moreover, the latter even seems to have a future if one considers general developments in microprocessors and nanotechnologies. Nevertheless:

Against this background, it is confusing to claim that the body has a history – in other words that it is historically and culturally relative. Thereby, indeed, the divide between culture and nature, which until recently was perceived as fundamental, dissolves. “The” human body then ceases to be a timeless standard to, for instance, criticise particular societal conditions that leave traces on concrete, perishable bodies. If these bodies do not only have an individual history but are also subjected –as bodies– to historical change, then the nature and the substance of the body as we perceive, represent and treat them, are no longer a reliable reference beyond speech and action. This does not mean that the body is “nothing other” than a societal construction, or “nothing” but a pure discourse effect. Bodies die and we do along with them. But the perception, representation and activities of human beings in concrete historical situations always shape the body in a specific way as a social fact: they “mould” our nature, into a societal “form” or ascribe a cultural “text” to it. It is not the metaphors that circumscribe this rapport between nature and culture which are decisive. Rather, the crucial point is that the link between nature and culture remains intangible and does not represent a systematic boundary –distinguishable for all times and cultures– separating the nature of our bodies from their cultural coding or shaping. Thus, the body question becomes a historical one. Without seeking to establish the boundary that has separated the flesh from history during various periods, one should try to tell the story of this relation.<sup>156</sup>

I have reproduced this rather long quote in full because it encapsulates the most fundamental issue at stake in the historicisation of the body: when confronting sources, the body’s nature recedes but does not completely disappear behind the signs of its cultural, hence also technological makeover. Concretely, a 1980s advertisement for an artificial sweetener, “embodied” by a radiant and slender female model, will not present us with a sense of this individual body’s history –from birth to decay– nor, when considered alone, will it provide us with clues about the evolution of our genotype. Rather the body will remain suspended in a web of contemporary signs: it will tell us something about the slimness and fitness ideal of the time, fashionable hairstyles and make-up or appropriate representations of femininity. When compared with advertisements for the same product over a number of

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<sup>156</sup> In *ibid.* pp. 11-12. *“Auf diesem Hintergrund ist es irritierend, zu behaupten, der Körper habe eine Geschichte – das heißt: er sei historisch und kulturell relativ. Denn damit fällt die in unserer Zivilisation zumindest bis vor kurzem noch als grundlegend empfundene Schranke zwischen Kultur und Natur. „Der“ menschliche Körper hört dann auf, ein zeitloser Maßstab zu sein, ein Maßstab etwa für die Kritik an jenen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnissen, die ihre Spuren auf den konkreten, vergänglichen, Körpern hinterlassen. Wenn diese Körper nicht nur eine individuelle Geschichte haben, sondern auch als Körper überhaupt historischem Wandel unterworfen sind, dann sind Natur und Materie des Körpers, so wie wir sie wahrnehmen, vorstellen, repräsentieren und bearbeiten, keine verlässliche Referenz mehr außerhalb des Sprechens und Handelns. Das heißt nicht, der Körper sei „nichts anderes“ als eine gesellschaftliche Konstruktion, sei „nichts“ als ein bloßer Diskurseffekt. Körper sterben und wir mit ihnen. Aber das Wahrnehmen, Vorstellen und Handeln von Menschen in konkreten historischen Situationen formt den Körper in einer je spezifischen Weise als soziale Tatsache: Sie „prägen“ der Natur, die wir sind, eine gesellschaftliche „Form“ oder „schreiben“ ihr einen kulturellen „Text“ ein. Entscheidend sind hier nicht die Metaphern, die dieses Verhältnis zwischen Natur und Kultur einkreisen – entscheidend ist, daß dieses Verhältnis zwischen Natur und Kultur faßbar bleibt und keine systematische, für alle Zeiten und Kulturen festlegbare Grenze die Natur unseres Körpers von seiner kulturellen Kodierung oder Formung trennt. Damit aber wird die Frage nach dem Körper, zu einer historischen. Ohne die Grenzlinie bestimmen zu wollen, die in verschiedenen Zeiten das Fleisch von der Geschichte schied, muß man versuchen, die Geschichte dieses Verhältnisses zu erzählen.“*

years, it might even uncover clues about the evolving perception of women's body management and status. The anthropologist Kathrin Bonacker, in her excellent book on the deciphering of body culture through publicity, provides many convincing examples of this embedding.<sup>157</sup> She terms the bodies thus "excavated" from these sources "*hyperbodies*" because they are ideal-types, styled and staged to sell a product and are as devoid of ambivalence as possible.<sup>158</sup> Indeed, if the advertisement is to be potent, the viewer should not be able to perceive a distance between these hyperbodies and reality: constructedness must either completely recede behind the attainability of this corporeality (if the ad takes a positive tack) or its avoidability (if the ad is more satirically flavoured). As she points out however, her publicity-flavoured conceptualisation of hyperbodies differs from that of Jean Baudrillard, who sees a hyperbody as a "projection of the self" in his analysis of the "Madonna" phenomenon –thus implying a conscious distance between the body and identity that is unthinkable in the advertisements analysed by Bonacker.<sup>159</sup>

From a historian's perspective though, I would argue that the bodies accessed through my sources navigate between these two "hyperbody" visions –independently of the type of visual source analysed (photographs, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles, etc.). Whether the representations seem to be the result of a very minimalist staging (maybe even explicitly labelled as "spontaneous") or whether they clearly appear to be the product of a sophisticated construction, today's viewer is left with the very difficult task of determining what distance there is between the historically embedded *signifier* and its potentially fleshy *signified*. Just as we cannot convincingly affirm that an advertisement (especially when considered alone) is or is not an emblematic reflection of its time, we cannot affirm that a private photograph condenses the essence of a familiar "lived body". Indeed, personal experience shows that we often apply a considerable number of body management techniques before being photographed. In our westernised cultures at least, we actually tend to put on our photographic bodies like a cloak: by tensing belly muscles, smoothing unruly hair and wearing a photogenic smile before the click sounds. Hence, who has never felt uneasy when perusing (even present-day) photographs, which seem to alienate our perception of self or others?

Thus, all past portrayals of the body remain "hyper", lost between a potentially mimetic realism and a carefully crafted identity projection. They isolate a precisely outlined "moment of the body" in question, without giving us a definite clue as to the quality of its aliveness or continuity, its situatedness in a personal or collective body history. Similarly, "non-visual" sources, such as e.g. statistics on average height, weight, diet or various epidemiological factors might provide precious indications on general "genotypical" trends over a number of decades but they will leave us in the dark about how these changes have been both collectively and/or personally engineered and experienced. Thus, an encounter with various body sources will unearth a wealth of signs that complement and cross-reference each

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<sup>157</sup> Bonacker, Kathrin, op. cit., cf. e.g. pp. 12-14 (Natreen sweetener) or 94-105 (tights for men), etc.

<sup>158</sup> Bonacker, Kathrin, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>159</sup> Bonacker, Kathrin, op. cit., p. 8 & p. 130. Cf. also Baudrillard, Jean, "Le chômage technique du désir", in *Le crime parfait*, Paris: Galilée, 1995, pp. 173-180. « *Si le corps n'est plus un lieu d'altérité, mais d'identification, alors il faut de toute urgence se réconcilier avec lui, le réparer, le parfaire, en faire un objet idéal. Chacun en use avec lui comme l'homme avec la femme dans l'identification projective: il l'investit comme fétiche, en en faisant l'objet d'un culte autistique, d'une manipulation quasi incestueuse. [...] C'est déjà ainsi dans le body-building: on enfle son corps comme une combinaison nerveuse et musculaire. Le corps n'est plus musclé, il est musclé.* », p. 173.

other; and these signs will enable us to make fairly plausible conjectures about the evolution of body fashions and imperatives. But an awareness of our personal and cultural/historical embodied situatedness, hence its doubly limited perspective,<sup>160</sup> should force us to retain a certain humility, because we know that past “lived bodies” forever escape our grasp.<sup>161</sup>

Don Ihde, by distinguishing three dimensions of the body enables one to recapture a better sense of the hierarchy of embodiment in relation to both “lived body” and cultural situatedness (the “lived-body” being the pre-condition for the cultural), even though the three dimensions he outlines are rarely experienced separately. He describes the first one as follows:

Body one is the existential body of living, here-located bodily experience, the sense of body elicited by Husserl as *Leib*, but much better descriptively developed by Merleau-Ponty as the *corps vécu*. Body one is the perceiving, active, oriented being-a-body from which we experience the world around us. It is the experience-as-body that is a constant of all our experiencings. [...] But, and I note this only in passing for now, this meaning of body is not directly or introspectively grasped – rather it is interactively grasped by way of and in relation to the experienced environment or enviroing world. Its sense must be *reflexively* recovered.<sup>162</sup>

The emphasis here should be placed on the body as active experiencing subject-medium (Ihde emphasises that it is not the Cartesian body-object that is at stake here). “Body one” is the primary condition of interaction but, so to speak, only “comes alive” through its interaction with the world. The implication that this dimension has for the personal and cultural/historical situatedness alluded to in the previous paragraph is that my sense of who I am as a historian (and more broadly as a person) is contingent upon the reflections cast back onto me by the world — that is through my active experience of it. Moreover, this dimension introduces the crucial concept of the body as subject. Without wanting to anticipate upon the “Embodied consciousness” section, Ihde’s “body one” dimension implies that this level of embodiment is the guarantor of the uniqueness of my experience (as far as I can tell from my position within my own body) and this even before cultural markers intervene. Indeed, nobody can hope to totally share my embodied perspective and conversely I cannot hope to fully explain it to others. Hence, this state of affairs seals the fate of the historian even more tightly by a type of *mise en abîme*: recovering the *corps vécu* experience of past, “other” bodies appears virtually impossible since it proves already very challenging to share my own contemporary bodily experience, e.g. in terms of pain or well-being. As the sociologist Robert Gugutzer contends:

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<sup>160</sup> I can only speak from my body or my experience of embodiment which is anchored in a particular place and time. Concretely, in 2011, I can only speak from the perspective of a 40-year old, white, female, British-Swiss person living in Germany, etc.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Ihde, Don, *Bodies in Technology: Electronic Mediations*, Volume 5, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p.71. “What the body discourses contribute to situated knowledges is both deconstructive and reconstructive. What is deconstructed is the disembodied, nonperspectival, god-trick epistemology of early modernity. What is reconstructed is the sense of located, perspectival, embodied, and enculturated knowledge that is a praxis and action within and in relation to the surrounding world.” Cf. also *ibid.* p. 69: “Phenomenologically one does not immediately apprehend that one’s vision is perspectival, rather one’s invariant perspective on the world is reflexively realized by noting the ways in which that world ‘points back’ to the null point of one’s bodily position. In this sense, I learn my embodiment by actively being in a world.”

<sup>162</sup> Ihde, Don, *op. cit.*, p. 69

When considering the body as an object of research there are a few typical methodological problems, which become especially obvious in empirical investigations, but also surface in theoretical essays. It is the “speechlessness” of the body that is at stake here. This speechlessness firstly stems from our culture’s lack of nuanced vocabulary to describe bodily phenomena, secondly, from a lack of distance from one’s own body and thirdly, from the necessity of translating bodily phenomena into speech.<sup>163</sup>

Thus, it is both the necessity and the impossibility of interpreting “bodyspeak” that renders the body signs we are confronted with so ambivalent and makes our quest of the “body one” dimension so elusive. As Gilles Deleuze put it [cf. the introductory quote to my study], the contemporary quest to transform the body into an ontological retreat requires transcending the barriers of our language or signs to let the body re-appropriate discourse.

Ihde then defines “body two” as the “[...] *cultural or socially constructed body [...] upon which is written or signified the various possible meanings of politics, culture, the socius.*” It is only at this point then that markers of gender, age, culture and class intervene, markers that anchor a particular cultural perspective. But as Ihde stresses it: “[...] *for there to be a marked cultural body, or body two, there must be a body one that is markable.*”<sup>164</sup> Mary Douglas goes even further, since in her analysis of the link between the two body dimensions, she sees a mutual influence of the one upon the other:

The social body constrains the ways the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other.<sup>165</sup>

However, the difficulty specifically resides in pinning down where the point of exchange lies, especially when trying to examine bodies historically. Anne Balsamo, in her book *Technologies of the Gendered Body*, while she does quote Douglas and primarily conducts her body analysis on a textual basis admits that “*To think of the body as a social construction and not as a natural object provokes a deceptively simple question: how is the body, as a ‘thing of nature’, transformed into a ‘sign of culture’?*”. And while she articulates the two above dimensions in terms of “product” for the social and “process” for the lived body, she doesn’t provide her readers with a sense of the mutually transformative transitions: i.e. how the process leads to the product or how the product constrains the process.<sup>166</sup> Appropriately, this product/process metaphor then leads us to the “body three” or technological dimension

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<sup>163</sup> Gugutzer, Robert, *Soziologie des Körpers*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2004, p. 10. “*Mit dem Körper als Forschungsobjekt ergeben sich einige typische methodische Probleme, die vor allem in empirischen Untersuchungen deutlich werden, jedoch auch in theoretischen Abhandlungen auftreten. Hierbei handelt es sich um die „Sprachlosigkeit“ des Körpers, die erstens aus dem in unserer Kultur wenig differenzierten Wortschatz zur Beschreibung körperlicher Phänomene, zweitens aus einer mangelnden Distanz zum eigenen Körper und drittens aus der Notwendigkeit der Übersetzung körperlicher Phänomene in Sprache resultiert.*”

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Ihde, Don, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>165</sup> Douglas, Mary, *Natural Symbols: explorations in cosmology*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1970 (revised edition, 1982), p. 65.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Balsamo, Anne, op. cit., p. 3. “*The works I examine in this book begin with the assumption that ‘the body’ is a social, cultural, and historical production: ‘production’ here means both product and process. As a product, it is the material embodiment of ethnic, racial, and gender identities, as well as a staged performance of personal identity, of beauty, of health (among other things). As a process, it is a way of knowing and marking the world, as well as a way of knowing and marking a ‘self’.*”

described by Don Ihde, a dimension that could help us to define the articulation between “body one” and “body two”:

Traversing both body one and body two is a third dimension, the dimension of the technological. In the past perhaps the most familiar role within which we experienced and reexperienced being a body was what I have often called an embodiment relation, that is, the relation of experiencing something in the world through an artefact, a technology. Such human–technology relations are often simple—seeing through eyeglasses, nailing with hammers (Heidegger), negotiating doorways while wearing long-feathered hats (Merleau-Ponty).<sup>167</sup>

Technology, in this vision, can become a sort of copula mediating between body one and body two: as a product marked by a particular society or culture, technology constrains bodily processes (glasses literally frame the gaze of “body one” just as the hammer requires a particular “body one” handling in order to be efficient). Conversely, technology’s cultural markings remain lifeless as long as the body is unwilling to literally incorporate it into a *corps vécu* process. Hence, if as historians, we find it difficult to restore the link between the two first dimensions of the body, we can nevertheless try to broach it by analysing the elaboration, evolution and appropriation of especially those technologies that have been designed to enhance bodies. Echoing Michel Feher, we can concentrate on how technology and techniques have been used to experience, condition and express embodiment. The history of the body is thus

[...] neither a history of scientific knowledge about the body nor a history of the ideologies that (mis)represent the body. Rather it is a history of “body building”, of the different modes of construction of the human body. The body perceived in this way is not a reality to be uncovered in a positivistic description of an organism nor is it a transhistorical set of needs and desires to be freed from an equally transhistorical form of repression. This body is instead a reality constantly produced, an effect of techniques promoting specific gestures and postures, sensations and feelings. Only in tracing these modes of its construction can one arrive at a thick perception of the present “state of the body.”<sup>168</sup>

In this section, I have tried to analyse the body’s fascinating but slippery trajectory in the social sciences. It seems that, as historians or sociologists, we are often condemned to grasp elusive signs of the body, knowing full well that these potentially deceptive apparitions are dragging clunky tin cans of resistant flesh that we will never be able to access. However, technology, as it relates to the body, may provide us with a more concrete measure of the latter. The following sub-section is therefore devoted to exploring how technology, techniques and the experiences they trigger are conceptualised in this study, by reinstating them as vital markers of embodiment.

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<sup>167</sup> Ihde, Don, op. cit., p. xi.

<sup>168</sup> Feher, Michel, „Of Bodies and Technologies”, *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, Number One, Ed. Hal Foster, DIA Art Foundation, Seattle: Bay Press, 1987, p. 159.

## Technology

*Le corps est le premier et le plus naturel instrument de l'homme. Ou plus exactement, sans parler d'instrument, le premier et le plus naturel objet technique, et en même temps moyen technique, de l'homme, c'est son corps.*<sup>169</sup>

*...technology is more than a set of physical objects or artefacts. It also fundamentally embodies a culture or set of social relations made up of certain sorts of knowledge, beliefs, desires, and practices.*<sup>170</sup>

At least half a century, a gender, a nationality and a disciplinary affiliation separate the two quotes I have chosen to introduce my theoretical exploration of “technology” and its namesakes “technique” and “the technological”. But together, these quotes neatly, if perhaps daringly, circumscribe the discussion I am about to stage, since they embrace the spectrum leading from technique to technology and from the concrete body to abstract embodiment. Marcel Mauss posits the human body as the primeval and most “natural” source of technology –both object and medium– thus indirectly pointing to the body as the living paradox that transcends the modernist nature/culture (or technology) divide. Indeed, without “natural” body techniques, there is no technology. For her part, Judy Wajcman uses the verb “embody” to describe the way technology virtually *in-corporates* a culture. This tension is particularly fruitful from my perspective, since this study concentrates on self-consciously labelled “healthy lifestyle technologies” (HLTs) that embrace technology, techniques and the technological. These HLTs are designed to design the body in a way that reflects the cultural concerns and expectations of the society they have been developed in – not only in terms of health but also of aesthetics, comfort, discipline, experience, control, pleasure, etc.

Because technology is such a ubiquitous component of culture-building, in this section I will be proceeding in concentric circles to try to embrace all the issues that are relevant for my case-study, before narrowing down towards the most concrete arenas. With the help of Mauss and Wajcman, my first aim is to open up the field for a very wide human-centred understanding of technology. Then, following Herbert Mehrrens’s lead, I will seek to demystify the oppositions that have long plagued the definition and perception of technology: society vs. technology, nature vs. technology and science vs. technology. By focusing on “the technological” in hybrid systems, I hope to better grasp what consequences these seeming oppositions have on the technical styling of the body and the products and processes used to achieve this aim. The third step will consist in briefly analysing mechanisms of autonomy, control, power but also contingency in the way HLTs are structured, by drawing on insights from Peter Weingart, Madeleine Akrich, Michel de Certeau and Mika Pantzar. After that, I will home in on the body’s relationship with technology: from Foucaultian notions of self-discipline to how the modern imagination has

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<sup>169</sup> Mauss, Marcel, « Les technique du corps », *Journal de Psychologie*, XXXII, ne, 3-4, 15 mars-15 avril 1936. Communication présentée à la Société de Psychologie le 17 mai 1934. As reproduced on the web by Tremblay, Jean-Marie (Cégep, Chicoutimi, Québec), [http://www.ugac.ca/zone30/Classiques\\_des\\_sciences\\_sociales/classiques/mauss\\_marcel/socio\\_et\\_anthropo/6\\_Techniques\\_corps/techniques\\_corps.doc](http://www.ugac.ca/zone30/Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/classiques/mauss_marcel/socio_et_anthropo/6_Techniques_corps/techniques_corps.doc), p. 10: “The body is man’s first and most natural instrument. Or more precisely -avoiding the term ‘instrument’- it is man’s first and most natural technical object as well as technical medium.” [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>170</sup> Wajcman, Judy, *Feminism Confronts Technology*, University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1991, p. 149.

dealt with a perceived “colonisation” of the body by technology (the body as machine), before tackling the concepts of hybrid and cyborg based on Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway or Mike Michael. Finally, I will evaluate the implications of these discussions for a historical account of body technologies.

For Mauss, the human body seals the interdependence of nature and technology: it is the “natural” catalyst (medium) of technology, but not in the chemical sense, since the body’s “nature” is also modified (object) through its interaction with technology or technique –as displayed in the relationship between feet and shoes.<sup>171</sup> In his course notes entitled « *Les techniques du corps* », he attempted a transcultural analysis of his observations of body techniques in various societies (England, France, the U.S., Maori New Zealand, Aboriginal Australia, Central Africa, etc.) in order to provide a satisfactory ethnological definition of these techniques: “*I define them as the ways in which man knows how to use his body traditionally in various societies*”.<sup>172</sup> Further, he admits having had to overcome the idea that a technique invariably involves an instrument by going back to a Platonist perspective (i.e. music and dance as techniques), before refining the notion of technique as a “*traditional and effective act*”. Indeed, for him, “*if there is no tradition, there is no technique and no transmission*”.<sup>173</sup> This implies that body techniques move beyond a relationship with an individual body to encompass a lineage of bodies. But the difference between other traditional acts (such as religious or legal acts) and a traditional technical act resides in the fact that the author of the latter consciously pursues it as “*a mechanical, physical or physical-chemical act*”.<sup>174</sup> Mauss later broadens the scope of these body techniques by stating that they consist of series of acts that are “*physio-psycho-sociological amalgams*”.<sup>175</sup> For Mauss then, body techniques imply a conscious steering of physiology (the will or psychological intent of the individual moves the body), learning (techniques do not just happen but rely on practice and on a tradition) and broad cultural influences (a particular society values or rejects given body techniques).

It is in both its traditional and psycho-sociological aspects that Mauss’s vision of “body techniques” links up with the “beyond-the-hardware” vision of technology promoted by Wacjman and other sociologists of her generation, since they see technology as “*a cultural product which is historically constituted by certain sorts of knowledge and social practices as well as other forms of representation*”.<sup>176</sup> Pierre Rabardel, a French professor of psychology and ergonomics, balks at the current ethymological erosion of “technology” or “technical” that often ignores the original Greek meaning [i.e. τέχνη: art or craft, hence man-made] as

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<sup>171</sup> Mauss compares the example of the “onioi” gait (technique) cultivated by Maori women and the effect of shoes (technology): “*C’était une façon acquise, et non pas une façon naturelle de marcher. En somme, il n’existe peut-être pas de “façon naturelle” chez l’adulte. A plus forte raison lorsque d’autres faits techniques interviennent: pour ce qui est de nous, le fait que nous marchons avec des souliers transforme la position de nos pieds; quand nous marchons sans souliers, nous le sentons bien.*”, Mauss, Marcel, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>172</sup> Mauss, Marcel, ibid., p. 5 : « *J’entends par ce mot les façons dont les hommes, société par société, d’une façon traditionnelle, savent se servir de leur corps.* »

<sup>173</sup> Mauss, Marcel, ibid., p. 10 : « *un acte traditionnel efficace* » ; « *Il n’y a pas de technique et pas de transmission, s’il n’y a pas de tradition.* »

<sup>174</sup> Mauss, Marcel, ibid., p. 10 : « *[...] celui-ci est senti par l’auteur comme un acte d’ordre mécanique, physique ou physico-chimique et qu’il est poursuivi dans ce but.* »

<sup>175</sup> Mauss, Marcel, ibid., p. 23 : cf. « *[...] nous nous trouvons partout en présence de montages physio-psycho-sociologiques de séries d’actes.* »

<sup>176</sup> Wacjman, op. cit., p. 158.

revived and even expanded by Heidegger.<sup>177</sup> He thus suggests a form of tautological coinage to re-emphasise the human element:

Technical objects and systems are incorrectly termed. It would be better to speak of anthropotechnical objects or systems, despite the inelegance of the term. [...] Man is omnipresent in their life cycles from their conception to their discarding, through the essential phases of their functioning and use.<sup>178</sup>

Klaus Tüchel, a German philosopher is even more radical in his anthropocentric thrust because he sees man

[...] not as a nice ingredient, which could just as well be omitted, but as a universal and essential trait of anything technical. The narrow definition of technology as calculable means is incomplete and presents a false perspective on what technology actually is. To talk about technology without human beings is senseless.<sup>179</sup>

In contrast with apparently more disembodied technologies such as steel armatures or concrete blocks, Rabardel and Tüchel's concern about the humanness of technology is particularly central when discussing HLTs, since man is not only present and active throughout the life-cycle of an HLT (as producer, mediator, consumer, etc.) but is also its central object. Like other more traditional body-centred technologies such as shoes or hairbrushes, HLTs are actually designed to accompany and act upon human beings throughout their life-cycles: there are functional foods, movement techniques, cosmetics, and alternative health practices for all ages (think e.g. of baby "movement" classes, ballet or football for teenagers, yoga or weight-lifting for the middle-aged and senior gymnastics...). Moreover, instead of stopping at the periphery of the body or just moulding/designing it from the outside, they are often ingested, absorbed, breathed in, transformed into reflexes, routines etc. In other words they become embodied and so inseparable from consumers' bodily consciousness as to become constitutive of their identities. It is therefore not only senseless to distinguish individuals from the HLTs they consume, but almost impossible. This background also further undermines the definition stub that Tüchel has been attacking –to wit, the claim that technology is calculable. Indeed, since they are designed to appeal to a body considered as a highly subjective and holistic entity, the effects of HLTs remain consciously unpredictable. However, this is a question I will try to address more precisely in the "Embodied consciousness" section.

But how should we describe technology then? Is it condemned to remain a fuzzy concept, the contours of which are impossible to draw? Until now, we have seen that it involves human beings and their techniques, that it has both material and immaterial components,

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<sup>177</sup> Cf. "Die Frage nach der Technik" [1953], in: Heidegger, Martin, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Stuttgart: Klett-Cola, 2004.

<sup>178</sup> Rabardel, Pierre, *Les Hommes et les technologies : Approche cognitive des instruments contemporains*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1995, p. 9 : « *Les objets et les systèmes techniques sont improprement nommés. Il vaudrait mieux parler d'objets ou de systèmes anthropotechniques, malgré l'inélégance du terme. [...] Les hommes sont omniprésents dans leurs cycles de vie depuis la conception jusqu'à la mise au rebut en passant par les phases essentielles du fonctionnement et de l'utilisation.* »

<sup>179</sup> Klaus Tüchel, *Sinn und Deutung der Technik*, Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1970 [1966], p. 68: „[...] nicht als freundliche Zutat, die ebensogut fortbleiben könnte, sondern als ein allgemeiner Wesenszug alles Technischen. Die enge Definition der Technik als berechenbaren Mittel ist unvollständig und verstellt den Blick auf das, was Technik eigentlich ist. Von Technik zu sprechen, ohne zugleich vom Menschen zu sprechen, ist sinnlos.“

not to mention embodied aspects. Moreover, it implies some form of continuity or transmission (traditional/historical or cultural aspects). Thus, rather than abiding with too narrow a definition, I am tempted to agree with Wajcman's recapitulative distinction into three layers of meaning:

Firstly, 'technology' is a form of knowledge, as Staudenmaier emphasizes. Technological 'things' are meaningless without the 'know-how' to use them, repair them, design them and make them. That know-how often cannot be captured in words. It is visual, even tactile, rather than simply verbal or mathematical. But it can also be systematized and taught, as in the various disciplines of engineering. Few authors however would be content with this definition of technology as a form of knowledge. 'Technology' also refers to what people do as well as what they know. An object such as a car or a vacuum cleaner is a technology, rather than an arbitrary lump of matter, because it forms part of a set of human activities. A computer without programs and programmers is simply a useless collection of bits of metal, plastic and silicon. 'Steelmaking', say, is a technology: but this implies that the technology includes what steelworkers do, as well as the furnaces they use. So 'technology' refers to human activities and practices. And finally, at the most basic level, there is the 'hard-ware' definition of technology, in which it refers to sets of physical objects, for example, cars, lathes, vacuum cleaners and computers.<sup>180</sup>

Hence culturally contingent knowledge, practice and hardware are at stake in technology. But if it doesn't seem to be separable from human ideas, activities, products and even bodies (as in the case of HLTs), can it be contrasted with anything else to help us distinguish its contours? Herbert Mehrtens argues that such major counter-poles as nature, science and society are no longer tenable from our current historical perspective:

Oppositions such as 'nature and technology', 'science and technology', 'society and technology' have long lost their significance as separative and thus clarifying categorisations because the aim of historical activity is to uncover the connections, the interactions and intertwinements with which the past reaches into our present and future.<sup>181</sup>

However, it should be noted that these polarisations have made sense and even proved fruitful at given times even if Mauss and Wajcman have made it amply clear that it is futile to pursue an elusive distinction between society and technology and Mauss has also blurred the distinction between nature and technology (culture) through his definition of the body. Indeed, even though a number of late modern or resolutely non-modern thinkers such as Bruno Latour, have denounced the nature/culture divide as a delusive and damaging construction,<sup>182</sup> this modernist opposition has proved particularly resilient and its ramifications can still be felt today:

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<sup>180</sup> Wajcman, *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>181</sup> Mehrtens, Herbert, „Gilt das Trennungaxiom? Zum Verhältnis von Wissenschafts- und Technikgeschichte“, *Brückenschläge: 25 Jahre Lehrstuhl für Geschichte der exakten Wissenschaften und der Technik an der Technischen Universität Berlin 1969-1994*, Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschafts- und Regionalgeschichte Dr Michael Engel, 1995, pp. 237-238. „Oppositionen wie ‚Natur und Technik‘, ‚Wissenschaft und Technik‘, ‚Gesellschaft und Technik‘ sind als trennende und dadurch reinigende Kategorisierungen längst nicht mehr sinnvoll, weil das Zielfeld der historischen Arbeit in den Zusammenhängen, Interaktionen, Verflechtungen liegt, mit denen die Vergangenheit in unsere Gegenwart und Zukunft reicht.“

<sup>182</sup> Latour, Bruno, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes: essai d'anthropologie symétrique*, Paris : La Découverte, 1994. On the basis of contemporary hybrid phenomena such as polluted rivers, frozen embryos, the hole in the ozone layer or the AIDS virus, Bruno Latour patiently deconstructs modernity's painstaking but illusory efforts to separate nature from culture as well as subject from objects.

At the moment it appears that the word nature is performing three functions; it is seen: as a normative horizon fixing universalist ethical limits to technical activity (“that’s against nature, it’s unnatural”), as an horizon of technical exploitation and as ecos, as ecology, which sometimes links up with the desire to create some other kind of nature.<sup>183</sup>

It is probably because technology is perceived as threateningly pervasive that society clings to a mythological dimension of nature even if it has become a signifier almost depleted of any tangible signifieds. Indeed, just like “outer nature”, contemporary “natural” bodies have become inseparable from technological intrusions.<sup>184</sup> Mirroring the consciously active landscaping processes that involve felling trees, spraying pesticides or introducing exotic species of plants and animals (as well as the less conscious ones involving various types of pollution and poisoning), bodies are also constantly knowingly and mindlessly designed and re-designed by everyday technologies – be it through cycling to work in an urban setting, sitting all day in office chairs or using toothbrushes and antiperspirants. With the rise of genetic engineering, fertility enhancing technologies and increasingly invasive antenatal care (not to mention the impact of the above-mentioned environmental conditions on fertility and gestation), even the “naturalness” of the newborn or unborn child is exposed as a fiction.<sup>185</sup> As Latour puts it:

...the body itself, can also be perceived technologically [...]. Every artist, technician or craftsman knows full well that technicality is but a new form of distribution between bodies – some natural, others artificial– and that it is only vascularisation that enables these feats which, due to laziness, are subsequently attributed to human genius. In that sense, according to the expression coined by Marcel Mauss, all techniques are body techniques.<sup>186</sup>

Nevertheless, despite this recognition, we find it almost impossible to let go of our quasi-Frankensteinian division of nature and culture/technology. Indeed, it has truly overtaken us, since it seems to have alienated us from both poles by trapping us in a vise between their excesses. To wit, the use of technology is often motivated by the wish to correct the “flaws” of nature, a nature at once so present, powerful and potentially threatening that we feel the need to control it through technology... until technology is perceived as perhaps even more

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<sup>183</sup> Jardine, Alice, „Of Bodies and Technologies, in: *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, Number One, op. cit., p. 157.

<sup>184</sup> Indeed, in the course of his analysis of the concept of naturalness, Dieter Birnbacher reminds us that: „*Unter den Dingen, mit denen wir in unserer Lebenszeit in direkten Kontakt kommen, ist das in Reinform Künstliche ebenso rar wie das in Reinform Natürliche. Das ‚lupenreine‘ Natürliche und das ‚lupenreine‘ Künstliche sind eher gedachte Pole eines Spektrums, von dem wir lediglich den mittleren Bereich kennen. Mehr oder weniger alle uns in der Alltagserfahrung begegnenden Welt Dinge fallen in den großen Bereich der Zwischentöne, auch dann, wenn wir sie –fälschlicher- oder unbedachterweise– den natürlichen Pol zuordnen.*“ Cf. Birnbacher Dieter, *Natürlichkeit*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, p. 4. Cf. also his enlightening discussion of naturalness as “value” (pp. 17-41) or “norm” (pp. 42-64).

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Böhme, Gernot, *Natürlich Natur: Über Natur im Zeitalter ihrer technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992, esp. „Künstliche Natur“ (pp. 181-198).

<sup>186</sup> Latour, Bruno, « Morale et technique : la fin des moyens », *Réseaux*, 18, 2000, pp. 39-58, also available here: <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/080.html>. « ...le corps propre, lui aussi, peut se saisir sous le mode technique [...]. Tout artiste, tout technicien ou artisan, tout chirurgien sait bien qu'il n'est jamais question dans la technicité que d'une forme nouvelle de répartition entre corps, les uns artificiels et les autres naturels, dont la vascularisation seule permet ces prouesses que l'on attribue ensuite, par paresse, soit aux objets soit au génie humain. Toutes les techniques, en ce sens, selon l'expression de Marcel Mauss, sont techniques du corps. » [website accessed Aug. 2011]

ubiquitous, potent and menacing than nature and we e.g. switch from antibiotics to naturopathic remedies.

This then gives rise to a form of techno-nature, a more or less difficult marriage where the side-effects of one realm are clumsily counterbalanced with those of the other. Or to use another landscaping metaphor, bodies' naturalness is reinvented as in English-style gardens where feigned artlessness is in fact extremely controlled. Braces, orthopaedic shoes and speech therapy are but a few of the technologies or techniques belonging to the arsenal that seeks to recreate or perfect nature in the body. And I would argue that HLTs even go a step further since both in their production and in the marketing rhetoric that packages them, this uneasy alliance is not only repeatedly featured but, to some extent, even normalised or celebrated – based on the recognition that there is no going back to a primeval nature devoid of the technology we have become so dependent upon. For instance, a review article on the 1980s published in a German women's magazine in 1989 discusses, among other developments, those in the cosmetics realm. The main gist of the debate revolves around natural cosmetics: whether on the one hand, they can be considered as hygienically and clinically secure and on the other, if they can still be perceived as "natural" after the Chernobyl catastrophe –thus illustrating the ambivalence surrounding the attributes of both nature and technology. To find a way out of the impasse, the author then concludes that the new motto for cosmetics should be *"As much nature as possible but with industrial purity standards"*.<sup>187</sup>

Just as it is difficult to separate nature from technology in HLTs, it has become futile to try and strictly distinguish between science and technology in these products. Indeed, when viewed from a healthy lifestyle perspective, the debate on the characteristics of science versus those of technology, as e.g. framed by John Staudenmaier for the *"Technology and Culture"* journal in the mid-1980s, now appears rather quaint. The only point that still seems relevant to me in the case of HLTs is the reference to aesthetics, linked to the discussion of *T&C* author Cyril Smith. The latter contends that in man's early history there was no distinction between aesthetic, scientific and technological categories: indeed, in the process of moulding a statue, an artist could understand the properties of matter and use them to achieve his purpose.<sup>188</sup> As we will see in the course of this study, a healthy lifestyle implies the creation of an individualised if commodified aesthetics of everyday life – which is why producers' focus is on contributing to this aesthetics by designing goods that can be creatively appropriated by consumers. In the process, the latter may become aware of scientific or technological issues, but the point is nevertheless that both science and technology are subservient to the aesthetic purpose. It is therefore irrelevant for a company to clearly define and hierarchize the inputs provided by these two domains. Instead, "science" and "technology" are usually just name-dropped, often indiscriminately, as reassuring but increasingly dispensable pedigrees of soundness and rationality.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> „Das waren die 80er Jahre“, *Freundin*, 25, 1989, pp. 102-108, p. 105: „Soviel Natur wie möglich aber industrielle Reinheitsstandards“.

<sup>188</sup> Staudenmaier, John, *Technology's storytellers: reweaving the human fabric*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1985, p. 100.

<sup>189</sup> This becomes particularly obvious in Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*). However, in other domains, the distinction between science and technology remains valid and fruitful. For a good overview of the debate on this distinction –especially as it relates to the epistemological constitution and legitimacy of history of technology or technology studies– and its implications in industrial innovation, cf. e.g. Faulkner, Wendy,

De facto, in most health and beauty companies, development teams are transdisciplinary - involving chemists, biologists, biotechnologists, materials engineers, pharmacists, medical doctors, lab technicians, beauticians, make-up artists, marketing specialists, etc. And the R&D process itself, for products such as cosmetics and food, constantly swings back and forth between physiological (i.e. scientific) findings on the body –enabled by new technologies– and the elaboration of new technologies that have a direct impact on physiology, hence on further scientific observation and description. Therefore, echoing Rabardel’s concern over the inclusion of “man” in the “technical” leading to the coinage of “anthropotechnical” objects and systems, one can only champion the use of “technoscientific”<sup>190</sup> to qualify the endeavours of research in the body enhancement field. If the expertise of physicians, chemists or pharmacists<sup>191</sup> still prominently features in the German pharmaceutical, nutritional and cosmetic landscapes,<sup>192</sup> engineering or “applied” scientific knowledge is just as frequently acknowledged and sought after, as illustrated by the success of certification labels provided by a number of independent testing agencies such as “TÜV”<sup>193</sup>, “Stiftung Warentest”<sup>194</sup> or “Ökotest”<sup>195</sup>.

Thus, especially in the case of HLTs, instead of defining technology in opposition to society, nature or science, I find it more helpful to adopt Herbert Mehrrens’s suggestion not to focus on “*technology*” but on “*the technological*”, a dimension which must be located and analysed in complex historical phenomena. He suggests that “*the technological*” be defined

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“Conceptualizing Knowledge Used in Innovation: A Second Look at the Science-Technology Distinction and Industrial Innovation”, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 19, 1994, 425-458: “This review led to the conclusion that there is a strongly interactive relationship between science and technology, instrumentalities being an important area of overlap. In some new fields, such as biotechnology, the relationship between them is so intimate that the boundaries between them appear blurred, if not obliterated. Nonetheless, technology can be distinguished from science because of its practical, artifactual orientation. This has implications for both its sociotechnical organization and its cognitive or epistemological character.” (p. 451)

<sup>190</sup> Thus echoing Bruno Latour again, cf. Latour, Bruno, *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987.

<sup>191</sup> All professions that have long blurred the boundaries between science and technology thanks to the intrusion of increasingly sophisticated instruments requiring both scientific knowledge and technical know-how. Witness also the conjoining of “bio” with “medicine”, “chemistry” or more even more pointedly “technology”.

<sup>192</sup> both in terms of branding, e.g. *Dr Hauschka* or *Dr Oetker*, and the various forms of endorsement championed in advertising. Numerous examples of this phenomenon can be found in Chapter 5 (*Food Case-Study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*).

<sup>193</sup> or Technischer Überprüfungsverein. Until recently, this agency’s main expertise was concentrated on cars, building safety and real estate, electrical appliances, etc. Cf. <http://www.tuv.com/de/deutschland/gk/produktpruefung/produktpruefung.jsp>. But the company has expanded its expertise to a broad range of every day consumer products and services, from fitness-horseriding-, camping- or pet-related equipment, to cosmetics, food, prams, tanning studios, not to mention erotic toys: cf. e.g. [http://www.tuv.com/de/deutschland/gk/produktpruefung/fitness\\_freizeit/fitness.jsp](http://www.tuv.com/de/deutschland/gk/produktpruefung/fitness_freizeit/fitness.jsp); [http://www.tuv.com/de/deutschland/gk/produktpruefung/kinder\\_spielzeug/kinder\\_spielzeug.jsp](http://www.tuv.com/de/deutschland/gk/produktpruefung/kinder_spielzeug/kinder_spielzeug.jsp) as well as to health consulting (work & holidays): cf. [http://www.tuev-sued.de/gesundheit\\_arbeitsplatz\\_urlaub](http://www.tuev-sued.de/gesundheit_arbeitsplatz_urlaub). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>194</sup> Cf. the monthly magazine *Test* or the foundation’s website: <http://www.stiftung-warentest.de/online/>. For health and cosmetics, cf. [http://www.stiftung-warentest.de/online/gesundheit\\_kosmetik.html](http://www.stiftung-warentest.de/online/gesundheit_kosmetik.html), for food & beverages, cf. [http://www.stiftung-warentest.de/online/essen\\_trinken.html](http://www.stiftung-warentest.de/online/essen_trinken.html). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>195</sup> Monthly magazine „Ökotest: richtig gut leben” or website: <http://www.oekotest.de/>. They also regularly publish special issues, guidebooks or yearbooks on specific themes such as food & drink, cosmetics, health, fitness and wellness. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

as “reproducible, controlled and effective functioning”.<sup>196</sup> But he quickly warns that this definition should be handled with care and not as a normative locating instrument fuelled by a modernist pride in progress – a stance untenable from our contemporary historical perspective. Indeed, both in temporal and spatial terms, the definition applies only fleetingly, since correlations and interactions are not controllable:

The technological is historically powerful, but this power has no ruler and no controller. The word “technology” – used without an article<sup>197</sup> suggests a unified power, which could be harnessed by “man”. This is one of the most successful western modernist narratives, but a narrative that has fundamentally lost its credibility. The technological is not a sum of phenomena that can be isolated; it is found in things, events, living beings, pictures and signs, fantasies and hopes – it is scattered, heterogeneous and heterologous, but entangled in dense and multifarious interrelations.<sup>198</sup>

However, even if I essentially agree with Mehrtens that technology can no longer be viewed deterministically as an abstract “deus ex or in machina”<sup>199</sup> and that the power of the technological must always be locally circumscribed, I find that in the case of HLTs the notion of power must be refined because it is particularly difficult to locate. Peter Weingart distinguishes between two contexts of use for technology, contexts that have very different implications in terms of power: the professional realm where the use of specific (often expensive) technologies seems to dictate a particular type of specialised human behaviour and the everyday or private realm where technology is appropriated individually. In the latter it also means that:

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<sup>196</sup> Mehrtens, Herbert, op. cit., p. 238. „Damit wäre eine Definition nicht, der Technik sondern des Technischen fällig, das in den historischen Erscheinungen zu lokalisieren und zu analysieren ist. Diese Definition lautet nach Stand meiner Überlegungen etwas folgendermaßen: Das technische ist reproduzierbares, kontrolliertes und effektives Funktionieren.“

<sup>197</sup> Due to differences between German and English syntax, I have had to take liberties in the translation here. Cf. the following footnote.

<sup>198</sup> Mehrtens, Herbert, op. cit., p. 238. „Das technische ist historisch machtvoll, aber diese Macht hat keinen Machthaber und keinen Kontrolleur. Die Wortbildung ‚Die Technik‘ – mit dem bestimmten Artikel- suggeriert eine einheitliche Macht, der sich ‚Der Mensch‘ bedienen könne. Das ist eine der großen Erzählungen der okzidentalen Neuzeit, die gründlich unglaubwürdig geworden ist. Das Technische ist keine ausgrenzbare Menge von Phänomenen; es findet sich in den Dingen, den Ereignissen, den Lebewesen, den Bildern und Zeichen, den Phantasien und Hoffnungen – verstreut, heterogen und heterolog, aber in einem dichten vielfältigen Zusammenhang verstrickt.“

<sup>199</sup> For more on the emergence of the word “technology” and its received meaning(s) in the English language, cf. Marx, Leo, “Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept”, *Technology and Culture*, Volume 51, Number 3, July 2010, pp. 561-577. There are at least four noteworthy points in Marx’s argumentation: “belated emergence” (historically speaking, the term is relatively new in the English language), “semantic void” (technology describes complex technical phenomena that prior or competing expressions fail to adequately designate), “conceptual competition” (obviously, there were other contenders for this role but they were dismissed over time) and – the most interesting point for us in the context of this study – “hazardous agency” (a quasi-mystical agency has been devolved to technology). To quote Marx: “By now, however, the concept has been endowed with a thing-like autonomy and a seemingly magical power of historical agency. We have made it an all-purpose agent of change. As compared with other means of reaching our social goals, the technological has come to seem the most feasible, practical, and economically viable. It relieves the citizenry of onerous decision-making obligations and intensifies their gathering sense of political impotence. The popular belief in technology as a – if not the – primary force shaping the future is matched by our increasing reliance on instrumental standards of judgment, and a corresponding neglect of moral and political standards, in making judgments about the direction of society.” (p. 577).

[...] it is massively disseminated and is subordinated to subjective needs of and capacities for control. This type of everyday life technology is by definition Every(wo)man's technology. This does not mean that it does not require adjustments in order to be used. But these must be kept in check, if individual use and control are to be ensured.<sup>200</sup>

However, the appropriation of HLTs, perhaps more than that of other everyday technologies, entails a clearer power struggle between producers' and mediators' normative health and beauty values on the one hand and those of consumers which may be more individually-tailored, hence also resistant or subversive. Madeleine Akrich, as a sociologist rooted in the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), postulates that conditions of usage –which usually correspond to certain user representations<sup>201</sup>– are objectified in technologies as so-called “scripts”. She thus interprets technologies as non-human actors which prescribe the behaviour of their (human) users and thus argues against the dividing of the social and the technical as promoted by the SCOT (social construction of technology) theory.<sup>202</sup> Producers (often in collaboration with mediators) inscribe their visions and predictions of the world in the technologies they design. The “script” metaphor refers to a film script because both define a framework for future actions. For Akrich, “*a technical artifact can be described as a scenario replete with a stage, roles, and directions governing the interactions between the (human and nonhuman) actors who are supposed to assume those roles*”.<sup>203</sup> Many design choices can thus be seen as “*decisions about what should be delegated to the technology and what should be left to the initiative of human actors*”.<sup>204</sup>

This vision of technology could leave one with the impression that if the human element is a co-determinant of technology, power inequalities determined by the varying resources of different human groups (in this case those of producers vs. those of consumers) can endow technology with a form of proxy authority, leaving users quite disempowered. As put by Ulrich and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, “[*technology*] appears as both the product and the instrument of social needs, interests and conflicts. Technology is effect and cause at the same time.”<sup>205</sup> But even Madeleine Akrich, in her examples drawn from technology transfers

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<sup>200</sup> Weingart, Peter, „Differenzierung der Technik oder Entdifferenzierung der Kultur“, in *Technik im Alltag*, Ed. Bernward Joerges, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988, pp. 148-149. „Das bedeutet auch, daß sie massenhaft verbreitet ist und subjektiven Kontrollbedürfnissen und –fähigkeiten unterliegt. Derartige Technik des alltäglichen Lebens ist per definitionem Technik für jedermann. Das heißt nicht, daß sie nicht Anpassungsleistungen zu ihrer Bedienung verlangte. Diese müssen sich jedoch in Grenzen halten, wenn die individuelle Verwendung und Kontrolle gewährleistet sein soll.“

<sup>201</sup> She divides user representation techniques into explicit and implicit ones: the explicit techniques are based on special strategies such as, for example, market surveys, consumer testing and feedback on experience through contacts with after-sales services. Implicit techniques, however, are based on experience with similar or related products and on statements made solely on behalf of users e.g. by designers and experts who believe they share a “common/ lay user” understanding of technology (cf. I-methodology). Cf. Akrich, Madeleine, “User Representations: Practices, Methods and Sociology”, *Managing Technology in Society. The approach of Constructive Technology Assessment*, Eds Arie Rip, Thomas J. Misa & Johan Schot, London: Pinter, 1995, pp. 167-184.

<sup>202</sup> Cf.: Akrich, Madeleine, “Beyond social construction of technology: The shaping of people and things in the innovation process”, *New Technology at the Outset. Social Forces in the Shaping of Technological Innovations*, Eds Meinolf Dierkes & Ute Hoffmann, Frankfurt: Campus, 1992, pp. 173-190. In later articles, Akrich uses the term “actant” to refer to (human and non-human) actors in order to avoid terms that assume a distinction between the technical and the social.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. p. 174.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Akrich, Madeleine, “The De-Description of Technical Objects”, *Shaping Technology, Building Society. Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, Eds Wiebe E. Bijker & John Law, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1992, p. 216.

<sup>205</sup> Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, op. cit., p. 139.

between France and emerging economies, shows that users/consumers do not passively accept the scripts embedded in technologies but will always try to adapt them to their needs and to local conditions. In that sense, Akrich agrees with Michel de Certeau and his concept of subversive use that presents a more nuanced view of agency.<sup>206</sup> Subversive use is underpinned by users' ability to tinker (in French: "bricoler") within the praxis of consumption, even when the room to manoeuvre is extremely limited. This particular resource of consumers can be termed the "*tactics of consumption, the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, [which] thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices.*"<sup>207</sup> The consumer, as a creative and cunning individual, but without the benefit of a proper (a spatial or institutional location)<sup>208</sup> resorts to spur-of-the-moment tactics in her/his arts of using [in French: "arts de faire"] to counter the long-term strategies of producers who are anchored in a recognized, defensible locus.<sup>209</sup>

What this implies for users of HLTs is that they can collaborate, vie with, resist or even subvert the authority vested in non-human artefacts and processes, under the guise of biological additives, computer steered fitness programmes, cosmic energy flows, or more concrete design options or instructions for use (which are also upheld by institutionalised mediators such as governmental agencies, physicians or wellness experts). In this context, I am reminded of a former flatmate whose diet consisted exclusively of the cheapest and fattiest fast food available on the German market, excluding all fresh fruit and vegetables. Nevertheless, he would guzzle litre upon litre of a so-called A-C-E fruit drink, assuring me that it was a very positive contribution to his health... heedless of potential vitamin surfeit or the "one-leggedness" of his health strategies. Far removed from the healthy lifestyle ethos (involving a balanced diet, sport, etc.) in which this type of product is supposedly embedded or a more straightforward physiological "common sense" implying a carefully monitored intake of nutrients, my flatmate seemed to simply consider the drink as a convenient technical-mental fix to solve his daily "*what-should-I-do-for-my-health?*" conundrum.<sup>210</sup>

At any rate, the appropriation or domestication of a technology presupposes at least a minimal margin of interpretive flexibility, as a precondition for its adoption into a particular setting. Which is why I would be tempted to agree with Mika Pantzar who argues for the coexistence of configuring (by engineers, designers or more generally producers) and appropriating (by users) because he sees scripts as allowing for different scales of interpretive flexibility. First, there are scripts for "correct consumption" as suggested by advertisers or public discourse –which, in contrast with Akrich's scripts are not inscribed in a technology but ascribed. Secondly, there are "open" scripts that can be transformed by

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<sup>206</sup> De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984. Cf. also the original French version: De Certeau, Michel, *L'invention du quotidien : 1. arts de faire*, Paris: Gallimard, 1990, p. 53: « *En réalité, à une production rationalisée, expansionniste, centralisée, spectaculaire et bruyante, fait face une production d'un type tout différent, qualifiée de 'consommation', qui a pour caractéristiques ses ruses, son effritement au gré des occasions, ses braconnages, sa clandestinité, son murmure inlassable, en somme une quasi-invisibilité puisqu'elle ne se signale guère par des produits propres (où en aurait-elle la place ?) mais par un art d'utiliser ceux qui lui sont imposés.* »

<sup>207</sup> Cf. De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, op. cit., p. xvii.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., p. xix.

<sup>209</sup> For the references to Madeleine Akrich and Michel de Certeau, I have freely drawn on a literature review I co-authored with Heike Weber: Bingle, Gwen & Weber, Heike, "Mass Consumption and Usage of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Technologies - a Literature Review", op. cit., pp. 26, 28-29 & pp. 38-39. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>210</sup> This example also proves interesting in the light of my arguments on "commodified experience" in the "Commodification" section and "rationality constructs" in Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*).

users, as in e.g. multi-functional appliances, such as a food blender used to produce e.g. homemade cosmetics, and thirdly, there are “closed” scripts, as in the case of a rowing machine or a treadmill that do not allow for many subversive opportunities besides rowing or walking/running.<sup>211</sup>

But since they are so closely connected to the body as to design and mould it from both the outside and the inside (with varying degrees of interpretative flexibility and control), HLTs beg a confrontation with what Michel Foucault apprehends as “technologies”. Concision constraints mean that I cannot delve too deeply into a concept he develops over several studies, which is why I will concentrate on the notes for the *Technologies of the Self* seminar.<sup>212</sup> Broadly, he defines technologies as “*specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves*”, before specifying:

As a context, we must understand that there are four major types of these “technologies,” each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.<sup>213</sup>

Foucault thus provides yet another slant on our quest for a good definition of technology, a perspective that may prove as confusing for a traditional historian of technology as it may prove enlightening for a historian of health and the body. The first point that should be mentioned is that the Foucaultian conception of both “techniques” and “technologies” is much wider than that of the authors I have quoted until now. Indeed, he labels as *technologies* a symbolic realm, as well as an outer and inner governmentality that, at first sight, seem detached from the technological hardware of production. However, as he goes on to add: “*These four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each one of them is associated with a certain type of domination.*”<sup>214</sup> He then narrows down his focus specifically on the fourth category because he is “*more and more interested in the*

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<sup>211</sup> The reference to Mika Pantzar is freely adapted from Bingle, Gwen & Weber, Heike, op. cit., pp. 29-30. Cf. also Pantzar, Mika, “Inventing and articulating the need for domestic appliances - an exploratory study into the discursive reality of post-war Finland”, paper presented at the workshop “Mediating technologies: users and usage in the history of 20th century technology”, Munich 14-16/12/2001, 2001 and later published as: Pantzar, Mika, “Tools or toys. Inventing the Need for Domestic Appliances in Postwar and Postmodern Finland”, *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 32, no. 1, Spring 2003, pp. 81-91.

<sup>212</sup> *Technologies of the Self: a seminar with Michel Foucault*, Eds Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman & Patrick H. Hutton, Amherst: the University of Massachusetts Press, 1988. On the “theory.org” website, there is an interesting section <http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-fou6.htm> in which scholars have contributed their understanding of “technologies of the self”. Definitions range from the curt and effective “*Holistic civil bondage techniques*” (G.N.Unger) to the more personalised and wry “*Foucault's phrase 'technologies of the self' refers to ways in which people put forward, and police, their 'selves' in society; and the ways in which they are enabled or constrained in their use of different techniques by available and disenchanting discourses where the geometric flux abdicates the signifier, leaving us even further removed from any coherent sense of "self" and with our heads on the floor after downing a whole bottle of Jack Daniels in search of the ever-elusive transcendental [sic] signifier that just might, just might, lead to a sense of self*”. (Mary Hudock). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 18

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

*interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self.*"<sup>215</sup>

His subsequent analysis is therefore a comparative case-study on "the hermeneutics of the self" in Greco-Roman philosophy and early Christian monastic thought. In the first case, he revives the classical notion of "*epimelesthai sautou*" (*take care of yourself*) as opposed to the more popular "*gnothi sauton*" (*know yourself*), explaining how these two dimensions were articulated in the Greco-Roman as opposed to the modern world: "*To summarize: There has been an inversion between the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity, 'Take care of yourself' and 'Know thyself'. In Greco-Roman culture knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of taking care of yourself. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle.*"<sup>216</sup> Foucault sees the reason for this inversion in the fact that the rigorous moral order and austerity principles of modern Western society could not accommodate care of the self as a premise, since renunciation of the self was seen as the utmost goal. Moreover, morality was viewed as an external product based on the relation with others rather than with the self.<sup>217</sup> Philipp Sarasin, however, reminds his readers that Foucault's interpretation of the Ancient Greek "dietetics" as an "art of living" embedded in an "aesthetics of existence" has been deemed misguided by classics scholars and historians of Classical Antiquity. Indeed, compared to the Greek understanding, Foucault's "*souci de soi*" (or "technologies of the self") does not seem to really overlap with the classical model: "*If one can credit these assessments, the ancient "dietetics" and the care for the self were much more medically and spiritually oriented than Foucault's very secular and aestheticizing representation of Classical Antiquity's technologies of the self.*"<sup>218</sup>

But what can be retained from this debate for my discussion of HLTs is the fact that in the late modern period, disenchantment with many of modernity's postulates has led to a certain alienation from the *gnothi sauton*. Just as the unintended material side-effects of technology have undermined blind faith in "rational" technical fixes, their mental side-effects (in terms of uncertainty, risk, fear, isolation, etc.) have led to an estrangement from a unified, Cartesian self, towards a diffracted identity that seems increasingly unknowable. In this context, the *epimelesthai sautou* can be perceived as a refuge, an investment in something perceived as comfortably accessible and subjective: the body and its well-being. But this shift does not mean that the quest for the *gnothi sauton* has disappeared, rather it is mediated through the pursuit of *epimelesthai sautou*. Whether this is a turn back to classical values or to a Foucaultian model is hardly relevant here, since the ethic underlying HLTs seeks to happily (and relatively unreflexively) embrace all dimensions of everyday life, whether medical, spiritual, secular or aesthetic. Thus, HLTs freely draw on, flexibly recombine<sup>219</sup> and promote a "*number of operations*" on consumers' "*own bodies and souls*,

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>218</sup> Sarasin, Philipp, op.cit p. 458: "*Die antike Diätetik und die Sorge um sich waren also, wenn man diesen Urteilen glauben schenken darf, zugleich medizinischer wie auch spiritueller als Foucaults sehr diesseitige und ästhetisierende Darstellung der antiken Selbsttechnik.*" Sarasin therefore sees a much closer affiliation between Foucault and hygienic thought: "*...Foucault's Modell des souci de soi als Form, die Freiheit des Subjekts zu denken, ist eine Erbe der Hygieniker. Foucault ist damit in doppelter Weise auf die Geschichte bezogen, die ich rekonstruiere: als theoretischer und historiographischer Ausgangspunkt für Fragen, die sich ohne seine Bücher nicht hätten stellen lassen – und als großer Hygieniker.*" From Sarasin, Philipp, ibid., p. 28.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. my discussion of "recombinance" as a master metaphor in the next section on "Commodification".

*thoughts, conduct, and way of being, the transformative aim being to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality*<sup>220</sup>. They combine “souci de soi” and “dietetics” techniques, be it under the guise of simplistic auto-suggestion and dialogue techniques,<sup>221</sup> special nutritional regimens, exercise routines, organisation and relaxation tips or meditation practices. Contemporary popular discourse on wellness clearly reflects this wide purport, as in this example drawn from the website of “Ars Vitalis” – a gym that opened in 1994 in Berlin– where wellness is qualified as a “*holistic lifestyle therapy and prophylaxis*”:

As a life philosophy, wellness influences well-being and can thus be defined as physical activity in connection with spiritual relaxation and mental stimulation. [...] The approach is holistic and embraces both personal attitudes towards life and the specific situations of individuals. The aim is to improve bodily performance, mental agility and spiritual resilience, not to mention a harmonious private life as well as a positive attitude towards work in harmony with nature.<sup>222</sup>

Here, the aesthetics of HLTs subjects the moral order of the polis<sup>223</sup> to an ethic of “individualistic” health commodification,<sup>224</sup> an issue that was not explicitly tackled by Foucault. Compared to Foucaultian or classical technologies of the self, the commodification of health and well-being implied by HLTs is thus mediated by the purchase and appropriation of concrete, mechanical technologies such as specific dietary supplements, cosmetics, fitness appliances, etc. and more immaterial processes, services or experiences (e.g. a voucher for a wellness “oasis” experience including sauna, massage, facial, soft music, light therapy, etc.). Alice Jardine therefore argues for a superimposition of a mechanistic and a Foucaultian understanding of technology:

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>221</sup> or more “sophisticated” techniques such as e.g. the controversial Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), curtly defined by the online *Oxford Dictionaries* as “a system of alternative therapy intended to educate people in self-awareness and effective communication, and to model and change their patterns of mental and emotional behaviour” ([http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m\\_en\\_gb0554960#m\\_en\\_gb0554960](http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0554960#m_en_gb0554960)) or more comprehensively by the online *Business Dictionary*: “Set of rules and techniques proposed for modifying behavior in achieving self improvement, self management, and more effective interpersonal communications. Based on certain assumptions about how language and movements of eyes and body affect brain (neurological) functions, NLP is similar to self-hypnosis. Its basic premise is that to achieve any kind of success one must create rich imagery of the goal, and must imitate (model) and internalize the appropriate behavioral patterns. Its name is derived from how senses filter and process experience before storing it in brain (neuro), how one uses words and symbols to create mental pictures (linguistic), and how desired habits and attitudes become ingrained (programming). Proposed in 1970s in the US jointly by John Grinder (born 1940, a professor of linguistics) and John Bandler (born 1950, a mathematician) in association with the UK anthropologist and social scientist Gregory Bateson (1904-80), its claims are yet to be proven by scientific studies.” (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/neuro-linguistic-programming-NLP.html>) [Websites accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>222</sup> <http://www.ars-vitalis.de/wellness/>: “Als Lebensphilosophie prägt Wellness das Wohlbefinden und kann daher als körperliche Aktivität in Verbindung mit seelischer Entspannung und geistiger Anregung definiert werden. [...] Der Denkansatz ist ganzheitlich und berücksichtigt die individuelle Lebensgefühle und die Situationen der einzelnen Menschen. Ziel ist die Verbesserung des körperlichen Leistungsvermögens, der geistigen Beweglichkeit und der seelischen Belastbarkeit, des harmonischen Privatlebens sowie der positiven Arbeitseinstellung im Einklang mit der Natur.” [website originally accessed Jan. 2006; unfortunately, the content has been updated since]

<sup>223</sup> supported by the quest for a rationally, spiritually or more holistically enlightened selfhood -whether linked to classical, monastic or hygienist thought.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. the following section on “Commodification”.

The second thing I will emphasize is the conjunction today between Michel Foucault's use of the word "technology" and our everyday sense of the word "technology"—a conjunction on or in the flesh. Various histories and genealogies of technology (from the Greek word *technē* through Heidegger's "Question of Technology" to contemporary "high techniques") have brought us to the point where what Foucault described "metaphorically" as techniques of techno-bio-power have merged with our everyday sense of the term of technology as "mechanical" (from the Greek *mechanos*)—although a lot of people insist Foucault wasn't being metaphorical. This has produced a series of megamachines which are disciplining and punishing the body—by which I do not mean some abstract entity but *the flesh*—in new and sometimes overwhelming ways.<sup>225</sup>

But the perverse twist in this reading is the question of agency and its delegation as it pertains to HLTs. Just as other technologies, HLTs represent nodes or intersections of power: first there is the power delegated by producers to the design of the product or process (which seems to confer technology with an impetus of its own) as we discussed it with Akrich's *script* concept. Second, I would name the power of a specific cultural environment/or landscape<sup>226</sup> that seeks to frame or dictate the "correct use" of the product (to go back to our discussion of interpretative flexibility) and which emanates either from production or mediation institutions—in the guise of instructions for use, magazines, websites, governmental guidelines, etc. Third, there is the power of the user that can be enlisted (or not) to conform to, negotiate with, resist or subvert a technology. Thus, in the context of contemporary HLTs, the megamachines that discipline, punish or even pamper the flesh are neither disembodied mechanisms endowed with a runaway science-fiction power, nor are they really remote-controlled by wily manufacturers or obscure societal forces.<sup>227</sup> Instead, they are to a large extent consciously and wilfully integrated by consumers into their everyday lives. Surveillance has thus been very effectively delegated to the self. Jardine fittingly quotes Bob Somol, a professor at UIC's [University of Illinois at Chicago] School of Architecture, who states that "*...we are rather in a mode of self-surveillance: we watch ourselves as someone else.*"<sup>228</sup>

With HLTs, the internalisation of control goes even a step further than the inward-turned gaze, it is also reflected in the individual choice of surveillance tools: "*Whoever pursues wellness, finds and designs her/his own needs and desired states -which then become a yardstick for comprehensive self-development- and uses individually chosen methods to attain this aim.*"<sup>229</sup> But a double caveat should be raised here: first of all, even if the invention of needs and desires as well as the fixes selected seem to be left to consumers' province, health commodification spells the emergence of an internalised imperative to pursue well-being at almost any cost. And if the diagnosis and the tools are individualised,

<sup>225</sup> Jardine, Alice, *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, op. cit., p.152.

<sup>226</sup> For more on cultural landscapes, cf. Kotro, Tanja & Pantzar Mika, op. cit.

<sup>227</sup> For a stimulating discussion of healthism and governmentality building on Foucault, cf. Rose, Nikolas, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, esp. Chapter 2 (Freedom).

<sup>228</sup> Jardine, Alice, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>229</sup> Duttweiler, Stefanie, „'Körper, Geist und Seele bepuscheln...': Wellness as Technologie der Selbstführung“, in: *Artifizielle Körper – Lebendige Technik: Technische Modellierungen des Körpers in historischer Perspektive*, Zürich: Chronos, 2005, pp. 261-277, p. 266. „Wer Wellness betreibt, findet und erfindet eigene Bedürfnisse und erwünschte Zustände, die zum Maßstab umfassender Selbstbearbeitung werden und verwendet selbst gewählte Mittel, diesen Zustand zu erreichen.“

they do not stem from a cultural vacuum but are shaped by the possibilities and limits of the technologies' design as well as "correctly pleasurable living" guidelines peddled by the same mediation instances that I have mentioned above. As Stefanie Duttweiler words it:

From the wellness perspective, technologies of the self are thus instances of a process requiring a number of pre-conditions: one must see oneself as in need of change, choose the appropriate technologies and apply them situationally, implement the instructions and finally produce a result, enabling one to state that one feels well.<sup>230</sup>

Therefore, the balance of power in HLTs is quite subtle: even if most of their characteristics (such as the primacy of individual health, well-being and sensuous gratification, their mix-n-match quality as well as their flexible tailoring) seem to point towards a maximum autonomisation of the subject, this autonomy is only that of a consumer. Indeed, the late modern subject is exposed to a double bind: not only is s/he, as a citizen, still controlled by more or less repressive state technologies but, as a consumer, s/he is also monitored (and steered) by economically-driven institutions (e.g. transnational corporations), whose interests are best served when consumers believe that they have the choice to define themselves.

Thus, since most HLTs seem to be voluntarily embodied in one way or another, it appears difficult to envision freedom from technological encroachments, hence also a gradual abatement of self-surveillance. Rather, it seems more likely that both the encroachment and the surveillance processes will be continually re-negotiated in individual, localised versions of embodiment:

Embodiment, however, is always relativistic in the sense that it is a relation between the human and the technologies employed. What stands out first is that all human-technology relations are two-way relations. Insofar as I use or employ a technology, I am used by and employed by that technology as well. [...] In the second place, through our various journeys it can be seen that bodies, our bodies, adapt to different kinds of technologies and technological contexts. [...] This range of adaptation to our machines, however, is not infinite or totally malleable. It reaches limits and has structural aspects [...] the technologies must also adapt to us. [...] We are our bodies – but in that very basic notion one also discovers that our bodies have an amazing plasticity and polymorphism that is often brought out precisely in our relations with technologies. We are bodies in technologies.<sup>231</sup>

For a historian of technology, this triggers the question of when this vision of our "bodies in technology" actually arose. Did it already accompany humankind from its first experiments with sticks and stones or with tattoos, piercing and scarification? Because my expertise does not extend to paleoanthropology, I will have to limit my observations to more recent times. Tim Armstrong contends that modernism is "*characterized by the desire to intervene in the body; to render it part of modernity by techniques which may be biological, mechanical or behavioural*".<sup>232</sup> But these types of intervention in the body go hand in hand with, indeed

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p. 270. „Selbsttechnologien im Modus der Wellness sind somit Momente eines voraussetzungsvollen Prozesses: Man muss sich als veränderungsbedürftig begreifen, die richtigen Techniken auswählen und ihren Einsatz situativ entscheiden, die Anweisungen umsetzen und letztlich ein Ergebnis produzieren, von dem man sagen kann, man fühle sich wohl.“

<sup>231</sup> Ihde, Don, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

<sup>232</sup> Armstrong, Tim, *Modernism, Technology and the Body: a cultural study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 6.

they actually depend on the acceptance of a new cultural metaphor, that of the *body as machine*, a body that can be correspondingly mechanically serviced and maintained. While she mentions androids or automata as precursors of biological mechanism, Maria Ossietzki locates the hybridism of the body in the 19<sup>th</sup> century “at the latest in the course of industrialisation and the technicization of medicine”.<sup>233</sup> This is corroborated by Carolyn Thomas de la Peña, who after tracing back the analogy of *body as machine* to Descartes, quotes a number of popular American publications that repeatedly drew on this simile from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards in the U.S.:

Such human-machine comparisons were not new, but they did represent a fundamental shift in how individuals viewed their physical frames. Enlightenment philosophers and physicians had speculated that the body might be a rational collection of mechanized parts. Yet their understanding of the body as machine-like was a means to understand the body, not to improve upon it. By 1860, machines analogies were not merely being used to describe complex physiology to a general audience. They also began to reflect a popular belief that machines could improve upon God’s given body.<sup>234</sup>

There again, while wholeheartedly subscribing to this “improvement belief” (which can be perceived as one of the last contemporary remnants of a positivist approach to technology),<sup>235</sup> HLTs adopt a hybrid position that brazenly blurs boundaries. Under the guise of a neovitalist holism<sup>236</sup> that seeks to restore the body’s original balance,<sup>237</sup> they draw on

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<sup>233</sup> Ossietzki, Maria, “Körpermaschinen und Dampfmaschinen: vom Wandel der Physiologie und des Körpers unter dem Einfluß von Industrialisierung und Thermodynamik”, in: *Physiologie und Industrielle Gesellschaft: Studien zur Verwissenschaftlichung des Körpers im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, op. cit., pp. 313-346, p. 313. „Hybrid wurde der Körper spätestens im Verlaufe der Industrialisierung und der Technisierung der Medizin.“ In her article, Ossietzki particularly dwells on the thermodynamic model: „Man muß tief graben, um die Spuren aufzufinden, die jenen Reduktionismus begründeten. Sie führen zurück in die physikalische Physiologie, wie sie den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren des letzten Jahrhunderts begründet wurde. Damals war es ein Zeichen von Wissenschaftlichkeit, wenn Analogien zwischen Mensch und Maschine gefunden wurden. Das Knochengestütz entlang der Hebelgestetze zu erklären, die Funktion des Auges in den Begriffen des Fernrohrs zu beschreiben, die Nerven elektrischer Erregung gleichzusetzen oder den Muskel als gespannte Feder zu begreifen: damit schloß die Physiologie an Grundkonzepte der Physik an.“ In: *ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>234</sup> De la Peña, Carolyn Th., *The Body Electric: how strange machines built the modern American*, New York & London: New York University Press, 2003, p. 24.

<sup>235</sup> The “improvement” belief also lies at the core of the tensions surrounding not only the birth of physiology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but also its entire history to the present times, including narratives of physiology’s so-called “decline”. Concretely, the tensions recur cyclically in the debate between vitalism and mechanism as described by Christiane Sinding: „Die entstehende Physiologie des 19. Jahrhunderts vertritt eher den Mechanismus, während die „untergehende“ Physiologie sich auf einen Vitalismus in neuem Gewand beruft, der sich je nachdem organismisch, integrativ oder holistisch nennt.“ Sinding, Christiane, “Vitalismus oder Mechanismus?: Die Auseinandersetzungen um die forschungsleitenden Paradigmata in der Physiologie“, in: *Physiologie und Industrielle Gesellschaft: Studien zur Verwissenschaftlichung des Körpers im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, op. cit., pp. 76-98, p. 77.

<sup>236</sup> The Encyclopedia Britannica online defines “vitalism” as a “school of scientific thought—the germ of which dates from Aristotle—that attempts (in opposition to mechanism and organicism) to explain the nature of life as resulting from a vital force peculiar to living organisms and different from all other forces found outside living things. This force is held to control form and development and to direct the activities of the organism. Vitalism has lost prestige as the chemical and physical nature of more and more vital phenomena have been shown.” Cf. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/630920/vitalism>. For more information and historical contextualisation, cf. also Bechtel, William & Richardson, Robert C., “Vitalism”, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward Craig, London: Routledge, 1998, as quoted here: <http://mechanism.ucsd.edu/~bill/teaching/philbio/vitalism.htm>. On neovitalism, cf. the following description from: <http://www.wissen.ch/wde/generator/wissen/ressorts/bildung/index,page=1198494.html>: “von E. du

and heavily rely upon a large repertoire of mechanistic fixes.<sup>238</sup> However, this inclusiveness should not be seen simply as an “anything goes” or “anything sells” strategy, typical of a wry and disenchanting post-industrial economy, since it more specifically results from a very contemporary obsession, i.e. risk management. Indeed, nowadays technology is only haltingly perceived as a harbinger of progress since its unintended side-effects often overwhelm us:

Peoples who no longer dare eat meat for fear they will become mad, who no longer dare to make love for fear of falling sick, and who no longer dare press the nozzle of an aerosol for fear the sky will fall upon their heads are no longer either modern, post-modern or barbarian: they have gone back to a shared humanity, to what anthropology has always described as pertaining to “the others”. When one decides to blend human societies and an even broader society of objects, prions, neutrinos, viruses, microchips and cabled networks within a common collective life, one has to “watch out”, one has to be aware of every connection. The old idea of progress, which we have only recently discarded, allowed us to stop being careful, it freed us from all caution and precaution; instead, the new idea seems to impose caution, selective choice, a painstaking sorting out of the possibles.<sup>239</sup>

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Bois-Reymond stammende Bezeichnung für die Erneuerung des → Vitalismus, die Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts durch Biologen (H. Driesch, J. Reinke, J. von Uexküll), antidarwinistische Entwicklungstheoretiker und Philosophen (E. von Hartmann, H. Bergson, E. Becher, A. Wenzel) entwickelt wurde. Der Neovitalismus vertrat die Auffassung, dass die Lebensvorgänge nicht allein aus physikalischen und chemischen Prozessen sowie aus der Kausalität dieser Prozesse bestimmt werden könnten, sondern einer übergreifenden Gesetzmäßigkeit unterlägen, die, als ‚Autonomie des Lebens‘ bezeichnet, durch seelenartige Kräfte, Entelechien, Dominanten strukturiert sei.” For more on the relationship between physics and the (neo)vitalism of alternative/traditional healing systems, a good article is Stenger, Victor J., “The Physics of ‘Alternative Medicine’. Bioenergetic Fields”, *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*, Vol. 8, No 1, Spring/Summer 1999, online: <http://www.sram.org/0301/bioenergetic-fields.html>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>237</sup> usually rejecting straightforward “machine” metaphors, but readily drawing upon mechanistic linguistic legacies such as “power”, “energy”, “calories”, “resistance”, “resilience”, “burnout”, “breakdown”, etc. Cf. Osietzki, Maria, op. cit., p. 314.

<sup>238</sup> It’s interesting to note that the machine metaphor still holds sway in the realm of consumption, cf. Anamma, Joy & Alladi, Venkatesh, “Postmodernism, feminism and the body: The visible and the invisible in consumer research”, *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 11, 1994, pp. 333-357: “According to Thompson et al. (1989), the machine metaphor, borrowed from theories in cognitive psychology, is probably the most prominent theme in consumer research and likens humans to information-processing devices. The dominance of the machine metaphor is also evidence of the silence regarding the body in consumer research. We argue that we study consumption, typically an activity associated with the animate body, yet we shape our thinking with metaphors that portray consumers as inanimate machines.” (p. 335)

<sup>239</sup> Latour, Bruno, « La modernité est terminée », article originally published in *Le Monde* on August 28th, 1996, available online: [http://www.bruno-latour.fr/presse/presse\\_art/002.html](http://www.bruno-latour.fr/presse/presse_art/002.html). «Des peuples qui n'osent plus manger de la viande de peur de devenir fous, qui n'osent plus faire l'amour de peur de se rendre malades, qui n'osent plus presser le bouton d'un aérosol de peur que le ciel ne leur tombe sur la tête, ne sont plus ni modernes, ni post-modernes, ni barbares; ils sont revenus à la commune humanité, à ce que l'anthropologie a toujours décrit chez "les autres". Lorsque l'on se décide à mêler, dans une même vie collective, des sociétés d'humains et une société plus vaste encore d'objets, de prions, de neutrinos, de virus, de puces et de réseaux cablés, il faut "faire gaffe", il faut prendre soin de toutes les connections. L'ancienne idée de progrès, celle que nous avons quitté récemment, permettait de ne plus faire attention, elle libérait de toute prudence, de toute précaution; la nouvelle idée apparaît plutôt comme ce qui oblige à la prudence, au choix sélectif, à un triage minutieux des possibles. » Cf. of course also, the classic: Beck, Ulrich, *Risikogesellschaft: auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

Thus, the body and its HLTs do not escape this general scrutiny of technology. If the shift from an “industrial” to a so-called “post-industrial”<sup>240</sup> society seems to imply that the body has changed from a factor of production to a factor of consumption and that there is almost nothing left to industrialise but the flesh, this step is carried out with a fearful enthusiasm. HLTs are designed and perceived in a corresponding light: for example, the aerobic or jogging excesses of the Jane Fonda generation are both smugly and concernedly dismissed by proponents of more “softcore” wellness technologies. But do the latter remain distinct from human bodies or not? Latour again, in his endeavours to blur boundaries between sclerotic categories, suggests that drawing the line between “us” humans as sovereign subjects and “them” technologies as subordinate objects is rather futile:

Without technical detours, there is no « real » human. More seriously, this has been illustrated by innumerable studies that range from ergonomics to technology, through Laurent Thévenot’s remarkable efforts to classify the modes of action: the techniques that bombard human beings with a continuous offer of incredible positions –grips, suggestions, permissions, prohibitions, habits, positions, alienations, prescriptions, calculations, memories. By generalising the notion of affordance, we can say that, as quasi-subjects, we become so thanks to quasi-objects that people our universe with little ghosts of beings similar to us – whose scripts we take over or not.<sup>241</sup>

Edward Tenner describes the situation even more pointedly as it pertains to body technologies: “*When we use simple devices to move, position, extend, or protect our bodies, our techniques change both objects and bodies. And by adopting devices we do more. We change our social selves.*”<sup>242</sup> But it is Donna Haraway who takes the most radical stance in the debate on body/technology fusion with her understanding of the cyborg as a potent political affirmation: “*[M]y cyborg myth is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities which progressive people might explore as one part of needed political work.*”<sup>243</sup> However, in contrast with the producers, mediators and users of invasive medical technologies such as cosmetic surgery, computer-steered cyborgian experiments (like those of Steve Mann, a Canadian professor of computer engineering)<sup>244</sup> or radical body

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<sup>240</sup> Although, as Chaia Heller rightly argues: “[...] there is nothing so ‘post’ about ‘post-industrialism’: First World countries are still ‘industrial;’ they just moved their industrial infrastructure to the Third World.” Cf. Heller, Chaia, „McDonalds, MT, and Monsanto: resisting biotechnology in the age of informational capital”, *Redesigning Life? The Worldwide Challenge to Genetic Engineering*, Ed. Brian Tokar, London: Zed Books, 2001, pp. 405-419. The article is also available here: <http://www.social-ecology.org/2005/01/mcdonalds-mtv-and-monsanto-resisting-biotechnology-in-the-age-of-informational-capital/>. Nevertheless, this move has had tangible consequences for western bodies, as I argue in Chapter 4 (*History*). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>241</sup> Latour, Bruno, « Morale et technique : la fin des moyens », op. cit. « *Sans les détours techniques, il n’y pas de ‘proprement’ humain. Plus sérieusement, on peut le voir dans les innombrables travaux qui vont de l’ergonomie à la technologie, en passant par les remarquables efforts de Laurent Thévenot pour classer les modes d’action : les techniques bombardent les humains d’une offre continue de positions inouïes –prises, suggestions, permissions, interdictions, habitudes, positions, aliénations, prescriptions, calculs, mémoires. En généralisant la notion de promesse, on peut dire que les quasi-sujets que nous sommes tous deviennent tels grâce aux quasi-objets qui peuplent notre univers de petits fantômes d’êtres semblables à nous et dont nous revêtons ou non les programmes d’action.* »

<sup>242</sup> Tenner, Edward, *Our own devices: the past and future of body technologies*, New York: Knopf, 2003, p. 29.

<sup>243</sup> Haraway, Donna. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”, in: Haraway, Donna J., *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 154.

<sup>244</sup> See his professional homepage: <http://wearingcam.org/mann.htm> or his personal one: <http://wearingcam.org/steve.html>. [websites accessed Feb. 2011]

modifications such as branding, scarification and piercing, most HLT producers, mediators and users would wince at the thought of such a radical coalescence. Instead of trumpeting the merging of human and machine, they prefer to more or less consciously disguise the technologies they design, promote and consume with a comfortably “natural” sugar-coating that will blend in with a “naturalised” aesthetics of everyday life.

Hence technology in the realm of my dissertation is understood as *the technological* that can be found in artefacts (both products and appliances), processes, techniques, routines, sensations, emotions, experience and knowledge that users can appropriate to consciously design and influence the health and well-being of their bodies in everyday life. The inclusiveness of my definition is purposeful: from a consumer perspective and in an increasingly holistic paradigm, it has become very difficult to distinguish between industrial products and the experiences they help to induce or between appliances and specific bodily techniques which are supposed to enhance the effects of these appliances. Moreover, the holistic body as a consumer, mediator and (co-)producer of technology does not necessarily distinguish between a process and the sensation or experience it evokes since HLTs, more than any other technologies, are conceived as ‘lived/living technologies’.

Finally, even if in this context I consciously avoid analysing the above-mentioned more “radical” realms of body technology, I remain sensitive to all the dimensions that they uncover. Indeed, in the case of HLTs, it is not because the body-technology merger is quieter that it is less fundamental. On the contrary, HLTs have a way of creeping up on us, discreetly but surely transforming us into tomorrow’s more mainstream cyborgs. In this context, inputs from Mike Michael’s book *“Reconnecting Culture, Technology and Nature”* are of particular relevance. His study focuses on what he defines as *mundane* (in contrast with *exotic*) technologies and their contribution to the creation of hybrid entities he calls *“co(a)gents”*. Among others, his case-studies include the role of walking boots, automobiles or the remote control in the creation of respectively the *“seeker of natural sublime”*, the *“road rager”* or the *“couch potato”*. In the wake of Bruno Latour, he contends that:

There are no humans in the world. Or rather, humans are fabricated – in language, through discursive formations, in their various liaisons with technological and natural actors, across networks that are heterogeneously comprised of humans and non-humans who are themselves so comprised. Instead of humans and non-humans we are beginning to think about flows, movements, arrangements, relations. It is through such dynamics that the human (and the non-human) emerges.<sup>245</sup>

In the process of unravelling the articulations of these co(a)gents –where *“specific technologies, bits of bodies, aspects of nature, parts of culture, and traditions of discourse come together”*–<sup>246</sup> Michael exposes the overlaps and the limits of categories such as “culture”, “technology” and “nature”. In parallel, disciplinary boundaries that rely on a careful delimitation of these categories are denounced as too constricting since they are incapable of individually providing a satisfactory analysis of co(a)gents. Similarly, HLTs can be seen as contributing to co(a)gents such as the “fitness freak”, the “health geek”, the “wellness guru” –or more generally the “lifestyle-conscious consumer”. However, even if they remain relatively unobtrusive, these constructions are far from innocuous. Indeed, from

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<sup>245</sup> Michael, Mike, *Reconnecting Culture, Technology and Nature*, Routledge: London & New York, 2000, p. 1.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2

a political perspective, the appropriation of “softer” body technologies raises just as many questions about the wielding of power as more invasive techniques: they may seem self-chosen, self-imposed, and subjectively internalised but they nevertheless betray our visions of nature, science, society, risk, expertise, commodification, pleasure and aestheticisation, not to mention normalcy, disease, disability, obsolescence, death and... transcendence.

Thus, as hinted at in the last section, the *technological*, whether object- or subject-centred, provides us with an indispensable tool (!) to gauge the meanders of our evolution:

In the history of technology we discover ourselves as both technically active and the objects of technical action and we thus question the problems that these actions raise for us and for our societies. Our aim is to understand the technological dimension of our lives against the background of the intellectual as well as material manifestations handed down to us through past technological actions as well as of current manifestations in the transformation processes of the present.<sup>247</sup>

By taking stock of the evolving entanglement of technology and human activity as well as its perception, this section will have hopefully contributed to a dynamic understanding of *bodies in technology*, of *the technological in bodies* or, maybe more succinctly, of *techno-bodies*. In fact, it is perhaps the concept of *somatechnics* as expounded by the “Somatechnics Research Center” at Sydney’s Macquarie University that best encapsulates the relationship between technologies and the body:

‘Somatechnics’ is a newly coined term used to highlight the inextricability of soma and techne, of the body (as a culturally intelligible construct) and the techniques (dispositifs and ‘hard technologies’) in and through which bodies are formed and transformed. This term, then, supplants the logic of the ‘and’, indicating that technologies are not something we add to or apply to the body, but rather, are the means in and through which bodies are constituted, positioned, and lived. As such, the term reflects contemporary understandings of the body as the incarnation or materialization of historically and culturally specific discourses and practices.<sup>248</sup>

The next section will then chart the role of commodification as it actively reinforces and justifies this melding process.

## Commodification

*What is most remarkable, however, isn't merely the way that the market has triumphed as the dominant form of economic organization, but rather the way that commodification--the process of transforming things into objects for sale--has also become a dominant and totalizing cultural force. We live not only in a market economy, but in a market society, where*

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<sup>247</sup> Wengenroth, Ulrich, „Was ist Technikgeschichte?“, teaching material: working paper, cf. <http://www.fggg.edu.tum.de/personen/ulrich-wengenroth/wengenroth-lehrveranstaltungen/was-ist-technikgeschichte/>: “Wir erfahren uns in der Technikgeschichte als technisch Handelnde ebenso wie als Objekte technischer Handlungen und fragen dabei nach den Problemen, die Veränderungen dieser Handlungen für uns und unsere Gesellschaften aufwerfen. Es geht um das Verstehen der technischen Dimension unseres Lebens vor dem Hintergrund der überkommenen geistigen wie materiellen Manifestierungen vergangener technischer Handlungen wie auch der aktuellen in den Veränderungsprozessen der Gegenwart.” [website accessed Oct. 2011]

<sup>248</sup> Cf. <http://www.somatechnics.mq.edu.au/index.php>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

*the market and its categories of thought have come to dominate ever more areas of our lives. Many universities now think of the education that they offer as a "product" that they need to pitch to their student "consumers." Increasingly, new advances in biotechnology make possible the commodification of our offspring or our very bodies. While commodification is certainly not a recent innovation, what is new is its size, dimension, scope, and power. It has become intensified and institutionalized in new and far-reaching ways, carrying meanings that reconfigure our understanding of the world and our place within it. Everything can become a commodity now, and almost nothing is unaffected by the appropriation of the market paradigm.*<sup>249</sup>

I chose commodification instead of consumption in my dissertation title because beyond the integration of HLTs in everyday life, I am even more interested in the forces that, under a myriad of guises, conspire to make us buy (into) wellbeing. I find the use of this concept very profitable in this study because it enables me to uncover a number of concrete and symbolic strategies used to transform apparently “normalised” or “domesticated” foodstuffs, cosmetics, movement routines or alternative health practices into healthy lifestyle technologies (HLT). In this section, I will therefore try to clarify the main implications of commodification for HLTs by emphasising its boundary-breaking characteristics. I will then introduce the master metaphor –namely recombination– that will guide my investigation into contemporary commodification and its strategies. This metaphor, loosely inspired by the genetic model, will enable me to show that the contemporary production, mediation and consumption of goods and especially services are dominated by a commodified and transcultural ethic of admixture. First, I will examine recombination at work in novel products and the ideologies that underpin them, before focusing on how it affects individuals, blurring the boundaries between lay and professional. I will then move on to show how it powers a decentralisation of knowledge hence power, whilst nevertheless coercing individuals to take action and accept responsibility for it. This emphasis on the individual implies a subjectivisation of the health offer, in terms of emotion and experience –in sum, the recognition that personal rationality overrides scientific or technical rationality. Offers are thus tailored to encompass emotional and experiential dimensions that emphasise a shift from health to well-being. Finally, using a tea example, I then show how semiotic work rather than technological innovativeness ultimately determines the successful transformation of generic goods into HLTs.

As stated in the introductory quote, commodities (hence commodification or commoditisation) are not a new phenomenon, be it in the common business sense<sup>250</sup> or the

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<sup>249</sup> Web-announcement for “*The commodification of everything*”, a colloquium organised by the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia in the Spring of 2003: [http://www.iasc-culture.org/old\\_site/colloquia2003.html](http://www.iasc-culture.org/old_site/colloquia2003.html) [website originally accessed in October 2006. The announcement has been truncated in a newer version, cf. [http://www.iasc-culture.org/events\\_colloquia\\_2003.php](http://www.iasc-culture.org/events_colloquia_2003.php). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>250</sup> The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines “commodity” as: “1. An economic good (a. A product of agriculture or mining; b. An article of commerce especially when delivered at shipment; c. A mass-produced unspecialised product; 2. Something useful or valued; [...]; 4. A good or service whose wide availability typically leads to smaller profit margins and diminishes the importance of factors (as brand name) other than price; 5. One that is subject to ready exchange or exploitation within a market <stars as individuals and as commodities of the film industry – *Film Quarterly*>”. First uses are attested from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. (cf. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commodity>) This array of definitions already presents us with a central paradox inherent to the word, i.e. the tension between usefulness or value and wide availability (hence low price) as well as to its potentially venal dimension. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

sense developed by Karl Marx.<sup>251</sup> But it is the contemporary transformation process of non-commodities into commodities that is particularly arresting.<sup>252</sup> At first glance, this process may seem quite straightforward and neutral: i.e. the transformation of some “thing” or dimension into a commodity: *“The process of commodification might be seen as boundary work--behind our classes of everyday objects are patterns of division and subdivision of naturally fuzzy concepts into portable, exchangeable portions of value.”*<sup>253</sup>

However in the popular imagination, this boundary work is often negatively connotated for at least three reasons. First, it implies a form of surfeit linked to a reproduction effect. For example, soap as a traditionally homemade household product was transformed into a generic commodity through industrial mass-production in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further branding and product differentiation (e.g. bath soap, facial soap, baby soap, soap for sensitive skins, liquid soap, soap suds, scented soap, hypo-allergenic soap, etc.) then gradually transformed a relatively basic and limited assortment into an almost overwhelming offer of soap options.<sup>254</sup> Linked to this surfeit, the second problematic aspect of commodification is finding new markets within or beyond the domestic market once an initial saturation level has been reached. This implies expensive R&D investments or complex marketing strategies often involving more or less covert and devious ideological/political agendas.<sup>255</sup> The third contentious dimension of commodification is what is usually perceived

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<sup>251</sup> Cf. especially Book 1 (Capitalist Production). Part 1 (Commodities and money), Chapter 1 (Commodities), of Marx, Karl, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, [First edition: 1867 in German, 1887 in English], a very recent English edition was published by e.g. Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010. I refer here to an online PDF version (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>), pp. 26-46. Obviously, it is difficult to condense a concept developed at length but I like the summary provided here (<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/marxism/terms/commodity.html>): “COMMODITY: “an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind” (Marx, Capital 125) and is then exchanged for something else. When Marx speaks of commodities, he is particularly concerned with the “physical properties of the commodity” (126), which he associates closely with the use-value of an object. However, use-value does not automatically lead to a commodity: “He who satisfies his own need with the product of his own labour admittedly creates use-values, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use-values, but use-values for others, social use-values” (131). Commodities, therefore, “possess a double form, i.e. natural form and value form” (138). (See Use-Value vs. Exchange-Value.) The physical body of the commodity is made up of 1) the material provided by nature (e.g. linen, gold, etc.); and 2) the labor expended to create it (see Marx, *Capital* 133). Note that a commodity can refer to tangible [sic] things as well as more ephemeral products (e.g. a lecture). What matters is that something be exchanged for the thing.” [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>252</sup> The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines “commodify” as “to turn (as an intrinsic value or a work of art) into a commodity”. First known use in 1982. Cf. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commodify> [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>253</sup> Cf. <http://www.cs.cornell.edu/boom/2003sp/ProjectArch/ReflectDesignProj/commodification.html>, the thought-provoking definition found on the website of “BOOM” [i.e. bits on our minds] (<http://www.cs.cornell.edu/boom/2003sp/index.html>), a “fair that showcases student efforts and creativity in digital technology and applications” hosted at Cornell University (<http://www.cs.cornell.edu/boom/2003sp/index.html#line>). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>254</sup> Cf. a book recently published about the German soap scene: Brede, Christina, op. cit. For a general soap typology: [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/soaps\\_detergents\\_products\\_ingredients.aspx](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/soaps_detergents_products_ingredients.aspx) and history (intended for kids...): [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/soaps\\_detergent\\_history.aspx](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/soaps_detergent_history.aspx). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>255</sup> A striking and good example of this development is Timothy Burke’s book on the dissemination of soap in Zimbabwe in the wake of colonisation. Cf. Burke, Timothy, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, & Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe*, Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996. Another more recent example that particularly struck public consciousness was the disastrous consequences of the promotion of infant formula milk in emerging economies, culminating in the Nestle boycott of 1977. For

as a form of degrading *reification*. Reification here should be understood in the Marxist sense, i.e. the transfer of human qualities to things but conversely also the transformation of human beings into things.<sup>256</sup> Thus reification is probably the most disturbing characteristic of commodification since it opens the door to the merchandising of the body and its parts, of health as well as of experience and emotions, as aptly described in this definition of commodification as:

[...] the subordination of public and private realms to the logic of capitalism. In other words, to say certain things (e.g., friendship, women) have become "commodified" is to say they are now valued primarily for their commercial value. With commodification aspects of our lives that are culturally conditioned take on the mythology of being "natural" but their continued appreciation is dependent on their commercial value.<sup>257</sup>

Hence, commodities do not just happen, they are *made* in the merging between what producers or mediators think is the appropriate worth of a product or service and what consumers are prepared to pay for.<sup>258</sup> Thus, commodification entails an agreement about value ascription –resting on notions such as scarcity, need, want, luxury etc. In the case of

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various documents on this problem and its more recent ramifications: cf. <http://www.babymilkaction.org/pages/history.html>; <http://www.babymilkaction.org/pdfs/nprme05web.pdf>; <http://www.ibfan.org/newsletters-world-asia-nestle.html>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>256</sup> For a Marxist perspective on "reification", cf. the work of György Lukács, especially *History and Class Consciousness*: Lukács, Georg, *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein: Studien über marxistische Dialektik*, Berlin: Malik Verlag, 1923 [first German edition]. Cf. also e.g. Gajo Petrović's definition: "*The act (or result of the act) of transforming human properties, relations and actions into properties, relations and actions of man-produced things which have become independent (and which are imagined as originally independent) of man and govern his life. Also transformation of human beings into thing-like beings which do not behave in a human way but according to the laws of the thing-world. Reification is a 'special' case of ALIENATION, its most radical and widespread form characteristic of modern capitalist society.*" From: Petrović, Gajo, "Reification", *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Eds Tom Bottomore, Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan, Ralph Miliband, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1991 [2<sup>nd</sup> edition; first published in 1983], pp. 463-465, p. 463 (Also available here: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/petrovic/1965/reification.htm>). To draw upon the soap example again, the former aspect can be frequently witnessed in advertisements where a piece of soap is endowed with (super)human capacities such as relaxation, stimulation or enlightenment (witness the examples mentioned in my introduction). The second aspect is particularly highlighted in the historical controversies surrounding alleged National-Socialist soap-manufacturing involving human fat, cf. e.g. <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/dachau/legends/soap.htm>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>257</sup> From: "commodification", Provisional Definitions of Common Postmodern Terms from A to D, courtesy of Lois Shawver, available online here: <http://www.degenevieve.com/files/Postmodern%20Terms%20from%20A%20to%20D.pdf>, p. 3. Cf. also Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit, p. 61: "*Individuals are encouraged to approach themselves and others as products – products to be exchanged, and which will become obsolete without upgrades and improvements [...]. Such an attitude towards the self, rooted in the transformation of production, spreads outwards to areas of life traditionally considered beyond competitive exchange. As social interactions increasingly takes on the form of commodity exchange, individuals are faced with anxieties concerning their market value, and the rate of conversion for their physical capital. And as with the physical culture of the nineteenth century, the primary site of the resolution of such anxieties remains the physical body.*" [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>258</sup> Cf. also my discussion of the "uses and gratifications" approach in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*). Moreover, the fact that commodities are created also means that their value is relative and can thus fluctuate over time, depending on social and environmental circumstances as well as other values (both immaterial and material, i.e. including other commodities). However, as emphasised by anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff in their "social/cultural life/biography of things" concept, commodification is not irreversible: just as things (or people) can become commodities, commodities can also regain a non-commodified status. Cf. Kopytoff, Igor: "The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process", in: *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective*, Ed. Arjun Appadurai, Cambridge & New York: CUP, 1986, pp. 64-91.

human commodification, however, the arbitrariness of value ascription may appear much more blatant. Indeed, if at a given time in a given society, relatively stable exchange values can be negotiated and decided upon for a pound of rice, a plot of land or a computer, who can claim to convincingly and lastingly define the relative worth of a donated kidney, of a siliconed breast, of slimness, companionship, beauty, pleasure or good health, since their value oscillates between “cultural” and “natural” assumptions? The trick with the commodification of body parts or more immaterial human aptitudes and values is that it requires the subjective consent AND collaboration<sup>259</sup> of consumers even more than material goods do. While a pound of rice or a washing machine may remain commodities even when stocked unsold in a warehouse, the former can only access commodity status when consumers are willing to ascribe a relative value to them by metaphorically and literally buying (into) them. With the outsourcing of “western” industrial production to transition and emerging economies, this particular form of commodification has been eagerly embraced by increasingly service-oriented economies. Indeed, since goods can no longer be manufactured cheaply enough in the “west”, westernised economies are forced to shift “value-making” to another level. Increasingly the sheer material qualities of the products or services offered recede behind their human evocative potential, thus smoothly paving the transition from “object” to “subject” commodification.<sup>260</sup>

However, to come back to my soap example, it does not mean that ingredients and their provenance, textures, fragrances or other physical-chemical properties no longer matter since many cosmetic businesses owe at least some of their success to labels such as “organic”, “fair-trade”, “not tested on animals”, “free of artificial fragrances and/or preservatives”, etc. But in an increasingly franchised economy, with cosmetics and soap boutiques spreading globally, traditional soap-makers such as *Yardley*,<sup>261</sup> *Crabtree & Evelyn*,<sup>262</sup> *L’Occitane*<sup>263</sup> or even *The Body Shop*<sup>264</sup> have to contend with the arrival of the likes of *Lush*<sup>265</sup> whose concept stores have taken the world by storm. The Lush experience begins even before unsuspecting potential customers enter the shop: walking past, one cannot help but be arrested by the colourful stacks of fun-looking objects in every conceivable variety – reminiscent of a lively market stand.<sup>266</sup> A closer look at the products reveals that one is not staring at hunks of freshly cut mature Emmenthal, mouth-watering sherbet, slices of

<sup>259</sup> Obviously, phenomena such as organ trafficking or pornography may impose rather than enrol individual consent and collaboration.

<sup>260</sup> For the commodification of emotions in the service economy, cf. e.g. Hochschild, Arlie Russell, *The Managed Heart: the Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1983 [Reprinted with new afterword, 2003]; Rastetter, Daniela. *Zum Lächeln verpflichtet: Emotionsarbeit im Dienstleistungsbereich*, Frankfurt: Campus, 2008.

<sup>261</sup> Founded in the UK in 1770, cf.: <http://www.yardleylondon.co.uk/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>262</sup> Founded in the US in 1972 by Cyrus Harvey, cf. <http://www.crabtree-evelyn.com/eng/aboutUs/aboutus.cfm?&var=d&ckey=US>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>263</sup> Founded in France in 1976 by Olivier Baussan, cf. <http://www.loccitane.com/a-true-story,29,1,2270,106327.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>264</sup> Founded in the UK in 1976 by Anita Roddick, cf. [http://www.thebodyshop.com/en/ww/services/aboutus\\_history.aspx](http://www.thebodyshop.com/en/ww/services/aboutus_history.aspx). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>265</sup> Founded in the UK by Mark and Mo Constantine together with Elizabeth Weir in 1994 after other experimental cosmetics ventures, cf. Teather, David, “Lush couple with a shed load of ideas: Behind the ever-expanding chain of cosmetics shops is a messy Dorset workshop with a sausage machine”, *The Guardian*, Friday 13 April 2007, online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2007/apr/13/retail2> [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>266</sup> Cf. *ibid.*: “The look of a Lush shop was partly inspired by the London cheese shop Neal’s Yard. Soap is sold in wedges that do indeed look like cheese, priced by weight and wrapped in greaseproof paper. ‘Bath bombs’ are piled up like fruit; butter cream looks more like a mouth-watering cake than shower soap.”

birthday cake or strange hand grenades, but that these products are more likely to be *Honey I Washed the Kids* soap, *Creamed Almond and Coconut Smoothie* shower soap, or a *Blackberry Bath Bomb*.<sup>267</sup> If to-be customers survive the almost overpowering fragrance wave upon entering the store, they might get to finger and sniff at the products closely before reading more about them. For example, what looks like a piece of bicolour candy is actually *The Comforter Bubble*. Its effects are described as follows: “Wraps you in a fluffy pink blanket of blackberry bubbles to keep you safe and warm.”<sup>268</sup> A host of other examples in the assortment have been endowed with similar humanoid or esoteric characteristics – from *Ne Worry Pas Bath Ballistic* that is designed with a “magic grotto” in which you can whisper your worries and “then let them dissolve away”<sup>269</sup> to the almost self-explanatory *Tea and Sympathy*.<sup>270</sup>

*Lush* Products are a good example of the trend that is transforming relatively straightforward products into holistic services that draw on and mix a number of registers to appeal to their clientele. I would therefore like to introduce a simile that I find extremely helpful to understand how these new service products are designed and what strategies are used to power this new type of commodification. In an article on biotechnology in the age of informational capital,<sup>271</sup> Chaia Heller makes a convincing case for the adoption and adaptation of the genetic *recombinance* metaphor.<sup>272</sup> After characterising service production in the post-industrial age as relying “[...] on national and global expansion of service production through standardized, franchised chain-store formations and the transformation of service commodities into patentable information”<sup>273</sup> –thus shifting the emphasis from product to practice– Heller argues that:

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<sup>267</sup> All examples were drawn from the German *Lush* website: <http://www.lush-shop.de/>. On the smell of the cosmetics, cf. Teather, David, op. cit.: “Ingredients are mostly natural, nothing is tested on animals and packaging avoided where possible. ‘The reason it smells so strong is that if you are going to take all the packaging off cosmetics, you can smell it,’ says Mark. ‘So I didn’t think, lets make it really smelly and that’ll advertise it. If you take all the packaging off it really is smelly. Even the money smells of it. We go home and everything smells of it.’ He pauses. ‘The sweet smell of success I suppose,’ and then laughs at his own bad joke.”

<sup>268</sup> This description was retrieved from the U.K. *Lush* website: <http://www.lush.co.uk/> in Nov. 2006 but this product is no longer manufactured.

<sup>269</sup> This description was retrieved from the U.K. *Lush* website: <http://www.lush.co.uk/> in Nov. 2006. The product still exists but the description has changed: <http://www.lush.co.uk/shop/product/product/id/1001/keyword/Ne+Worry+Pas/ne-worry-pas> [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>270</sup> “Having a bit of a crisis? Soak in a sympathetic, calming bath. Drop into a warm bath for fizz and fragrance. Contains a tea bag!”. This description was retrieved from the U.K. *Lush* website: <http://www.lush.co.uk/> in Nov. 2006 but this product is no longer manufactured.

<sup>271</sup> Heller, Chaia, op. cit.

<sup>272</sup> “‘Recombinant’ is a term used in both classical and molecular genetics. 1. In classical genetics: An organism or cell that is the result of recombination (crossing-over), e.g., Parents: AB/ab and ab/ab; recombinant offspring: Ab/ab. 2. In molecular genetics: A molecule containing DNA from different sources. The word is typically used as an adjective, e.g., recombinant DNA.” Source: FAO, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/x3910e/X3910E21.htm>. “Recombinant: In genetics, describes DNA, proteins, cells, or organisms that are made by combining genetic material from two different sources. Recombinant substances are made in the laboratory and are being studied in the treatment of cancer and for many other uses.” Source: National Cancer Institute, <http://www.cancer.gov/dictionary?expand=R>. A variety of definitions from different sources can also be found here: <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/recombinant> [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>273</sup> Heller, Chaia, op. cit. In Germany, however, franchising is not yet as dominant in the field of health technologies and systems, as it is in e.g. the food or personnel domains. In February 2006, a cursive glance through the virtual fairground of a franchising website revealed the following figures: out of 179 franchising

If rationalization and homogenization are the hallmarks of industrial capitalism, then *recombinance* is the emblem of informational capitalism. Recombinance is a productive modality characterized by the continual re-melding of architecture, graphic design, radio, television, and film that have come to constitute the spectacular stage. Within recombinant production, the assembly line is reversed to create the 'anti-assembly line'. Whereas the Fordist assembly line moved in a linear direction from 'standardized parts' to create 'unified wholes', the post-Fordist anti-assembly line rearranges unified wholes to create a pastiche of informational parts. [...] Recombinance provides the flexibility required by a standardized service industry, furnishing the informational 'moveable joints' for the production [of] otherwise rigid and homogenous service commodities.<sup>274</sup>

Whilst taking fast food in general, and hamburgers in particular, as prominent examples of this kind of production, the author moves on to show how the metaphor functions perhaps even more strikingly in the cultural domain where:

[...] signs and symbols are [extracted] from various cultural moments to create wholes comprised of components that often share no common history or development. Within recombinant production, cultural artifacts are reduced to information bits to be cut and spliced together to create novel commodities.<sup>275</sup>

Thus what applies to hamburgers or trademarked coffee specialities can be seen as characterising an increasing number of phenomena such as techno music, clothes design, software, TV variety shows and... health.<sup>276</sup> But what distinguishes this type of flexible recombinance from previously more localised hybrid cultural production is the fact that it is primarily profit-driven, whilst seeking transcultural validation and appropriation.<sup>277</sup> For

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companies presented only 17 had something to do with health and beauty (taking all sun parlours and beauty institutes into account). Cf. <http://www.franchiseportal.de/wcms/bin/Server.dll?Article?ID=18&Session=1%2Dis84eRkW%2D0%2D273100200520091306&Agency=4#top>. [unfortunately the page in question is no longer valid] In 2011, the categories listed have changed somewhat, but I have counted 39 offers under the "Fitness and Wellness" heading – a development that confirms the trends mentioned in Chapter 1 (*Introduction*). Cf. <http://www.franchiseportal.de/franchise-kategorien/Fitness-Wellness.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>274</sup> Heller, Chaia, op. cit.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Interestingly, Barry Glassner comes to a similar conclusion, when analysing fitness as a post-modern pursuit. Instead of "recombinance", he has recourse to the famous "pastiche" metaphor that he defines as "[...] a borrowing from diverse imagery, styles and traditions, including both high and low, commercial and artistic, and past, present, and future, wherever these seem usable. Such pastiche is a form of contextless quotation [...]" along with the idea of simulacrum, i.e. "[...] representations for which there are no original" [Glassner then quotes the exercise video as a case in point]. Cf. Glassner, Barry, "Fitness and the Postmodern Self", op. cit., p. 181 & p. 184. Personally, I prefer the term "recombinance" term to "pastiche", first because it appears less critically (or "post-modernly") loaded and second because, to my mind, it more clearly encapsulates the precisely *engineered* (if not classically scientific) post-industrial approach to product and service creation.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Heller, Chaia, op.cit.: "Yet, we cannot base a critique of recombinant culture on a static notion of cultural integrity or purity. It is vital to distinguish commodified recombinance from the forms of spontaneous collective synthesis that are integral to all cultural practice. As the field of anthropology has acknowledged in recent years, culture-making has always been a hybrid process, a continually developing synthesis of information, language, and identity that emerges within and between peoples of different populations and cultures. Rather, it is the primacy of profit-driven recombinance, as a principal form of capital-intensive production, over non-commodified forms of local, fluid, and hybrid cultural production, that is problematic. Of great concern is the declining tension between holistic and local forms of cultural generativity and moments of translocal

instance, the contemporary health offer is so dominated by globalizing and commodifying influences that it enables a splicing and braiding of almost all prior ethics of self-care.

The scale and the programmatic nature of this commodified recombination are particularly impressive since recombination has become a must for products and services to survive in a globalising economy. What applies to the symbolic levels is also translated to the material level, i.e. there are almost no technological “breeding” taboos left. For instance, many traditionally produced and personally-tailored Ayurvedic or Traditional Chinese Medicine products or practices –meant to be used within a cohesive healing system– are often mass-produced and marketed in combination with completely heterogeneous therapies (including western allopathic remedies). In this respect, I unearthed two good and rather amusing examples of this creolisation phenomenon. On the German side, I chanced upon the website of a self-proclaimed *Ayurveda Centre* advertising a number of “traditional” Ayurvedic products and treatments alongside a *Legacy of the Mayas* face and body cream as well as cosmetics from the *Indian Spirit* line developed together with Lakota Indians.<sup>278</sup> A few thousands of miles East, a wellness sanctuary in Chennai (formerly Madras) –offering Balinese, Thai, Shiatsu and Swedish massage, alongside Australian organic cosmetics designed by a German couple– was being reviewed in the online edition of the Indian newspaper *The Hindu*.<sup>279</sup> The globalised creolisation of well-being is bound to make even a detached observer a little giddy...

Pursuing the development of the *recombination* metaphor, Heller moves from an analysis of recombinant products to the praxis level, involving both producers and consumers. Using the entertainment industry as an example, she describes how the metaphor translates into a form of deskilling-reskilling process: traditional artists are gradually being replaced by “engineers” who design “patchwork” art by “*selecting, manipulating, and synthesizing bits of text or image to create textual novelties.*”<sup>280</sup> The resulting hybrid products are suitable for very heterogeneous contexts and tend to breed a new generation of “creator-consumers” who are more and more comfortable with both passive and active “sampling”. Indeed, recombination as an increasingly hegemonic productive modality encourages consumers to become apprentice “recombiners” themselves through the elaboration of personal compilations or more semi-professional dabbling.<sup>281</sup> More pointedly, in an increasingly

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*commodified recombinant production and consumption. The shift of capital toward an elastic and limitless production of recombinant informational service products flags a sharp curve in the capitalist road.*”

<sup>278</sup> Cf. <http://www.ayurveda-muenchen.de/data/index.shtml>. [website originally accessed Jan. 2006; unfortunately, these products no longer seem to be available]

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Farida, Syeda, “An Affair with the Soul: Jurlique Wellness Day Spa brings relaxing beauty regimens and natural products from Down Under”, *The Hindu*, Tuesday, Apr 13, 2004, online: <http://www.hindu.com/mp/2004/04/13/stories/2004041300450100.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Heller, Chaia, op. cit.

<sup>281</sup> In this respect, the contemporary electronic music scene is particularly emblematic. This type of music is a collage of so-called “music loops” and various sounds crafted or sampled by DJs and can be more or less passively enjoyed in a number of music clubs. But lay-users are increasingly encouraged to become “sound engineers” and produce their own homemade musical forms. This process is enabled by the increasing availability and cheapness of relatively user-friendly musical software and synthesizers that make home experimenting fairly accessible. Moreover, innovative electronic jamming sessions encourage the artistic “coming-out” of lay-users while providing increased visibility for more experienced musicians –without the stress of formal gigs or DJing. A good example is the “Spheric Lounge live ambient music” session that takes place once a month in an alternative Munich club: cf. <http://www.sphericlounge.de/>. The sessions there include productions from so-called VJs, i.e. video jockeys, who design the visual counterpart of the music, by

commodified paradigm where hybrid production is poised to outweigh all forms of traditional production, consumers are de facto coerced to submit to the recombination ethic. Indeed, by incorporating hybrid goods and services from various producers into their practices and routines –endowing them in passing with additional, more personal meanings– they end up creating hybrid lifestyles.

There again, this development is particularly obvious in the health realm: healthcare marketers (whether state-, corporate-, or more individually based) have multiplied and hybridised to such an extent that there is no one credible, overarching figure, institution or theory that can serve as a role model or reference for an increasingly multifarious if globalised community. Actually, the very success of fitness and wellness resides in the fact that they are not organically coherent cultural phenomena but media collages. Most prior health movements or fads can be traced back to charismatic individuals such as e.g. Sebastian Kneipp<sup>282</sup> and/or relatively influential and homogeneous groups, communities or institutions such as the Monte Verità.<sup>283</sup> In contrast, contemporary health ideologies are not even divided churches with many popes but represent a form of loose ecumenical faith or syncretism that sees no problem with –in fact actually encourages– the recycling of older traditions, the admixture of local and “exotic” knowledge forms and the aggressive merchandising of wellbeing. This confusion has made room for a new breed of deskilled-reskilled health “engineers”. These individuals or organisations may (but need not necessarily) rely on a professional health background to buttress their credibility. What they can rely on, however, is a strong sense of health recombination. When they cannot boast groundbreaking knowledge, they usually claim to have found a novel angle on optimal health management. This new generation of health engineers is particularly active in various media channels –whether newspapers, TV or the internet– where they have become adept at extracting, copy-and-pasting, synthesizing and re-vamping health knowledge and practices. But, as in the entertainment industry, it is often difficult to ascertain authorship as well as to enforce a regulatory framework.

Nevertheless, a number of individuals have managed to –sometimes very successfully– impose their signature on a particular “brand” of health management. A prominent example on the German-speaking scene is Dr Ulrich Strunz, a physician cum extreme triathlete, whose bestseller *“Forever Young - the recipe for success: run, eat and think your way into youth”* is a clever combination of well-known if often controversial “healthy lifestyle” building blocks, involving both material and behavioural changes.<sup>284</sup> He particularly emphasises the

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sampling e.g. T.V. news, films, ads or video sequences of the dancers performing live during the sessions and overlaying these samples with fluid chromatic experiments. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>282</sup> Kneipp is briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 (*Introduction*).

<sup>283</sup> An artistic & “life reform” [Lebensreform] colony founded on a hillside above Ascona in Switzerland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: *“The founders' initial idea consisted in setting up a community based on values of life that were beyond the reach of the society of the late nineteenth century, a time when scientific and technological progress was in the process of changing the social, economic, political and ideological scene throughout Europe. Healthy eating, outdoor living, nudism as a hygienist therapy, free love and the emancipation of women: these were just a few of the ideals behind the peaceful withdrawal from the industrializing society of the time, a hotbed within the revolutionary flame behind the sweeping changes taking place throughout Europe.”* Cf. <http://www.monteverita.org/museo/content.cfm?id=65>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>284</sup> Strunz, Ulrich, *Forever Young - Das Erfolgsprogramm; laufen Sie sich jung, essen Sie sich jung, denken Sie sich jung*, München: GU, 1999. Cf. also his website: <http://www.strunz.com>. Unfortunately for him, his career as a self-proclaimed “fitness-pope” took a tragic turn in 2006 after a crippling mountain-bike accident: cf. e.g.

importance of eating more fruit and vegetables as well as low fat protein, he reminds his readers of the merits of “the” Mediterranean diet, leads a crusade against the “wrong” and for the “right” fats and sugars, and he recommends appropriate health supplements, regular jogging and workouts, cardio training, hormonal/blood monitoring, regenerative sleep, etc. This advice is dished up with a smattering of holistic tips such as deep breathing and relaxation, smiling, auto-suggestion and positive thinking, alpha-napping, etc. None of the advice in the book is revolutionary but its success no doubt lies in the shrewd *compilation* of vulgarised physiological knowledge and psycho-technical quick fixes (along with a colourful layout, an attractively formulaic rhetoric, happy and healthy-looking models, not to mention the luscious “food porn” illustrations). On the other hand, many health authors remain anonymous as the content-managers of wellness websites or the editors of public health reports and insurance flyers.<sup>285</sup>

Finally, another parallel can be drawn between recombination in the service industry in general and health recombination. Just as management knowledge in a flexibilised service paradigm, knowledge about health in the medical realm has become both extremely specialised and complex. Whilst this knowledge long contributed to the hegemonic status of a mechanistic view of health and the body, this status has also become increasingly contested from both within and without the medical establishment –especially linked to the reevaluation of social and environmental factors in the development of so-called civilisation diseases.<sup>286</sup> It has then paved the way for a number of more holistic theories and practices that posit the necessity of alternative strategies to care for an increasingly unpredictable body.<sup>287</sup> Thus, just as there is no longer one best way to organise efficient service production but only a vast array of relatively flexible assemblages to anticipate or flexibly adapt to rapidly changing market conditions, there is no guaranteed theory or strategy to regain, preserve or enhance health. In terms of power structure, this situation also implies that there no longer is a central power hub but a variety of decentralised “power nodes” that have more or less ideological weight, depending on the following that they can rally. This then leaves more room for personal initiative.

In fact, just like “new economy” employees are required to take initiatives in the organisation of flexible production modules, health consumers are actually *required* to display initiative and discrimination in the choice of their health gospels –honing the skills to extract and splice together information from a great variety of sources to meet their subjective health needs. But in both cases, the framework is not entirely discretionary: the individual both as neo-liberal employee or health consumer is dependent on profit-driven or commodified recombination. That is, if a certain flexibility exists in terms of options, there

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<http://www.ksta.de/html/artikel/1201184441579.shtml> & <http://www.drstrunz.de/unfall.html>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>285</sup> Cf. e.g. the offers on the websites of the following health insurance companies, e.g. AOK: <http://www.aok.de/bundesweit/alles-in-balance/alles-in-balance-35486.php>; Techniker Krankenkasse: <http://www.tk.de/tk/jetzt-zur-tk/berufstaetige/gesundheit/136498>; or BKK; [http://ratgeber.bkkgesundheits.de/reisen\\_und\\_wellness/](http://ratgeber.bkkgesundheits.de/reisen_und_wellness/). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>286</sup> See e.g. the following for his discussion of stress: Rittner, Volker, „Krankheit und Gesundheit: Veränderung in der sozialen Wahrnehmung des Körpers“, in: *Die Wiederkehr des Körpers*, Eds Dietmar Kamper and Christoph Wulf, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp, 1982, pp. 40-51. This aspect will be further developed in Chapter 4 (*History*).

<sup>287</sup> Cf. my short discussion of mechanism vs. (neo-)vitalism in the “Technology” section as well as Chapter 4 (*History*).

nevertheless is an entrepreneurial coercion to take responsibility or to “perform”, in the name of either the company’s or of one’s own health. In fact, the health quandary leads to a conflation between the roles of corporate employee and responsible citizen-consumer, as neatly summed up by Elisabeth and Ulrich Beck-Gernsheim:

To keep one’s head above the water in a competitive labour market, it is necessary to be fit, healthy and capable. Now health, too, is not so much a gift from God as a task and achievement of the responsible citizen who must protect and look after it or face the consequences. Anyone with health problems has fewer chances in the labour market and is soon placed in the ‘hard to find work for’ category. This is a danger that potentially threatens all of us. It gives rise to a new morality of health, enjoining us to arm ourselves in advance. [...] Whereas health used to be something given to us that only required repairs in an emergency, it now has to be constantly produced.<sup>288</sup>

This individual “manufacturing of health” imperative thus functions at all levels, be it production, mediation or consumption. In parallel with the decentralisation of power alluded to above, it also opens the way for a certain subjectivity in the design of health products –the marketing and consumption of which now increasingly involves emotions and experience. This development is enabled by a distinct shift in goals, away from health viewed as a medical-rational achievement to what is seen as the result or connotation of health, i.e. personal well-being. In this context, individuals are bound to feel more concerned by an appeal to their subjective perception than to a hegemonic health doctrine, couched in obscure scientific or technical jargon –a doctrine which as we just noted, no longer exists in a unified version. Commodified recombinance therefore represents a dream tool for the inexhaustible marketing and consuming of health and well-being: not only can products be mix’n’matched on a material level but, in the process, experiential and emotional dimensions can be spliced into the offer, paving the way for an almost endless hybridisation of healthy lifestyle possibilities.

A striking instance of this emotion-splicing process is a face cream manufactured by L’Oréal called *Happyderm*<sup>289</sup>. The two main captions on the pack read “*Extra moisturising care for happy skin*” and “*Phyto-dorphines™ boost the well-being of the skin*”.<sup>290</sup> Besides more general indications on the pack, there are two specific blurbs that explain the “happiness” concept as it is understood for this product. The first blurb –in question and answer format– asks “*What is happy skin?*” before replying “*Happy skin is sufficiently provided with moisture, supple and soft. Your complexion is fresh and radiant. [Your skin] is relaxed and glowing; it looks good, as it does on holiday*”.<sup>291</sup> The next blurb goes on to detail the significant scientific discovery of a skin “*happiness molecule*” that imitates the activity of the so-called  $\beta$ -endorphine. Other comments on the product state that it makes the skin “*glow and bubble with happiness and signs of tiredness and stress disappear*”, its “*euphorising fragrance revives the senses and ensures marvelous well-being*”, etc.<sup>292</sup> Significantly, marketing talk

<sup>288</sup> Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>289</sup> A face cream manufactured and launched by L’Oréal in the mid-2000s.

<sup>290</sup> From the pack in 2006: “*Extra Feuchtigkeitspflege für glückliche Haut*”; “*Phytodorphine™ boosten das Wohlfühl der Haut*”.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.: “*Was ist glückliche Haut? Glückliche Haut ist ausreichend mit Feuchtigkeit versorgt, geschmeidig und zart. Ihr Teint ist frisch und strahlend. Sie ist entspannt und voller Ausstrahlung, sieht gut aus, wie während des Urlaubs.*”

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.: “*Sie strahlt, sprüht vor Glück und Anzeichen von Müdigkeit und Stress verschwinden [...]*”; “*Der euphorisierende Duft belebt die Sinne und schenkt herrliches Wohlbefinden*”.

here no longer revolves around environmental aggressions, wrinkles, etc. as the main tenor of cosmetic rhetoric does in the period I have analysed.<sup>293</sup> Instead, a rather vague “busy lifestyle” syndrome is the main threat to epidermic well-being (and is therefore contrasted with a “holiday” look). The skin here is no longer perceived as a mere physical shell or indicator of age, but as a sensing, living being, capable of emotion. And even if a certain type of scientific vulgarisation has not completely disappeared from cosmetic discourse, feelings are foregrounded as an essential component of the product experience.

Nevertheless, product manufacturers and service providers must make sure that they maintain a certain distinction or symbolic cohesion in their boundary-crossing since the ease of including emotional or experiential aspects in an offer may imply that just about anything can trigger emotion or experience –hence a successful transaction and potential brand or service loyalty. Actually, most experiential products or services sold do not stand out thanks to their technologically (or other) innovative aspects. Rather, the clinch resides more in the particular blend between product(s), knowledge and know-how that is on offer, in how this blend is symbolically anchored and in what strategies are employed to market it. In a commodified and recombined paradigm, producers and mediators must work harder at creating new frames of semiotic reference –which are continuously negotiated, appropriated or rejected by consumers in their everyday routines. Using the example of the bath, Elizabeth Shove convincingly illustrates the complex, multi-factorial causes underlying the semiotic and practical (in the sense of *praxis*) transformation of already domesticated artefacts:

The reconfiguration of meaning is evidently important when the transformation of practice is not strongly related to technological development. Somewhat different concepts are therefore required to make sense of situations in which already familiar tools and infrastructures are put to different use or in which the social significance of practice is redefined. During the course of its long career, the bath has for instance featured as a symbol of social status, an instrument in the war against germs and a site of luxuriating relaxation. The material culture of the bathroom arguably represents a fluid but none the less concrete expression of societal value systems. Just as the meaning of the artifact has been rewritten over time, so has the practice and ‘purpose’ of bathing. Rationales and legitimizing discourses move in ways that are often difficult to follow and that frequently invoke complicated chains of scientific, moral and social judgement. Yet these shifting contexts of social and cultural positioning are of immediate consequence for what people do and for how they understand and make sense of their actions.<sup>294</sup>

To make this phenomenon even more tangible, I will provide another example drawn from the HLT constellation: a brand of tea that was launched on the German market in 2002.<sup>295</sup> I

<sup>293</sup> As we shall see in Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics Case-Study*).

<sup>294</sup> Shove, Elizabeth, *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience: the social organization of normality*, Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003, p.16.

<sup>295</sup> The company no longer quotes when the tea was introduced in its timeline: <http://www.messmer.de/de/markenwelt/markengeschichte/index.html> –which was the case, when I previously accessed their website in March 2006– but its launch can be reconstrued by looking at consumer test reports, as found here (it is also very enlightening to witness the broad range of conclusions drawn –from enthusiastic to deprecating): [http://www.ciao.de/Erfahrungsberichte/Mesmer\\_Ananda\\_Tee\\_Ginseng\\_Lychee\\_1060670](http://www.ciao.de/Erfahrungsberichte/Mesmer_Ananda_Tee_Ginseng_Lychee_1060670). Otherwise, similar conclusions can be reached for a number of other HLTs –such as the shower gel and the bath salts quoted at the very beginning of Chapter 1 (*Introduction*). I have also provided many examples in various conference papers over the past years. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

have chosen tea because a priori it is not a particularly revolutionary product and this particular brand is readily available in a number of local supermarkets. It therefore fittingly illustrates the kind of semiotic work necessary to style normalised or long-domesticated products into HLTs. Messmer's *Ananda Tee Ginseng-Lychee* is part of a so-called Ayurveda assortment –featuring two other varieties, and this particular one is labelled “*balancing-exotic*”.<sup>296</sup> The caption on the pack reads as follows: “*In Asian traditions, Ananda represents bliss. For centuries in India, meditation and a balanced diet have paved the way towards this ideal state. Messmer Ananda Tea combines Ginseng and Lychee, making it into a balancing exotic blend. This tea enables you to counter stress in a perfectly natural way.*”<sup>297</sup>

First of all, it should be noted that technoscientific authority or rationales no longer seem to hold the upper hand. Instead, this type of product often appeals to historical, natural or mystical/supernatural dimensions, which may or may not be geographically contextualised. When they are, the geographical hence cultural contextualisation is often very fuzzy –to say the least– and the connection between ingredients and their origins are usually very weak or sometimes even inaccurate. This example is a case in point: Ananda is supposedly anchored in a mystical Indian context and lifestyle,<sup>298</sup> but ginseng as well as its medicinal use originate in China and Korea<sup>299</sup> and the lychee fruit was originally native to south China<sup>300</sup> –facts that seems to be confirmed by the green and white Tao sign that is used to decorate the package. Producers thus freely weave heterogeneous “exotic-Asian” elements into a mythical-mystical canvas to support the declared effect of the tea.<sup>301</sup> References are so curt as to function like a “token” or “pedigree”: here, nature, mysticism or tradition represent standardised references that do not require further explanations.

The second aspect is that specific ingredients are highlighted that are not the essential component of the product, i.e. we only find out about the variety of tea used by examining

<sup>296</sup> „ausgleichend-exotisch“, from the 2002 package.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.: “*Ananda steht in der asiatischen Überlieferung für die Glückseligkeit. Der Weg zu diesem Idealszustand führt in Indien seit Jahrtausenden über Meditation und eine ausgewogene Ernährung. Messmer Ananda-Tee kombiniert Ginseng und Lychee zu einer ausgleichend exotischen Mischung. Mit diesem Tee begegnen Sie Stress auf völlig natürliche Art.*“

<sup>298</sup> The Sanskrit word does indeed mean “happiness, joy, enjoyment, sensual pleasure” or “‘pure happiness’, one of the three attributes of Ātman or Brahman in the Vedānta philosophy”, cf. “Ananda” entry in: Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005 Reprint of 2002 [corrected edition; originally published by OUP in 1899], p.139. Additionally as a first name, it was much popularised by a famous disciple of the Buddha, cf. e.g.: <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/disciples09.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>299</sup> Apart from a Native North American variety, the so called “*panax quinquefolium*”. Cf. e.g. <http://www.uihealthcare.com/depts/medmuseum/galleryexhibits/naturespharmacy/ginsengplant/ginseng.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>300</sup> For a history of its dissemination to other Asian countries as well as beyond: cf. e.g. <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/morton/lychee.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>301</sup> For more on the enrolment of oriental fascination in wellness products and services, cf. Kittner, Alma-Elisa, “Weichspüler der Wüste: Orientalismus und Exotismus Heute”, *Weichspüler: Wellness in Kunst und Konsum, Querformat*, Nr 3, 2010, pp. 46-55. Kittner perceives that “*Zum einen ist dieser Exotismus so körperlich wie nie: Man kann die Welt durch ihn essen, seine Wäsche damit spülen und seinen Körper damit einbalsamieren. Es ist ein Exotismus, der einem auf den Leib rückt und den man sich dadurch noch intensiver einverleiben kann. Doch die Rückseite dieser Versprechen, durch Produkte des ‚harmonischen Asiens‘ eine innere Balance zu erreichen und durch die des ‚abenteuerlichen Afrikas‘ die Spannung des Lebens voll auszukosten, ist eitel: den Horizont der Wellnes bildet der Tod*“ (p. 54). She concludes that the vanishing point of oriental and exotic appropriation in the field of wellness is “*der Machtanspruch, sich Zeichen des „Anderen“ einzuverleiben* (p. 55).

the small print under the *Ingredients* heading: “green tea (60%), blackberry leaves, orange rind, plum fruit granules, flavouring (lychee), chokeberries, ginkgo leaves, ginseng root (2%), chrysanthemum leaves.”<sup>302</sup> The list thus shows to what extent the material composition of the product mirrors the symbolic recombination in the product description. Indeed it further blurs concrete and mythical-mystical geographical boundaries: green tea (presumably from Asia or maybe Africa) as well as leaves and fruit from a number of European, North American and South East Asian shrubs and trees are blended together into a globalising “well-being” elixir. Significantly the referenced “lychee” ingredient turns out to be just a flavouring! So much for the “*perfectly natural way*” to combat stress...

Finally it should be stressed that no clear technical or physiological explanations are provided for the ingredients that are highlighted: vague adjectives, such as “balancing” or “energizing”, are just dropped. It is up to the consumer to provide the missing links between an ingredient and its potential physical and/or psycho-mystical effects, such as aura-enhancement, pleasure or harmony. Specific “health-inducing” ingredients such as e.g. “ginseng” in this case, or e.g. “aloe vera” are dropped as buzz-words in the description of many HLTs. The former is often made to represent the epitome of eastern longevity while the latter is implicitly recognised as a post-industrial panacea, providing anything from moisturising to detoxicating features. One could thus appeal to “Barthesian” terminology and say that signifiers such as “ginseng” or “aloe vera” no longer directly point to denotative signifieds –the plants themselves or their biochemical properties– but to connotative signifieds such as health, balance, purity, etc.<sup>303</sup>

In sum, the referential web surrounding HLTs is increasingly broad: the semiotics of these new foodstuffs and cosmetics is often set free from concrete physiological and technical characteristics to include associations with lifestyle, recreation, meditation and even a form of spiritual enlightenment. Moreover, technology is naturalised through the dilation of connotation strategies: it frequently merges with tradition, belief, instinct and intuition, thus contributing to a new health myth in the Barthesian sense.<sup>304</sup> In fact, product discourse generally moves very swiftly from the factual (type of ingredients) to the functional (effect on the body)<sup>305</sup> to dwell at length on the sensual and experiential –in a transcendental curve. Basic human activities such as eating and drinking become holistic “experiential” gateways to the consumer’s psyche, overshadowing the physiological and technological trajectories of these processes. Ultimately, consumer subjectivity is the ingredient that makes the product

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<sup>302</sup> Cf. 2002 package.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. e.g. Chandler, Daniel, *Semiotics for Beginners: Glossary of Key-Terms*, online: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem-gloss.html#D>: “Denotation: The term refers to the relationship between the signifier and its signified. Denotation is routinely treated as the definitional, ‘literal’, ‘obvious’ or ‘commonsense’ meaning of a sign, but semioticians tend to treat it as a signified about which there is a relatively broad consensus. For Barthes, a denotative sign existed within what he called the first order of signification. In this framework connotation is a further sign (or signs) deriving from the signifier of a denotative sign. However, no clear distinction can be made between denotation and connotation.” Cf. also the already quoted Chandler, Daniel, *Semiotics for Beginners: Denotation, Connotation and Myth*, online: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem06.html>. There Chandler provides a good analysis of Barthes’ theoretical evolution regarding denotation, connotation and myth and their subsequent blurring from a post-structuralist angle. Here, however, to simplify the argument, I retain a more structuralist definition. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>304</sup> Cf. Barthes, Roland, op. cit.

<sup>305</sup> This step is however often extremely foreshortened or even omitted.

come alive, which is why producers must enrol consumers' endorsement in the shape of beliefs or at least a suspension of disbelief. As Gerhard Schulze expresses it:

Economically seen, it represents a total reversal from the traditional rationality of the user. If it was rational in the object-centred economy to mistrust the quality assurances of the producer and to only consider an artefact as worthy of being bought after a carefully critical appraisal, the contrary is now valid in the subject-oriented economy: it is rational to *believe* the effectiveness promises of the producer, because one thereby increases the likelihood that the promised effect will set in.<sup>306</sup>

Hence the experiential dimension of consumption can be seen as the latest adjunct in potential consumption incentives. However, this dimension does not negate or necessarily contradict previous incentives. Rather it builds on or even transcends the rationales put forth by economists (material needs, functional rationality, maximisation of utility), anthropologists, ethnologists and sociologists (social distinction and identity needs or wants) as well as literary theorists (consumption as a/n –often non verbal- communicative function).<sup>307</sup> What the experiential priority does is to reinstate a holistic body subjectivity – that is at once sensuous, pleasure-seeking and open to novelty– as a central motor of consumption. Consumers can thus be seen as *constructivist users* who choose from a number of subjective realities in an experience economy. Their health or well-being choices make them into the *co-producers* of HLTs, since the experience of a technology is inevitably mediated by individually embodied subjectivities.

Joy Annamma and Venkatesh Alladi neatly encapsulate the challenges linked to this transition by meditating on the origins and limitations of the “homo economicus” concept and how it is being transcended:

The Cartesian dualism of mind/body distinctions also gave rise to other metaphors of the body that privileged the mind over the body, such as “homoeconomicus”. The use of such a metaphor creates a particular textual reality which appears to be fixed. Homoeconomicus forces us to think of human consumption behaviour as primarily economic in character and eliminates consideration of other aspects of consumption, such as hedonism or symbolism. [...] The use of such a metaphor based on rationality brings to prominence the mind-body dualism that privileges the mind and cognitive activity over the body and emotional or physical labor. As Hirschmann observes, from a marxist and/or feminist perspective, such ideology is distorted and incomplete, because it excludes all other forms of social behavior other than contractual relationships. The rational economic model of consumption has now given way to more affective modes of consumption [...].<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Schulze, Gerhard, “Zeit der Wunder: auch der neue Modetrend Wellness ist Teil des Erlebnismarktes”, *Die Zeit*, 41, 1999, online version: <http://www.zeit.de/1999/41/199941.kur.erlebnis.xml>: „Ökonomisch gesehen, gilt hier eine völlige Umkehr der traditionellen Rationalität des Verbrauchers. War es in der Objektzentrierten Wirtschaft rational, den Qualitätsversicherungen der Anbieter zu misstrauen und einen Gegenstand erst nach eingehender kritischer Prüfung als kaufwürdig anzusehen, so stimmt in der subjektzentrierten Wirtschaft genau das Gegenteil: Es ist rational, den Wirksamkeitsversicherungen der Anbieter zu glauben, weil man dadurch die Wahrscheinlichkeit erhöht, dass sich die versprochene Wirkung tatsächlich einstellt. Wenn es nicht um Sachen geht, sondern um Erlebnisse, ist der Käufer unausweichlich Mitproduzent der Ware. Sie entsteht erst in ihm, unter Mithilfe des Anbieters.“ [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>307</sup> For a broad discussion of the authors and theories related to these trends, cf. Bingle, Gwen & Weber, Heike, op. cit., especially section 2.1.

<sup>308</sup> Anamma, Joy & Alladi, Venkatesh, op. cit., p. 335.

In this section, I hope to have shown the extent to which emotional and experiential commodification seem to be taking the lead over more straightforwardly economic commodification strategies. I also hope that the use and discussion of the “recombinance” metaphor has shed light on the elaboration of new types of constructed rationalities drawing upon a variety of codes. Closely linked to the findings of this section, the next section attempts to briefly outline a shift in the history of the mind-body relationship – a shift that has greatly contributed to the emergence of emotional and experiential commodification, by calling attention to and legitimising the body as a valid source of cognition and consciousness.

### Embodied consciousness

*Notre corps en tant qu’il se meut lui-même, c’est-à-dire en tant qu’il est inséparable d’une vue du monde et qu’il est cette vue même réalisée, est la condition de possibilité, non seulement de la synthèse géométrique, mais encore de toutes les opérations expressives et de toutes les acquisitions qui constituent le monde culturel.*<sup>309</sup>

*Etre une conscience ou plutôt être une expérience, c’est communiquer intérieurement avec le monde, le corps et les autres, être avec eux au lieu d’être à côté d’eux.*<sup>310</sup>

I wonder what Maurice Merleau Ponty would have said, had he been confronted with the latest generation of “experiential” wellness products... In my initial *Introduction*, I provocatively asked what had happened to German consumers: whether they had forsaken discriminating “Protestant” rationality for a softly passive “Buddhist” path or had simply become the bewildered victims of crafty marketing gurus.<sup>311</sup> The irony of the question was provoked by two strange captions found on wellness bathing products described as bridges towards “a holistic wellness experience for body, mind and soul” and “an aura of tranquillity and peace”.<sup>312</sup> Despite the irony, the question remained puzzling until I tackled the “Commodification” section. There, we saw that the continued encroachment of commodification on all aspects of everyday life required the annexation of experience and its prime medium, the body. The analysis of this new experiential ethos dominated by transcultural recombinance demonstrated that “Protestant” rationality and “Buddhist” paths need not contradict each other: sovereign consumers can appeal to scientific rationality while at the same time consciously deciding to be seduced by much more fuzzy esoteric concepts.<sup>313</sup>

My aim in this section is therefore to look beyond the latest commodification turn to see what kind of cultural hinterland has actually enabled and legitimated a shift in the perception of the body and its experiential primacy. Indeed, I contend that the proliferation of holistically designed HLTs owes as much, if not more, to shifting paradigms in the sciences

<sup>309</sup> Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Paris: Gallimard, 1945, p. 445: “Our body, in the sense that it is self-moving, hence that it is inseparable from a worldview and is itself the realisation of this view, is the condition for the possibility not only of geometric synthesis but also of all expressive operations and all the acquisitions that constitute the cultural world.”

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. p. 113: “Being a conscience or rather being an experience is communicating internally with the world, the body and others, being with them instead of beside them.” [emphasis in original]

<sup>311</sup> Cf. Chapter 1 (*Introduction*).

<sup>312</sup> Quotes from the captions found on a pack of *Kneipp’s Wellness Bath Salts Relax Care* and a bottle of *Palmolive Aromatherapy Anti-Stress Shower Gel*, respectively, cf. Chapter 1 (*Introduction*).

<sup>313</sup> Cf. my discussion of “rationality constructs” in Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*).

(both “natural” and “human”) as it does to the cyclical fashion flair of marketing experts trying to exploit the vagaries of the market. Therefore, the following discussion will take us along the path from Cartesianism to cognitive science(s), through phenomenology, psychophysiology and integrative medicine –within a reflexively modern context. Its aim is to display the theoretical underpinnings that have fostered a re-focusing on bodily, sensuous experience as constitutive –or rather a pre-condition– of a satisfying sense of selfhood, hence personal agency. Both “Under the sign of the body” and “Technology” have already set the stage for this discussion. In the former section, I hinted at the tension in the arts between the body perceived as sign and the body perceived as “corps vécu”, and, in particular how it threatened to undermine the entire historical enterprise (i.e. through the individual situatedness hence ambivalence of historical discourse and the difficulty of grasping even unreliable signs of past “corps vécus”). And in the latter section, I showed that technology experientially merged with the body, thus blurring the boundaries between culture and nature but also between subject and object. These findings thus questioned the modernist project and its hard and fast dichotomies.<sup>314</sup> Therefore, the last modernist dichotomy that I would like to tackle here is the mind (soul)-body divide, a divide which the discourse on and around HLTs repeatedly attempts to bridge, as in the two bathing examples I initially provided.

Beside the seminal influence of Christianity, Stefan Haas briefly sums up the currents that have proved the most influential on the cultivation of the body-mind tension:

This dichotomy can already be detected in Classical Antiquity. But it is Cartesianism which transformed this antagonism into the entirety of secular reality and thus radically modified the problem, since there is no superior saving principle left in the earthly dimension. Kant described the two worlds of which man partakes in that sense: through his embodiment, he is part of nature, but because of his faculty for pure reasoning, he belongs to the moral world. On the grounds of his intelligibility, man can thus rise above his embodiment and enslave himself to a self-chosen morality.<sup>315</sup>

Thus, Cartesianism should not be perceived as a cause (as is often put forward) but rather as a consequence of a divide crystallised earlier –the momentum of which can be seen as recurring cyclically in the course of Classical Antiquity and the history of Christianity, especially Protestantism:

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<sup>314</sup> Cf. Ferguson, Harvie, op. cit., p. 5: “As a general characterization of reality, the Object/Subject relation is specific to Modernity; it is its self-definition and its modality of existence. This distinction is replicated over and over again in the specific practices that mark Modernity as a distinctive way of life: mind and body; use and exchange; appearance and reality, all more or less directly encode the distinction between Subject and Object. Indeed, we might well be tempted to define Modernity as a worldview and a related set of social practices for which the distinction between object and subject is fundamental, as compared to the premodern or the nonmodern, which might be conceived as a worldview and related social practices for which such a distinction has little or no significance.”

<sup>315</sup> Haas, Stefan, „Vom Ende des Körpers in den Datennetzen. Dekonstruktion eines postmodernen Mythos“, *Körper mit Geschichte: Der Menschliche Körper als Ort der Selbst- und Weltdeutung*, op. cit., p. 99: „Diese Dichotomie von Körper und Geist lässt sich bereits in der Antike nachweisen. Aber erst der Cartesianismus macht aus dem Gegensatz die Gesamtheit der diesseitigen Wirklichkeit und modifiziert damit das Problem radikal, indem es kein aufhebendes, übergeordnetes weltliches Prinzip mehr gibt. In diesem Sinn beschrieb Kant zwei Welten, in denen der Mensch lebe: vermittelt seiner Leiblichkeit ist er Teil der Natur, durch seine Fähigkeit zur reinen Vernunft gehört er zur moralischen Welt. Der Mensch kann sich dabei aufgrund seiner Intelligibilität über seine Leiblichkeit stellen und sie der selbstgewählten Sittlichkeit unterwerfen.“

[...] it is because reflection in our culture has been severed from its bodily life that the mind-body problem has become a central topic for abstract reflection. Cartesian dualism is not so much one competing solution as it is the formulation of this problem. Reflection is taken to be distinctly mental, and so the problem arises of how it could ever be linked to bodily life.<sup>316</sup>

However, even if this Cartesian-Kantian framing dominated the philosophical scene for so long, a more discreet tradition managed to maintain itself in parallel, “[...] a minor branch of ‘philosophy’ (materialism, ideology critique) or at most a philosophy diverted toward politics, economics, psychology: Helvétius, Diderot, d’Holbach, La Mettrie, and ultimately even Marx, not to mention the Nietzsche who devoured the idéologues.”<sup>317</sup> And it sought inspiration from Spinoza to Condillac’s *Traité des Sensations* [1754] “for whom no impression of the world, could be born disembodied, because only the body could feel: ‘penser et sentir sont la même chose’.”<sup>318</sup> But it was only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, once new ground had been broken by physics, that a phenomenological approach to embodiment truly gained scientific credibility with Maurice Merleau-Ponty, via Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Indeed, it is mainly the former’s contribution that paved the philosophical path that would inspire a more cohesive transdisciplinary development of the so-called cognitive sciences (including neuroscience, cognitive psychology, linguistics, artificial intelligence and their association with phenomenological schools of thought) expanding and cross-breeding disciplines such as neurology, psychoanalysis and behaviourist experimental psychology, which until then had evolved in relative isolation.<sup>319</sup>

Merleau-Ponty was particularly seminal because he “proposed that analysis begin with the preobjective act of perception rather than with already constituted objects. He recognized that perception was always embedded in a cultural world, such that the preobjective in no way implies a “pre-cultural”. At the same time, he acknowledged that his own work did not elaborate the steps between perception and explicit cultural and historical analysis.”<sup>320</sup> However, what he did develop was a convincing description of the two poles of embodiment: “it encompasses both the body as a lived, experiential structure and the body as the context or milieu of cognitive mechanisms.”<sup>321</sup> My introductory quote thus convincingly illustrates these two aspects. Merleau-Ponty envisions the body as autokinetic, a characteristic that generates the autopoietic process of experience: the body’s movement into the world generates sensuous data that contributes to a worldview that is both literal and metaphorical, without which consciousness, hence culture, is virtually unthinkable. But it is situated interaction or exchange with the world, the body and others that enables subjective experience –in sum, the constitution of a sense of selfhood. This position then seems to suggest that the presence of culture antedates the experience of the subject in the world or at least emerges concurrently “because it cannot be consciousness without playing upon significances given either in the absolute past of nature or in its own personal past, and

<sup>316</sup> Varela, Francisco J., Thompson, Evan & Rosch, Eleanor, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive and Human Experience*. Cambridge MA & London: MIT Press, 1991, p. 30.

<sup>317</sup> MacCannell, Juliet Flower, „Introduction“, *Thinking Bodies*, Eds Juliet Flower MacCannell & Laura Zakarin, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>318</sup> As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 3: “thinking and feeling are the same thing”.

<sup>319</sup> Cf. Varela, Francisco J. & al., *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

<sup>320</sup> Csordas, Thomas J., *op. cit.*, p. 243.

<sup>321</sup> Varela, Francisco J. & al., *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

*because any form of lived experience tends toward a certain generality whether that of our habits or that of our bodily functions”.*<sup>322</sup>

Whatever controversies may arise from discussing “the absolute past of nature”, “one’s own past” or “the generality of experience”, Merleau-Ponty’s achievement is to have thrown a bridge between “I have a body” [*Körper*] and “I am a body” [*Leib*] and thus put the body back at the origin of human consciousness and subjectivity.<sup>323</sup> The body is seen as the catalyst of perception hence an active producer of experience that provides a sense of boundaries, i.e. what is inside and outside the “self”. Indeed, this first step does not require finding out if the (natural or cultural) world actually does exist outside of an individual perspective (hence potentially has a history) or establishing a diachronically unfolding sense of self, or even ascertaining the generality of experience –all of which can be postponed to a subsequent phase. What is central here is that “[w]hen the body is recognized for what it is in experiential terms, not as an object but as a subject, the mind-body distinction becomes much more uncertain.”<sup>324</sup> In an increasingly secularised and disenchanting 20<sup>th</sup> century, it meant that the Cartesian “in the beginning there was Reason” –which had replaced the theistic “in the beginning there was God”– was gradually replaced by “in the beginning there was the Body”. This substitution did not necessarily seal or signify the death of God or of Reason, but what it did do is subordinate the experience of these dimensions to the “subjectivity” of the body. It also paved the way for more holistic, Eastern or “aboriginal” philosophical and mystical traditions to gain a foothold in Western thought –traditions which instead of banning the body outside the spheres of knowledge and spirituality have long used it as a bridge to explore or deconstruct these spheres. I am thinking here of a number of Hindu and Buddhist schools of thought not to mention Turkish Sufism, as well as many shamanic teachings and practices.<sup>325</sup>

This body slant represented nothing short of a paradigm revolution in both the “natural” and the “human” sciences. In historical-philosophical terms, it might have appeared like a step back into a pre-Cartesian worldview (or the mainstreaming of a marginal current) but it took place in a world that had drawn and still draws huge “advantages” from the Cartesian

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<sup>322</sup> Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London & New York: Routledge 1962 [originally published in French in 1945], p. 158. I originally found this passage quoted in Csordas, op. cit., p. 61, but from another edition.

<sup>323</sup> For a good contemporary overview of the relationship between “Leib” and subjectivity, cf. Blankenburg, Wolfgang & Haltenhof, Horst, „Selbst und Leib\* – Ein phänomenologischer Zugang“, *Integrative Bewegungstherapie*, Nr. 2, 1995, pp. 72 – 77. Available online here: [http://dgib.net/files/ibt/pdf/Blankenburg\\_Selbst.pdf](http://dgib.net/files/ibt/pdf/Blankenburg_Selbst.pdf). Moreover, in recent years, feminist/gender studies scholarship has been intensively engaging with the legacy of Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists. To quote just one example here: Fielding, Helen A., “Reflections on Corporeal Existence – A Phenomenological Alternative to Mind/Body Dualism”, *Feministische Phänomenologie und Hermeneutik*, Eds Stoller, Silvia, Veronica Vasterling und Linda Fisher, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005. For more information on phenomenology from a feminist perspective, cf. the website for the Society of Interdisciplinary Feminist Phenomenology: <http://sifp.uoregon.edu/history>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>324</sup> Csordas, Thomas J., op. cit, p. 85.

<sup>325</sup> The role of the psychoanalytic tradition should not be discounted here. Even if in this tradition the body is still perceived in a dyadic relationship with the unconscious through the mediation of a system of so-called drives and repressions, the work of especially Carl Gustav Jung has contributed to a wider cultural acceptance of alternative world views anchored in the so-called “collective unconscious” and its “archetypes”. Cf. especially: Jung, Carl Gustav, *Zur Psychologie westlicher und östlicher Religion*, Olten: Walter, 1983 [4th ed.; originally published in 1963] or Jung, Carl Gustav, *Die Psychologie des Kundalini-Yoga (Nach Aufzeichnungen des Seminars 1932)*, Ed. Sonu Shamdasani, Olten: Walter, 1998.

dichotomies of mind vs. body, object vs. subject, culture vs. nature, etc. Indeed, these dichotomies not only enabled, they legitimized “objective” scientific research and technological development as hegemonic practices. Hence, the change of paradigm towards the primacy of the body meant (and still means!) nothing less than footnoting every experiment, every analysis, every result, every model or theory with an asterisk conveying the sense of a bodily bias, of the messy convergence of subject and object, mind and body, culture and nature –the clear boundaries of which are now irretrievably lost. In sum, this shift confronted and still confronts all and every form of knowledge to its *in-corporated* situatedness or relativity. Shaun Gallagher radically contends that:

[...] nothing about human experience remains untouched by human embodiment: from the basic perceptual and emotional processes that are already at work in infancy, to a sophisticated interaction with other people; from the acquisition and creative use of language, to higher cognitive faculties involving judgment and metaphor; from the exercise of free will in intentional action, to the creation of cultural artefacts that provide for further human affordances.<sup>326</sup>

But, even before embodiment flavours human experience in a wider cultural realm, its own “inner” articulation may prove problematic. Gallagher, a philosopher specialised in phenomenology and cognitive science, discusses a series of troubling case-studies on neonate imitation, phantoms in the case of congenital absence of limbs, unilateral neglect, the loss of proprioception (registration of own self-movement) and the tactile sense, schizophrenic manifestations, etc.<sup>327</sup> All these studies seem to point towards the fact that embodiment crucially conditions the sense of selfhood (and its boundaries), indeed that selfhood is first and foremost embodied.<sup>328</sup> They also confirm the validity of articulating embodiment into two distinct determinants –body image, that “*consists of a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body*” and body schema, “*a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring*”<sup>329</sup> – since in the cases examined, one witnesses either a co-operation or a dissociation of these determinants.

For example, the loss of proprioception, which affects the optimal functioning of the body schema, means that the individual has to consciously control muscles and focus her/his attention to accomplish even the most mundane tasks, such as to pick up a glass and drink from it.<sup>330</sup> The body image function thus has to compensate for an ailing body schema

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<sup>326</sup> Gallagher, Shaun, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005, p. 248.

<sup>327</sup> Thus building on the pioneer work of Merleau-Ponty but also on that of a number of cognitive scientists such as the neurologist Oliver Sacks, whose brilliant vulgarisations of neurological malfunctions (drawn from patient histories) were probably the first to highlight the ground-breaking importance of cognitive science for a broader public, cf. especially: Sacks, Oliver, *The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998 [first published in 1985].

<sup>328</sup> Gallagher, Shaun, op. cit., p. 3: “*The human body, and the way it structures human experience, also shapes the human experience of self, and perhaps the very possibility of developing a sense of self. If the self is anything more than this, it is nonetheless and first of all this, an embodied self.*”

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., p. 24

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., p. 26: “*Movements controlled by a body schema can be precisely shaped by the intentional experience or goal-directed behaviour of the subject. If I reach for a glass of water with the intention of drinking from it, my hand, completely outside my awareness, shapes itself in a precise way for picking up the glass. It takes on a certain form in conformity with my intention. It is important to note that although a body schema is not itself a*

function. In a “healthy” subject, these two dimensions continuously and seamlessly complement and feed into each other and it is usually only in the case of a (temporary) disturbance in one or the other realm that the articulation becomes obvious to individuals, or at least their environment. Indeed, the body image<sup>331</sup> consciously and unconsciously influences the body schema<sup>332</sup> just as disturbances in the body schema more or less consciously constrain body image.<sup>333</sup> Thus, even if this articulation is redolent of a subject-object dyad, within lived experience it can be deconstructed as a single co-dependent process. And while bodily awareness is often fragmented and fluctuates greatly in the course of experience, it is always close to the surface of human experience, since perception is usually a “*plenary gestalt*”, involving and “*structured by all the senses*”.<sup>334</sup> Gallagher thus pointedly reframes the question of embodied consciousness:

To ask about the prenoetic effects of embodiment is to ask about what happens behind the scenes of consciousness, and about how the body anticipates and sets the stage for consciousness. More precisely, the question in this case is not about the apparent *structure* of consciousness, but about the *structuring* of consciousness, and the role that embodiment plays in the structuring process. How does the fact of embodiment, the fact that consciousness is embodied, *affect*, and perhaps *effect*, intentional experience?<sup>335</sup>

This is a question that cognitive science is only beginning to tackle, with the help of the case-studies mentioned above. It is also a question that more practically-oriented scientists are trying to broach, albeit from another angle, that of decision-making, especially as it relates to neuromarketing. In the U.S., the technical opportunities offered by fMRI [functional magnetic resonance imaging] seem to allow for a convergence of research at a number of institutions such as Princeton, Caltech or the Bright House Institute for Thought Sciences in Atlanta. fMRI technology has enabled researchers from these very diverse institutions to visualise what areas of the brain are stimulated by certain socio-economic experiments, be it brand identification, the relation between rational and emotional investment in a product, the readiness to invest according to trust or to spend money for a very special gratification,

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*form of consciousness, or in any way a cognitive operation, it can enter into and support (or in some cases undermine) intentional activity, including cognition.”*

<sup>331</sup> Together with other researchers, Gallagher adopts a subdivision of body image into three components: “1. *Body percept: the subject’s perceptual experience of his/her own body.* 2. *Body concept: the subject’s conceptual understanding (including folk and/or scientific knowledge) of the body in general; and* 3. *Body affect: the subject’s emotional attitude toward his/her own body. Although (2) and (3) do not necessarily involve an occurrent conscious awareness, they are maintained as sets of beliefs, attitudes, or dispositions, and in that sense form part of an intentional system.”*, Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>332</sup> E.g. if over a long period, I am convinced that my body is huge, consciously ample “navigation” movements may become inscribed in my body schema and I will thereafter automatically and unconsciously avoid constricted spaces.

<sup>333</sup> E.g. a heart attack or a partial neural paralysis will no doubt contribute to my perceiving, monitoring and caring for my body in a different way.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Ihde, Don, op. cit., p. 38: “*In actual experience there is a constancy of what I call whole-body perception, in the sense that our perceptions occur as a plenary gestalt in relation to an experienced environment. We interact with the world around us. It is also the claim here that our whole-body perceptions are sensorily synthesized in our interactions with a “world”. Unlike the older traditions of discrete and separable sense, phenomenology holds that I never have a simple or isolated visual experience. My experience of some object that is seen is simultaneously and constantly also an experience that is structured by all the senses.*”

<sup>335</sup> Gallagher, Shaun, op. cit, p. 2.

etc.<sup>336</sup> The design of all these experiments rests on the fact that, according to the stimulation provided, fMRI tracks brain function indirectly, by measuring blood flow (which signifies that neurons have just been fired in specific areas of the brain). Results until now seem to point to the fact that neither “pure reason” nor “pure emotion” dominate economic choices but that many other fuzziier, experiential aspects factor into decision making, such as identification potential, trust, etc.

Perhaps the most disconcerting experiment was a scientific remake by Read Montague at the Baylor College of Medicine of the *Coke-Pepsi* challenges featured in commercials aired in the 1970s and 80s.<sup>337</sup> The findings were particularly striking: when test subjects were blind tested, Pepsi came out the distinct favourite (correlated by heightened activity in the so-called ventral putamen, the reward centre of the brain) but when, at the outset, subjects were told which samples were Coke and which Pepsi, Coke came out first and the brain activity of subjects actually changed. The area then highlighted was that of the medial prefrontal cortex, an area of the brain that governs high-level cognitive activity and also – some scientists posit– the area associated with a sense of self, hence identification.<sup>338</sup> Therefore, the brand and its associations seemed to override the pure reward sensation.

Even if this discovery still cannot be labelled as the discovery of the long sought after “buy-button” in the brain, it nevertheless has important implications not only for neuromarketing, but for cognitive science in general and phenomenological preoccupations in particular. Indeed, this is where intersubjectivity or culture comes back into the picture –even if one could argue that the design of the second part of the experiment may have in fact just elicited a conditioned brand identification reflex, not so distant from its simpler Pavlovian cousin. Nevertheless, the point is that human experience never happens in a vacuum (even when enacted within an experimental space). In fact, the distinction delineated above between schema and image (in terms of body perception) can be revived here: Pepsi seemed to appeal to the “schema” aspect of perception –in a sense the sensory-motor preference– whereas Coke seemed to engage more strongly with the “image” understanding (reflecting an extant *system* of perceptions, attitudes and beliefs). Consciousness –or meaning-building– thus seems to be rooted in the body but constantly negotiated and “*experienced within a domain of consensual action and cultural history*”.<sup>339</sup> In the words of Mark Johnson:

Meaning includes patterns of embodied experience and pre-conceptual structures of our sensibility (i.e., our mode of perception, or orienting ourselves, and of interacting with other objects, events, or persons). These embodied patterns do not remain private or peculiar to the person who experiences them. Our community helps us interpret and codify many of our

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<sup>336</sup> Thompson, Clive “There’s a Sucker Born in Every Medial Prefrontal Cortex”, *New York Times*, October 26th, 2003, (online version: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/26/magazine/26BRAINS.html>); Korschun, Holly, “Hey, What’s the Bright Idea”, *Momentum* [Forward Thinking from the Woodruff Health Sciences of Emory University], Winter 2005 (online: [http://whsc.emory.edu/pubs/momentum/2005winter/bright\\_idea.html](http://whsc.emory.edu/pubs/momentum/2005winter/bright_idea.html)); and two slightly different versions of the same article: Adler, Jerry, „Mind Reading”, *Newsweek International*, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2004, (online version: <http://www.newsweek.com/2004/07/04/mind-reading.html> or [no named author], “Mind Reading”, *Newsweek International*, August 9<sup>th</sup> 2004 (online version: <http://www.newsweek.com/2004/08/09/mind-reading.html>). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>337</sup> Thompson, Clive, *ibid*.

<sup>338</sup> Korschun, Holly, *op. cit.*

<sup>339</sup> Varela, Francisco J. & al., *op. cit.*, p. 150.

felt patterns. They become shared cultural modes of experience and help to determine the nature of our meaningful, coherent understanding of our “world”.<sup>340</sup>

What this implies for cognitive research is that “*world and perceiver specify each other*”.<sup>341</sup> Thus, the interesting twist that phenomenology brings to the study of HLTs is that the latter reunite at least two perceptive modes because they are geared towards the experiencing of one’s own body but within a collective body paradigm. Thomas Csordas sheds an interesting light on this phenomenon with his concept of “*somatic modes of attention*”. Based on Merleau-Ponty’s insight whereby objects are constituted out of an indeterminate horizon by our perceptive attention, he explores the moment when the perceiver actually focuses on her/his own body, the moment when the body becomes at once subject and object:

Somatic modes of attention are culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others. Because attention implies both sensory engagement and an object, we must emphasize that our working definition refers both to attending “with” and attending “to” the body. To a certain extent it *must* be both. To attend to a bodily sensation is not to attend to the body as an isolated object, but to attend to the body’s situation in the world. The sensation engages something in the world because the body is “always already in the world”. Attention *to* a bodily sensation can thus become a mode of attending to the intersubjective milieu that gives rise to that sensation.<sup>342</sup>

While Csordas undertakes an anthropological analysis of charismatic Christian and Navajo healing that involves the embodied presence of others, his analysis remains valid for the appropriation of HLTs, which is often a private act. It remains valid because, by buying (into) HLTs, consumers inscribe their bodies into a forestructured experiential realm. Indeed, the generic design of HLTs presupposes a common “embodiedness” that can then (potentially) be assimilated into a subjective realm. HLTs thus represent a novel “*somatic mode of attention*”, embedded in a conscious cultural process that posits the body’s need for positive experiential and healthful attention:

[...] the ways we attend to and with our bodies, and even the possibility of attending, are neither arbitrary nor biologically determined, but are culturally constituted. Leenhardt’s (1979) classic study of the Canaques of New Caledonia described not only a way of conceptualizing the body radically distinct from our own, but the exclusion of the body per se as an object of consciousness until the people were introduced by missionaries to the objectified body of Christian culture. This suggests that neither attending to nor attending with the body can be taken for granted, but must be formulated as culturally constituted somatic modes of attention.<sup>343</sup>

The Canaque example immediately brings to mind the fact that perhaps the most emblematic and widespread somatic mode of attention in the West has for centuries been medicine and the various ways in which it has objectified the body across traditions. The advent of so-called conventional medicine or modern Western “scientific” medicine in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century –linked to the impacts of modern physiology and bacteriology–

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<sup>340</sup> Johnson, Mark, *The Body in the Mind: the bodily basis of imagination, reason and meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 175.

<sup>341</sup> Varela, Francisco J. & al., op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>342</sup> Csordas, Thomas J., op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

has especially crystallised this perspective. Whereas the Classical paradigm (i.e. the Hippocratic and Galenic traditions) already separated the body into soul and mind components, it still paid attention to the individual person, her/his global “ecological physiology” and a dynamic “natural” equilibrium. In contrast, conventional medicine puts more emphasis on a “universal” body potentially reducible to physics and chemistry, i.e. a particular physiological model that distinguishes the *normal* from the diseased or deviant.<sup>344</sup>

Volker Rittner neatly retraces the success of this so-called *somatic model* (starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), emphasising its relationship with infectious diseases. In this model, illnesses are primarily perceived as natural phenomena. Hence, they should first be described rationally and un sentimentally. Second, the methods used to treat them are only effective if the body with its bio-chemo-physical characteristics is separated from the personae of patients –who actually represent more of a disturbance since they cannot even be relied upon to adequately describe their symptoms. Thirdly and finally, this implies that the history of the illness overshadows or even occults that of the patient.<sup>345</sup> As a result, the somatic model has drastic consequences for the identity and agency of patients. They are made to feel ignorant about their bodies and when facing the doctor can only understand them in terms of a defective mechanism, i.e. *“an inconvenient dysfunction, an annoying interruption. The separation of body and self is a precondition for the functioning of the medical enterprise. When the body is ill it is brought like a car to the workshop and its inevitable owner is not taken seriously.”*<sup>346</sup>

While this is not the place to further pursue even a compact history of somatic medicine and its alternative or complementary competitors, suffice it to say that the increasing credibility of phenomenology and its impacts on the cognitive sciences in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has no doubt paved the way towards, if not a really holistic approach to treatment in conventional medicine, at least to the recognition that there are bridges between mental and physiological states. Psychosomatic medicine, psychiatry and psychoanalysis<sup>347</sup> have long recognised the links between mental states and physical symptoms. But newer disciplines such as psychophysiology,<sup>348</sup> the cognitive neurosciences, and the biofeedback technologies

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<sup>344</sup> Cf. Bates, Don G., “Why Not Call Modern Medicine ‘Alternative?’”, *Global Perspectives on Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (“The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences”, Vol. 583, Sept. 2002), Eds. Helen E. Sheehan & Barrett P. Brenton, Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi: Sage, 2002, p. 16. The author pointedly suggests calling conventional medicine “alternative”, since he contends that so-called alternative or complementary practices have a lot more in common with Classical (i.e. Hippocratic or Galenic) medicine than with conventional medicine, which presents a truly *alternative* view of the body.

<sup>345</sup> Freely adapted from Rittner, Volker, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>346</sup> Freely adapted and quoted from *ibid.*, p. 42: „[...] *der Patient wird zum Ignorant gegenüber seinem eigenen Körper, den er, zugleich Laie vor dem Arzt, nur noch in Termini eines defekten Mechanismus begreifen kann: als lästiges Nicht-Funktionieren, als ein ärgerliches Aussetzen. Die Trennung von Körper und Selbst ist Voraussetzung für das Funktionieren des Medizinbetriebes; im Krankheitsfall wird der Körper abgegeben wie das Auto in dem Werkstatt, sein unvermeidlicher Besitzer nicht weiter Ernst genommen.*“

<sup>347</sup> Cf. e.g. Janssen, Paul L., „Zum Verstehen psycho-somatischer und somato-psychischer Vorgänge. Beiträge der Psychoanalyse“, *Zeitschrift für Klinische Psychologie, Psychopathologie und Psychotherapie*, Heft 1, Jahrgang 35, 1987, pp. 62-73.

<sup>348</sup> In 1964, the launching of *Psychophysiology* marked the coalescing of this new scientific discipline that aimed to map human mind-body interactions, thus demarcating itself from the former behaviourist perspective (i.e. explaining behaviour from an outside-the-organism point of view) that had dominated scientific psychology from the 1920s to the 1960s. Cf. e.g. Viedma-del-Jesus, Maria, Isabel, Perarakis, Pandelis, Muñoz, Miguel Ángel, López-Herrera, Antonio Gabriel & Vila, Jaime, “Sketching the first 45 years of the journal *Psychophysiology* (1964–2008): A co-word-based analysis”, *Psychophysiology*, 25.01.2011, pp. 1-8. (available here:

these have generated, have shown not only the limits of the “viral” or “bacterial” models and approaches by re-instating environmental factors as potentially pathogenic, they have also emphasised the importance of individual perception and response to various types of stress.<sup>349</sup> Indeed, biofeedback technologies have contributed to detailing the effects of environmental (“exogenous”: i.e. cold, pressure, etc.) and emotional (“endogenous”: i.e. anger, fear, etc.) stressors on the organism and have provided us with a mapping of “individual response stereotypy”.<sup>350</sup> Through the measurement of e.g. systolic and diastolic blood pressure, palmar conductance, electrical signals from brain activity (by means of an EEG), they have been able to offer scientific backing for the individualised symptom patterns that patients often diffusely describe as a pounding heart, sweaty palms, queasiness or muscular tensions in the back. It could then be shown that repeated exposure to certain stressors would reinforce personal responses in specific parts of the body, thus gradually contributing to the development of so-called lifestyle or civilisation diseases such as coronary heart diseases, cancer, migraines, asthma, ulcers and related digestive disorders.<sup>351</sup>

The fact that so-called “lifestyle” or “civilisation” diseases are the leading causes of death in the West<sup>352</sup> means that purely mechanistic medical interventions are bound to not prove very effective since these diseases are essentially multi-causal:

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<http://sci2s.ugr.es/publications/ficheros/Psychophysiology-2011.pdf>). For the years prior to the establishment of the journal, cf. Rodríguez Holguín, Soccoro & Cadaveira, Fernando, “Consolidation of psychophysiology as a scientific Discipline, 1930–1964: A historical note”, *Psychophysiology*, 32, 2002, pp. 619-624. (available here: <http://webspersoais.usc.es/export/sites/default/persoais/rodriguez.holguin/Descargas/2002-Hist-Psychophys.pdf>). But, as Kenneth Hugdahl expressed it, a lot remains to be done: “A major challenge to psychophysiology in the future will be to specify the functional architecture of interconnected structures and processes in the mind-brain-body network. This architecture has to be expressed in an algorithm explaining how the structures and processes may be transformed from one level of analysis to another, from a psychological to a physiological level. Such a strategy, thus, seeks to understand not only how the architecture of the mind interacts with structures and processes in the peripheral physiology and in the brain, but also how the mind-code is transformed into behavior.” Hugdahl, Kenneth, *Psychophysiology*, Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2001, p. 28. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>349</sup> However as expressed by Volker Rittner this represents a potentially uncomfortable paradigm shift for the medical profession, cf. Rittner, Volker, op. cit., p. 41: „Keime, Bakterien, später Viren sind Beleg für die Existenz eines Körpers, der zwar Probleme aufwirft, aber bezeichnenderweise nur als Körper, nicht als verwirrender Zusammenhang von Körper und Selbst. Die Keime sind ein faßbarer Beweis dafür, daß es begrenzte Kausalitäten und spezifische Ätiologien gibt, im Gegensatz zur Metapher der Balance, nach der alles mit allem zusammenhängt, nach der das Selbst mit dem Körper im Dialog steht und das Ich in Sympathie zu den Dingen der Umwelt.“

<sup>350</sup> Lacey, J.I. & Lacey, B.C., “Verification and extension of the principle of autonomic response stereotypy”, *American Journal of Psychology*, 71, 1958, pp. 50-73.

<sup>351</sup> Cf. e.g. Suter, Steve, *Health Psychophysiology: mind-body interactions in wellness and illness*, Hillsdale NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986; Hugdahl, Kenneth, op. cit.; *Handbook of Psychophysiology*, Eds John Cacioppo, Louis Tassinary & Gary Berntson, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>352</sup> I am not taking into account accidents, homicides and suicides here, although one could no doubt argue that all of them are at least loosely related to the “civilisation disease” category. In 2009, the Federal Statistical Office in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland) lists the following top-ten leading causes of death: „chronische ischämische Herzkrankheit; akuter Myokardinfarkt; Herzinsuffizienz; bösartige Neubildung der Bronchien und der Lunge; Schlaganfall (nicht als Blutung oder Infarkt bezeichnet); sonstige chronische obstruktive Lungenkrankheit; Pneumonie (Erreger nicht näher bezeichnet); Hypertensive Herzkrankheit; bösartige Neubildung des Dickdarmes; bösartige Neubildung der Brustdrüse (Mamma)“. Cf. <http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Content/Statistiken/Gesundheit/Todesursachen/Tabellen/Content75/SterbefaelleInsgesamt,templateld=renderPrint.psml>. Thus, coronary heart diseases, strokes, lung, intestine and breast cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are the main causes of death, leaving only pneumonia as a potentially “infectious” disease. To a large extent, these figures

The disease model does not transfer well to conditions such as essential hypertension (high blood pressure) and coronary heart disease [...]. There is a tendency to look for a discrete cause, for something like the bacterial agent of an infectious disease. None of the major disorders discussed in this textbook can be understood in terms of single, discrete causes. For example, the long list of contributors to essential hypertension may include diet, smoking, lack of exercise, personality characteristics, and stress. There is a hereditary component. The risk of hypertension is related to age, race, gender, and geography.<sup>353</sup>

Medical orientations such as psychosocial or behavioural medicine have thus begun working on a more integrative, synthetic approach to treatment and healing by laying a lot more emphasis on discussing the anamnesis of the disease with their patients, questioning nutritional and sports habits, emotional patterns and even spiritual options –be it in term of work-life balance, family and partner support, personal values, meditation, etc. The body in this “new” type of discourse is envisioned not only as a passive repository of encoded genetic, or more generally biological knowledge but as a living, cognizant, reactive and proactive being. It has clearly acquired a genuine subject position both grammatically and factually:

Bodily regulation is possible only if the body has a reasonable amount of control over its external environment. The world outside the body, for instance, must move at a pace that is in tune with the body’s capabilities; it must be to some degree, predictable, intelligible, etc. The body must also be able to regulate its internal environment. It must be able to recognize and monitor information about itself (e.g., pain), and be able to mobilize and defend itself against environmental stressors.<sup>354</sup>

As in the case of phenomenology that goes back to pre-Cartesian traditions or traditions that survived only marginally during the Cartesian paradigm, this type of holistic medical approach represents an implicit acknowledgement of a Hippocratic or Galenic heritage and it heavily draws on insights that have long been championed by complementary and alternative medical practices.<sup>355</sup> However slow and sometimes grudging, this ideological turn

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correlate with those provided by e.g. the Austrian Bundesamt Statistik: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/statistics/health/causes\\_of\\_death/causes\\_of\\_death\\_at\\_a\\_glance/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/health/causes_of_death/causes_of_death_at_a_glance/index.html) (figures for 2009); by the Swiss Bundesamt für Statistik: <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/14/02/04/key/01.html> (figures for 2008) , by the UK Office for National Statistics: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=9785> (figures for 2007 can be downloaded from here in Excel or CSV versions); by the French Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques: [http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?ref\\_id=natfps06205](http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?ref_id=natfps06205) (figures for 2008); and by the American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cf. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/lcod.htm> (figures for 2007). Cf. also Rittner, Volker, op. cit., p. 45. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>353</sup> Suter, Steve, op. cit., p 5. Cf. also: Friedman, Meyer, *Type A Behavior: Its Diagnosis and Treatment*, New York: Plenum Press [Kluwer Academic Press], 1996.

<sup>354</sup> Freund, Peter E.S. with the assistance of Miriam Fischer, *The Civilised Body: social domination, control and health*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982, p. 8.

<sup>355</sup> But the acknowledgement often remains implicit, since most conventional physicians do not like the idea of a reactionary return to humoral medicine and its vagaries and are still relatively reluctant to recognise a debt to CAM [complementary and alternative medicine]. Moreover, in the context of multi-factorial diseases, the burden of „scientific proof“ becomes almost unbearable, because of the constraints it places on clinical trial design (e.g. the necessity of several control groups, the time factor since the evolution of civilisation diseases is often very long-winded and may „outlive“ the existence of research teams and funding, etc.).

thus recognises that not just body “mechanics” but the *whole* person, her/his lifestyle and environment<sup>356</sup> must come back into the bigger medical picture:

For bodily “regulation” the mind actively collaborates with physiological processes. The true meaning of “psychosomatic” here then is not the simplistic idea of control by the mind “over” the body, but is rather an interactive process, psyche and soma influencing each other.<sup>357</sup>

Unfortunately, this turn has not proved as radical as the phenomenological revolution in other sciences. The specific “corps vécu” of patients may be increasingly taken into account in the medical equation but the scientific expertise model –despite having experienced a number of setbacks– remains extremely powerful, be it just symbolically.<sup>358</sup> Moreover, promising branches such as gene therapy or mainstream practices such as evidence-based medicine<sup>359</sup> retain a very positivistic, object-centred perspective on the body. Nevertheless, all these body trends, from phenomenology to cognitive science, through psychophysiology and integrative medicine, have left their mark upon the cultural substratum on which the marketing and appropriation of HLTs could grow. Obviously, the embodied mind concept as developed around HLTs does not display the sophistication of phenomenological theories or cognitive experiments since HLTs are designed for lay health consumers who are nevertheless perceived as knowledgeable and autonomous enough to invest in a number of relatively pleasurable preventive measures.

This empowerment appears increasingly necessary in societies stuck between the necessity of both text and body and the nostalgia for lost textual and/or bodily faith inherent to postmodernism (as already hinted at in the “Under the sign of the body” section):

[...] a double failure is given: a failure to produce a discourse on the body, also the failure not to produce discourse on it. A double bind, a psychosis. I have finished talking about the body, and I have not yet begun. I will never stop talking about it, and this body from which I speak will never be able to speak, neither about itself nor about me. It will never experience speech’s *jouissance*, and speech will never enjoy it.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> In this respect Kathleen F. Phalen’s book [Phalen, Kathleen F., *Integrative Medicine: achieving wellness through the best of eastern and western medical practices*, Boston & North Clarendon (VT): Journey Editions, dist. by Charles E. Tuttle, 1998] is a rather biased lyrical plea for a broad integrative merger with New-Agey undertones. I quote: “*Medicine’s emerging heroes –Bernie Siegel, Andrew Weil, Larry Dossey, Deepak Chopra, Dean Ornish, Christiane Northrup, Sandra McLanahan, to name but a few—have, through experimentation, new findings, and ancient teachings extracted the prime nectar of all the available medical worlds. The pilgrimage to integrative medicine, to wellness, has just begun. [...] The birth of integrative medicine will force the medical establishment to form previously unheard of alliances with practitioners once shunned by Western medicine. Transforming the course of our nation’s curative path, our sick care system will become obsolete. New strategies, blending the spiritual, emotional and natural with high-tech procedures, will evolve. Although it may seem overwhelming, this change is close at hand.*” But it remains interesting because it prophesies for the medical establishment what has already long taken place in the realm of HLTs and their commodification.

<sup>357</sup> Cf. Freund, Peter E.S. & al., op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. Freund, Peter E.S. & al., op. cit. Cf. also e.g. James Le Fanu’s diatribe against psycho-social medicine in: Le Fanu, James, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Medicine*, New York: Carroll & Graf, 1999.

<sup>359</sup> Or EBM. For a concise definition, cf. that of the Cochrane Collaboration (<http://www.cochrane.org/about-us/evidence-based-health-care>): “*Evidence-based medicine is the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence-based medicine means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research*”. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>360</sup> Nancy, Jean-Luc, “Corpus”, *Thinking Bodies*, op. cit., p. 18.

This psychosis is then reflected in a disintegrating sense of selfhood:

Postmodernism is fond of attacking the self, labeling it a fiction or 'construct' that has no inherent meaning or quality in and of itself. The self is also under attack from the various hard sciences, which claim to be able to explain phenomena normally aligned with the self in purely electro-chemical terms: moods, emotions, actions, temperament--everything can be explained in terms of biology. The postmodern body is hollow in the sense that it "contains" nothing which transcends the material world.<sup>361</sup>

However, Dieter Mersch contends that we are in fact pursuing the Idealism dream in a technological guise, through the *"technologisation of the bios"*, but that this dream of a philosophy or technology forever rid of the impurity of body, hence matter, is absurd.<sup>362</sup> He then shows how the *"performative"* undermines the conditions of this idealism and mathematical constructivism:

The fact that the performative cannot be renounced hints to the fact that something precedes the mediatisation and technologisations, something that comes *before* any design, construction or invention, something, which like a first gesture has always been already *"there": the placing of their ex-sistence*. It *"gives"* them being. Certainly, there is no presence, no body, no performativity without the medium – *but no sign, no embodiment and no medium is ever the "catalyst" of its own happening*.<sup>363</sup>

So here we are, back to the elusive body medium –both the shifty (empty?) performative medium as well as the potential transcendental channel communicating with the spirit– that nevertheless remains our only rampart against, if not the post-modern angst, at least late modern or reflexive modern insecurities. Ulrich Beck, Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash are some of the most prominent sociologists to have analysed and described what was perhaps too rashly labelled as post-modernity, in terms of late or reflexive modernity and its retinue of increasing individualisation, uncertainty and risk.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> Sheridan, David M, The Rhetoric of Surface and Depth: a hypertext, *ReSoundings*, volume 2, issue 2, Summer 1998, SN 91. [online version: [http://marauder.millersville.edu/~resound/\\*vol2iss2/sheridan/firsttp.html](http://marauder.millersville.edu/~resound/*vol2iss2/sheridan/firsttp.html) originally accessed in August 2003; unfortunately it no longer seems to be accessible]

<sup>362</sup> Mersch, Dieter, „Paradoxien der Verkörperung“, online article, [http://momo-berlin.de/Mersch\\_Verkoerperung.html](http://momo-berlin.de/Mersch_Verkoerperung.html): „Wir träumen so heute den einstigen Traum des Idealismus auf andere Weise weiter. Wie die Hegelsche Kunstauffassung die christliche Perhorreszierung des Leiblichen ins Ästhetische fortsetzte, um die Kunst, die sich nicht erfüllen kann, weil sie stets des Körpers, der verunreinigenden Materie bedarf, wir digitale Techniken, deren Absolutes das Mathematische, der Algorithmus, die Syntax der Maschinezustände ist, die wiederum auf die Technisierung des Bios zurückschlägt, wenn die Lebensschrift zum Code wird, der beliebig weiterschreibbar und manipulierbar scheint. Was ich demgegenüber unter dem Titel der „Paradoxa der Verkörperungen“ zu diskutieren versucht habe, konfrontiert zuletzt mit der ganzen Vergeblichkeit, ja der Unmöglichkeit, der Absurdität solcher Bemühungen.“ [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>363</sup> Ibid., p. 15: “[...] die Unverzichtbarkeit des Performativen [weist] darauf, dass etwas den Mediatisierung und Technisierungen vorausgeht, etwas, das vor aller Gestaltung, Konstruktion oder Erfindung kommt, was als erste Geste immer schon *"im Spiel"* ist: die Setzung ihrer Ex-sistenz. Sie *"gibt"* deren Sein. Gewiss: Es gibt keine Präsenz, keinen Körper, keine Performativität ohne das Mediale – aber kein Zeichen, keine Verkörperung und kein Medium ist je der *"Geber"* ihres Ereignens.“

<sup>364</sup> Cf. eg. Giddens, Anthony, *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991; *Modernity and Identity*, Eds Scott Lash & Jonathan Friedman, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992; Beck, Ulrich & Giddens, Anthony & Lash, Scott, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, op. cit.; Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences*, op. cit.

Reflexive modernity is not perceived as a radical break with modernity and its myths, but rather as a form of critical distancing, re-definition and re-positioning of self and institution/organisation vis-à-vis modernity. It is performed in various geographical dimensions: transnational, national and local. Actually, the above-mentioned researchers see one of the most meaningful triggers of this gradual shift as the gradual dissolution of traditional nation-bound identities and activities in favour of sweeping, economically induced, globalising trends. Another extremely significant accelerator is without doubt the ambivalent status of technology, as discussed in the “Technology” section –especially with respect to its unforeseen side-effects.<sup>365</sup> In this increasingly shifting, disenchanting paradigm, the body and its health acquire a new dimension, “a transcendental meaning” without which “everything else is nothing”:

Health as a secular expectation of salvation and health as pressure to perform in individualized market society, are two of the driving forces behind the rise of the ‘health project’. The characteristic striving for health in the modern world – for what critics describe as a cult fetish or a phantom – is thus not merely an expression of personal inclinations, compulsions or neuroses. Rather, it is part of the global project of modernity, of the new malleability of life with all its opportunities, checks and pressures.<sup>366</sup>

Hegemonic globalisation and technologisation have thus generated new organisational forms while simultaneously contributing to the obsolescence, erosion or re-structuring of many traditional arrangements. In this context, individuals are confronted with many more “life management” choices than ever before: almost anything is possible but hardly anything is really lasting or reassuring –be it professional choices, romantic and family involvements or financial investments. In parallel, sources of guidance are so manifold, ubiquitous and contradictory that they represent more of a confusing factor than an adjuvant. But at the same time, there is increased social pressure to seek achievement and self-fulfilment. Thus, as we already noted it in Chapter 1 (*Introduction*), the body is often paradoxically viewed as both a refuge against the uncertainties escaping individual control and one of the uncertain means to attain self-actualisation. The body and its health have in fact become the central icon of reflexive modernisation since more than any other entity, it blurs and problematises boundaries and taken-for-granted assumptions, through its irreducibility to either nature or technology, object or subject, matter or spirit.

Thus, in my dissertation, *embodied consciousness* is used to refer to the paradigm of the holistic body, viewed not only as a system of interdependent physiological functions but as an experiential and potentially transcendental entity, i.e. inseparably bound to emotional, mental and even spiritual dimensions. HLTs reflect this vision in that they span anything from fitness workouts, natural cosmetics or functional foods to sensuous massage, mental and emotional stress relief, and spiritual connection –often in packages or interdependent constellations. In this realm, the body is thus no longer a given, but a space *and* a medium for the creation, development and preservation of the self: it may in fact represent our only “reliable” sense of selfhood. Linked to the primacy of experience, *embodied consciousness* also marks a shift in authoritative knowledge: we are moving away from a direct, exogenous “expertise model” to what I would describe as an assisted, endogenous “body know-how”. In this context, consumers are increasingly supposed to know what their bodies want while

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<sup>365</sup> Cf. Beck, Ulrich, *Risikogesellschaft: auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*, op. cit.

<sup>366</sup> Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, op. cit., p.141

producers and mediators represent the midwives in this process, “gently” suggesting products, processes, services, strategies to “help” consumers birth, reinforce or simply cater to their embodied consciousness. And since the rule of the *cogito* has been definitively challenged by the *corps vécu*, a strong embodied subjectivity can be made to embrace dimensions that a rationalising consciousness might dismiss as esoteric drivel. Hence, within the logic of subjective body needs, it suddenly makes sense to expend huge amounts of money, time and effort to manage the body-self in all the variety of its incarnate and more ethereal manifestations.

Therefore, a quick excursion along the shelves of contemporary German supermarkets (or a survey of health-related services) reveals that, while it has not completely died out, the positivist tradition that confidently bequeathed us the likes of the 1950s radioactive face mask I mentioned in my *Introduction* is currently overwhelmed by a range of “supernatural” products and services. At first glance, they promise to provide consumers with the best of late modernity’s schizophrenic division of labour – i.e. high-tech expertise and security combined with natural care. But they do more than that: they overlap “horizontally” in the sense that food, cosmetics, health supplements, (newer and older) movement traditions as well alternative health practices are perceived as increasingly co-dependent in the design of a healthy body. And they overlap “vertically”: as in my initial “bathing” examples, beyond cosmetic performance (i.e. cleansing or purifying), these products are increasingly seen as influencing emotional or mental resilience. Finally, some of them are even designed to influence spiritual awareness: they promise to awaken the “Buddha on the Brain”<sup>367</sup> –but without the strenuous meditation practice...

These developments could well be linked to the remarks made by economist Robert Fogel in an article entitled “*Catching up with the economy*”.<sup>368</sup> His main postulate is that economics as a discipline is lagging behind the economy because it does not sufficiently take into account what he calls “*technophysio evolution*” that is the “*accelerating rate of technological change*” and “*the implications of this acceleration for the restructuring of the economy, and its transforming effect on human beings*”.<sup>369</sup> Among other things, this has a tremendous impact on the evolution of what Fogel calls the “non-market” or leisure sector (or even

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<sup>367</sup> The expression stems from John Geirland in his article “Buddha on the Brain: The hot new frontier of neuroscience: meditation! (Just ask the Dalai Lama.)”, *Wired*, Issue 14.02, February 2006, online: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.02/dalai.html> In it, the author discusses the controversies surrounding the research conducted by Richard Davidson at the Waisman Laboratory for Brain Imaging and Behavior in Madison (WI), USA, where Buddhist monks vs. a control group of college students –all under EEG– were asked to meditate on “*unconditional loving-kindness and compassion*”. The former then “*produced gamma waves that were 30 times as strong as the students’*. In addition, larger areas of the meditators’ brains were active, particularly in the left prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for positive emotions”. This research was seen as shedding important light “*on the ability to change brain function through training*” by increasing neural connections despite ageing factors.” [...] “*But Davidson saw something more. The monks had responded to the request to meditate on compassion by generating remarkable brain waves. Perhaps these signals indicated that the meditators had attained an intensely compassionate state of mind. If so, then maybe compassion could be exercised like a muscle; with the right training, people could bulk up their empathy. And if meditation could enhance the brain’s ability to produce “attention and affective processes” - emotions, in the technical language of Davidson’s study - it might also be used to modify maladaptive emotional responses like depression.*” [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>368</sup> Fogel, Robert W., “Catching up with the Economy”, *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 89, No. 1, March 1999, pp. 1-21.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2 & 1.

volwork as opposed to earnwork) that has grown at an amazing pace from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Another aspect affected by these changes are aging and morbidity factors which Fogel argues would be better captured by “*shifting to life-cycle data sets for successive cohorts and to intergenerational data sets*” instead of “*cross sectional data sets*”.<sup>370</sup> Finally Fogel makes a case for the inclusion of a momentous neglect:

The final section points to the impact of cultural lag in the treatment of material inequality, and the neglect of the more severe problem of spiritual inequality. I use the word spiritual not in its religious sense but as a reference to commodities that lack material form. Spiritual or immaterial commodities make up most of the consumption in the United States and other rich countries today.<sup>371</sup>

He shows that perceived diachronically, self-realisation is a pursuit that has become increasingly democratised in rich nations since, compared to the previous century, the poverty line has significantly dropped in terms of real income. Although Fogel mainly focuses on moral and intellectual/cultural components such as upbringing or education when referring to “spiritual” commodities, I feel his analysis sheds an interesting light on the function of HLTs. These technologies, while often retaining a fair degree of materiality, are crossbred with spiritual (here in the sense of transcendent or more holistic) clues if not downright values –thus maybe also mirroring a growing need to counterbalance or at least attenuate the stringent demands of “technophysio evolution”.

Thus, the aim of this section was to explore how HLTs and their strange recombinant commodification have been fostered by a revolution of cultural values centred on the body. We thus examined how parallel, often cross-fertilizing research in the humanities as well as in the “hard” and “softer” sciences contributed to usher in an era of renewed attention to the role of the body –especially in the generation of perception, cognition, experience and consciousness. We noted that this research called into question the modernist body/mind divide, and ultimately reinstated the body as a central (if often unreliable) locus of “selfhood” production. Simultaneously, we witnessed the impact that this change of paradigm had for the legitimisation of HLTs, through the transfer of authority and knowledge to embodied consciousness.

As stated in my initial Gilles Deleuze epigraph –“*Believing is no longer believing in another world, in a transformed world. It is only believing in the body, it is restituting discourse to the body and therefore, attaining the body before discourse, before words*”– this form of consciousness requires believing in the body as a “body” of knowledge and authority which precludes or transcends discourse. Ironically however –as we saw– the very possibility of this belief is generated and structured by the cultural discourses that re-enthroned the body. This then is the strange status of this new ideology: a body perceived as an ultimate ontological refuge in an environment where scientific, moral and religious certainties have been greatly discredited, but a refuge still riddled with the contradictions that contributed to its creation.

The next chapter will provide us with a historical perspective on the roots and the evolution of the fitness and wellness ideologies that feed into my HLT concept.

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### A NEW FORM OF LIFESTYLE DISCRIMINATION? MAKING SENSE OF FITNESS AND WELLNESS IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*Concentrated on the job – full of energy for a hobby, taxofit Vitamin E. Whoever wants to move on, to achieve more, both in their job and during leisure, requires taxofit Vitamin E. Highly dosed vitamin E activates your cells. It improves the absorption of oxygen and thus increases your bodily and mental performance, providing strength, energy and stamina as well as preserving sexual potency.*<sup>372</sup>

#### Introduction<sup>373</sup>

An enduring ad for *taxofit Vitamin E* –first launched in 1985– aptly illustrates how the fitness ethic permeates both the work and leisure realms. The above-quoted caption accompanies two snapshots: the first one shows an elegant woman sitting at a desk in a professional environment holding a marker over a pile of papers. Her serious gaze is intently fixed on an interlocutor behind the photographer; her half open mouth suggests that she is busy discussing something. The second one displays the same woman clad in a white martial arts uniform. The photographer has just caught her leaping in the air, one fist punching forward while the other arm is balanced behind her. Her hair is brushed up by the motion and her mouth is wide open suggesting that she is shouting. Clearly, the woman is supposed to be just as competitive at work as in her free time: concentration and energy are just two faces of the same performance coin. Indeed, qualities such as self-discipline, motivation, perseverance, precision, etc. are seen to power both realms with equal intensity. With the advent of wellness, this blurring of boundaries between work and leisure carries on but in softer, subtler ways.

Therefore, my ambition in this chapter is neither to provide a linear history of health promotion, prevention and associated healthy lifestyle technologies (HLTs), nor is it to build a coherently global historical framework or even compile an exhaustive catalogue of potential historical roots and offshoots.<sup>374</sup> An entirely different, much more source-intensive diachronic inquiry would be necessary to fulfil these goals –thus side-tracking my original intent. Instead, in the spirit of the eclectic questioning characterising my theoretical section, I want to investigate the implications of the health ethics mind-split that revolves around disciplining vs. gently caring for the body –be it at work or outside. Concretely, before sketching an idiosyncratic historical backdrop of these two often intertwined ideologies, I

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<sup>372</sup> *Bunte*, Heft 16, 1985. The ad appears several times during that year and thereafter, over a ten-year span at least.

<sup>373</sup> An article I published in 2005 has provided the basic articulations and many of the seminal ideas for this chapter. I quote extensively –sometimes literally– from it here without footnoting each instance because it would represent many more footnotes in an already footnote-heavy narrative and because I like to think that my research has matured considerably since then. Cf. Bingle, Gwen, “Working out for well-being: how fitness and wellness have reframed the paradoxes of body leisure”, *Manufacturing Leisure*, Helsinki: National Consumer Research Centre, online publication, pp. 235-255: [http://www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/files/4717/2005\\_01\\_publications\\_manufacturingleisure.pdf](http://www.kuluttajatutkimuskeskus.fi/files/4717/2005_01_publications_manufacturingleisure.pdf). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>374</sup> However, in the „Time frame: why focus on the ‘late twentieth century?’” section of Chapter 2 (Methodology), I have already provided a few seminal roots and offshoots in order to justify my focus on the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

first tackle the role-model function and genealogy of modern health and beauty “apostles” as well as the development of a late modern form of internalised lifestyle discrimination.

### Healthy heralds of self-enterprise

*Christine Kaufmann found herself ugly. She was afraid and insecure. Until she discovered healthy eating. The actress has now published a book about her path to beauty and self-confidence.*<sup>375</sup>

Over five pages, “*She eats her way into happiness*” a 1989 article in *Bunte* (a popular celebrities magazine) features the new lifestyle of Christine Kaufmann, a 40-year old actress who has just written a book entitled “*Body Harmony*”.<sup>376</sup> Even though the trajectory of the ugly and fearful duckling to the beautiful and independent swan does not just rely on food, food represents a lead that is subsequently exploited to broaden the perspective to holistic living. The epiphany style of this narrative is not altogether a novelty: during the confusing periods when new technologies or newly articulated (body) ideologies are being introduced and consolidated, the agency of lead-consumers often plays a key-role in enabling the concrete translation of abstract notions and the appropriation of unfamiliar products into everyday life. Indeed, before-and-after stories recounting the transition from a state of bodily, emotional, or spiritual misery to a state of blessed enlightenment boast a long-established tradition: from Saint Paul, through Pascal to Mary Baker Eddy, they draw on strong (para-)religious or philosophical traditions. But in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Germany (and elsewhere), they became an established if still marginal genre amongst so-called “life reformers”, such as e.g. Louis Kuhne:

Because these individuals’ lives and thinking were organized entirely around the poles of “health” and “illness”, they perhaps considered the story of their own suffering to be a matter of interest to the public and, thus, repressed feelings of shame that prevented others from sharing such stories with a wider audience. The public representation of one’s suffering was, however, also a means for the authors to reassure themselves that their suffering was now firmly in the past and that they had found the high road to health, happiness, and beauty, as they revealed to their readers. Seen in this light, these stories dramatized failure in order to demonstrate the ultimate success of their authors and the success that converts to life reform could expect.<sup>377</sup>

However, what is truly new in the case of Christine Kaufmann is the avowedly aesthetic and emotional challenge faced by the actress. Indeed, she has neither recovered from cancer nor overcome godlessness but accessed a means to positively assert her identity as a harmoniously secure person. Food and associated HLTs have become key-components of a

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<sup>375</sup> Lammert, Heidemarie, “Sie ißt sich glücklich”, *Bunte*, Heft 18, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1985, p.128: „*Christine Kaufmann fand sich selbst hässlich, Sie hatte Angst und war unsicher. Bis sie auf gesunde Ernährung kam. Über ihre Wege zu Schönheit und Selbstbewusstsein hat die Schauspielerin jetzt ein Buch veröffentlicht.*“ Interestingly, Christine Kaufmann seems to still be a fervent and successful ambassador of beauty and healthcare, cf.: <http://www.christinekaufmann.net/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128–132.

<sup>377</sup> Hau, Michael, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: a social history, 1890-1930*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 23. In this section of his book, Hau discusses the autobiographies of prominent and less prominent life reformers such as Louis Kuhne, a 19<sup>th</sup> century German health entrepreneur [1835–1901], who in 1898 published a book entitled “The New Healing Science” which enjoyed a considerable resonance amongst health aficionados of the period.

holistic makeover. No doubt, the most interesting part of the article is a sort of photo-novella over two pages that features six photographs with captions illustrating high-points in Christine's daily routine, such as exercising, buying and preparing healthy food, grooming and enjoying a relaxing evening with friends.<sup>378</sup>

In the first photograph, she is pictured on her bedroom floor, wearing a leotard and leggings and squatting on two hands and one knee, the other leg projecting up and backwards. The text reads: "1. *The morning begins with gymnastics. Christine Kaufmann exercises every day. But only as long as she feels like it. Any constraint is the enemy of beauty and inner harmony. Gymnastics are important for the skin and the metabolism.*"<sup>379</sup> Beyond functional aspects, it is suggested that gymnastics represents the first step in a sophisticated holistic routine. Christine is described as a disciplined person but with an ear attuned to her inner needs.

The second picture shows the actress clad in a loose-fitting night gown and bathrobe –her hair hardly ruffled– towering above a table where a fruit basket is prominently displayed as well as various bowls containing healthy-looking foods. The photograph catches her in the act of pouring milk on her cereals and the text runs thus: "2. *Breakfast determines the day's well-being. The smaller and healthier the morning meal, the better one feels. Christine Kaufmann eats yogurt with brewer's yeast and fruit and she also takes vitamin and mineral pills.*"<sup>380</sup> The importance of healthy eating is stressed here for the second time in the article. But, apparently, healthy natural foods do not suffice: they have to be supplemented with industrially produced micro-nutrients.

Christine is then shown riding on her bike – elegantly dressed in a rain coat, high-heeled tight-fitting boots and sunglasses – alongside a river and against an urban landscape. The commentary reads: "3. *Christine Kaufmann mostly commutes by bike – since she doesn't own a car. She even takes her bike when travelling. Bicycling stimulates circulation, has a preventive effect against orange skin. Moreover, it makes one independent.*"<sup>381</sup> This third characteristic of the actress's everyday life once again foregrounds sports as a health and beauty-enhancer, highlighting the fight against orange skin –the great enemy of the sedentary age. The caption somewhat surprisingly ends with a reference to one of the early motifs associated with women and bicycling: it is obviously important to portray Christine as fully mastering not only her health rationales but also as independently governing all the aspects of her life.<sup>382</sup>

The next photograph depicts the actress –dressed stylishly and sporting a hat– holding a wicker shopping basket and peering at goods over a counter in what looks like a cross between an indoor market and a supermarket. The accompanying text declares: "4. *Just as*

<sup>378</sup> Lammert, Heidemarie, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid., p. 130: „*Der Morgen beginnt mit Gymnastik. Christine Kaufmann turnt täglich. Aber nur solange sie Lust dazu hat. Jeder Zwang ist der Feind von Schönheit und innerer Harmonie. Gymnastik ist wichtig für die Haut und den Stoffwechsel.*“

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., p. 131: „*Das Frühstück entscheidet über die jeweilige Tagesform. Je kleiner und gesünder die Morgenmahlzeit ist, desto besser fühlt man sich. Christine Kaufmann ißt Joghurt mit Bierhefe, Obst und nimmt dazu Vitamin- und Mineralstoffpillen.*“

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., p. 131: „*Den Weg legt Christine Kaufmann – sie besitzt kein Auto – möglich mit dem Fahrrad zurück. Sogar auf Reisen nimmt sie ihren Treter mit. Fahrradfahren regt den Kreislauf an, beugt gegen Zellulitis vor und macht außerdem selbständig.*“

<sup>382</sup> Cf. e.g. Ebert, Anne-Katrin, op. cit.

*eating, shopping for food should be pleasurable. Christine Kaufmann not only patronises health food stores, but also goes to weekly markets and supermarkets. The decisive aspect here is the quality and not the quantity of goods.*<sup>383</sup> Thus, according to Christine, everyday life tasks do not necessarily exude boredom: instead, they should be infused with a hedonistic ethic. Moreover, it is precisely in a routine task such as shopping that the agency of the discriminating individual is the most decisive: consumers here are depicted as wielding the power to pick and mix goods in order to satisfy their own health imperatives – without slavishly abiding with health food.

The following snapshot offers an intimate peak into the actress's bathroom. She is shown sporting wet hair, sitting in a sea of foam her hands coyly turning her face towards the photographer – a plant, a towel and a cocktail glass are her only props along with the bath tub. *“5. This is the beauty care routine after work is over: a bath to relax. The skin is exfoliated with a special sponge. The face is nurtured with natural cosmetics. This is a daily programme for Kaufmann.”*<sup>384</sup> is the text inserted in the picture. Hygiene and cosmetic care are the next stage in Christine's routine. But having a bath is not just instrumental to beautifying and caring, it primarily serves a more holistic purpose, the need for recreation and enjoyment. In the actress's life, however, even relaxation has a programmatic drift to it.

Finally, Christine is shown socialising. The setting is elegant, a nicely laid table with candles, flowers and wine, presumably in a restaurant (but uncharacteristic enough to also be a private home). A group of people are eating and talking around the table. The photographer has just caught the actress smiling mischievously, as her neighbour, an elegant man, turns to embrace her closely or whisper something in her ear. The last blurb hammers it in: *“6. An evening with friends makes one happy – and beautiful. Here again for Christine Kaufmann, the pleasure principle is valid: one can also get carried away from time to time. In the evenings, she dissociates her food intake, choosing between protein and carbohydrates.”*<sup>385</sup> Happiness here is also seen as the fruit of a positive environment and as an important beauty catalyser. But even in this relaxed context, control is never far below the surface: sinning may be allowed but always within a very restricted framework.

The actress's free time thus seems to be mainly taken up with the streamlining of both her body and emotions, in a constant attempt to attain a balance between the two. This state of mind is reinforced by three small slogans emblazoned on diagonal banners on the top right hand corner of each double page: *“1. The biggest enemy of beauty is laziness”; “2. All sins are allowed but not everyday”* and *“3. The best make-up comes from the soul”*.<sup>386</sup> Interestingly enough, the slogans are couched in catechistic terms, which point to the fact that both body-work and body-leisure have attained the status of a new all-absorbing

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<sup>383</sup>: Lammert, Heidemarie, op. cit., p. 130: *„Das Einkaufen soll wie das Essen lustvoll bleiben. Christine Kaufmann gehst nicht nur in Reformhäuser, sondern auch auf Wochen- und Supermärkte. Ganz entscheidend dabei ist die Qualität, nicht die Quantität der Ware.“*

<sup>384</sup> Ibid., p. 130: *„Das ist die Schönheitspflege nach gtaner Arbeit: ein Vollbad zur Entspannung. Die Haut wird mit einem Spezialschwamm abgerubbelt, das Gesicht mit Naturkosmetik gepflegt. Für die Kaufmann ist das ihr tägliches Programm.“*

<sup>385</sup> Ibid., p. 131: *„Der Abend mit Freunden macht fröhlich – und schön. Für Christine Kaufmann gilt auch hier das Lustprinzip: Man darf auch mal über die Stränge schlagen. Abends achtet sie auf Trennkost – nur Eiweiß oder nur Kohlehydrate.“*

<sup>386</sup> Ibid. p. 129: *„Der grösste Feind der Schönheit ist die Faulheit“*, p. 131; *„Alle Sünde sind erlaubt aber nicht täglich“*; p. 132: *„Das beste Make-up kommt aus der Seele“*.

religion (or at least a serious ontological quest), and that this type of health narrative is still strongly connected to the spiritual and philosophical traditions I mentioned earlier on.

Just as when resorting to advertising as a source, one can argue that this type of feature article presents an extremely stylised (in this case one could even say staged hence distorted) vision into the reality of everyday life. Indeed, Christine's routine is the object of a clever *mise-en-scène*, first portraying her as a sexy princess picking at her salad in a theatre on the title photograph, before photogenically displaying her in harmoniously controlled settings. Thus the seemingly voyeuristic peak afforded into the actress's life appears not only consenting but even actively co-engineered as a conscious self-entrepreneurship move – since beyond her lead-consumer status as a celebrity, Christine has also just authored a book on holistic living.

Nevertheless, beyond the apparent physical perfection of the role-model, beyond the pedagogical tone of the article and its programmatic caricature of a healthy everyday life, I contend that it offers a privileged vista into some of the crucial tensions of the period. To my mind, it is not so much the exact components of this particular lifestyle that are primarily interesting. Rather, it is the oppositions or inconsistencies in the exposé of the lifestyle that are the most revealing. In Christine Kaufmann's case, one senses that the management of her everyday life and by extension her persona, pivots on the difficult negotiation of a number of interlinked dichotomies: work and leisure, order and freedom, regularity and exception, pleasure and rationality, nature and technology, emotion and control, matter and spirit and last but not least: fitness and wellness. These dichotomies are alternately blurred and reinforced throughout the article. For instance, the professional and private domains are strictly separated visually. However, in the work realm, Christine is not presented on stage but taking a lunch break. In contrast, the snapshots from the leisure realm mostly show her performing banal, routine and repetitive tasks that engross a lot of her energy and attention.

Christine's emblematic lifestyle is but one instance of a trend that has gathered impetus to this day. Nowadays, global heroines and heroes –be it in show-business, fashion, politics or business– are regularly marketed as identification figures or role models, not just in terms of dress or general lifestyle but increasingly as healthy icons:

Leisure is not a cure-all but once people have access to the best medical attention, and when they have achieved benign working and living conditions, their lifestyles are likely to become major discriminators of health status. People in these conditions seem aware of this. The pursuit of health has become a prominent lifestyle goal among sections of the upper middle classes (see Savage et al., 1992). They are less likely to be victims of a postmodern insecurity (see chapter 8) than people who simply realize that how they spend their leisure can affect their health, and that lifestyle factors are health determinants over which they can exercise direct and immediate control.<sup>387</sup>

A particularly interesting example of this shift was the health odyssey of Joschka Fischer, the Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany from 1998 to 2005, who launched his own physical fitness “gospel”,<sup>388</sup> documenting his struggle to shed weight and become fit

<sup>387</sup> Roberts, Kenneth, *Leisure in Contemporary Society*. Wallingford & New York: CABI Publishing, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>388</sup> Fischer, Joschka, *Mein langer Lauf zu mir selbst*, Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1999. For a brief overview of his fitness tribulations, cf. e.g. Kunz, Martin, “Der Jo-Jo-Joschka”, *Focus Magazin*, 17.05.2004, online version: [http://www.focus.de/kultur/leben/fitness-der-jo-jo-joschka\\_aid\\_200934.html](http://www.focus.de/kultur/leben/fitness-der-jo-jo-joschka_aid_200934.html). Echoing its title, the article

between 1996 and 1998. His story is also framed as a “before-after” narrative articulated around what most people would describe as a mid-life crisis (involving a marital fiasco and a deep sense of personal failure). Moreover, it is emblematic of a marked change in celebrity cult: even for men in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, artistic, political or economic success and respectability are no longer measured in terms of prosperous-looking bellies maintained by partaking in Trimalchio-style banquets and swilling gallons of claret. Instead, excess flab and a poor condition have become the signs of a lack of self-control, which is seen as reflecting limited efficiency in the professional sphere.

Whereas prior religious, philosophical or healthful enlightenment remained the province of a few exceptionally questioning (or exceptionally unwell) and often charismatic individuals, the type of individuation challenge taken up by Christine Kaufmann or Joschka Fischer is no longer strictly limited to a marginal or elitist layer of society. And in Kaufmann’s case the yardstick is not a prevalent notion of desirable spiritual development or bodily health, it is a highly internalised and subjective marker since the emphasis is on feeling well, beautiful or more confident. So even if the goal is individual development and even if there is an obvious trickle-down effect from lead- to anonymous consumers, the trajectory is one that can and should be emulated by the majority –especially since HLTs are more readily available for appropriation than arcane religious or philosophical revelations. Thus, this “subjective consumption turn” means that health and beauty competence is no longer the exclusive province of marginal eccentrics, austere reformers, highly-trained experts or glamorous celebrities.<sup>389</sup> Especially with the advent of Web 2.0, a whole new generation of relatively anonymous health “engineers” has emerged –their following largely a function of their self-presentation skills.<sup>390</sup> This shift can be traced back to the 1980s zeitgeist that promoted the challenge of pursuing positive personal autonomy:

The cult of performance takes off in the course of the 1980s by means of three shifts. Sports champions have become symbols of social excellence, whereas they used to be the sign of popular backwardness. Consumption has become a motor of self-realisation, whereas previously it used to imply alienation and passivity. The company director has become a role model, whereas he used to be the emblem of the employer’s domination over the worker. This cult thus inaugurated new mythologies enabling everyone to adapt to a major transformation: the decline of discipline in favour of autonomy. Personal fulfilment and individual initiative are the two facets of this new rule of the social game.<sup>391</sup>

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concludes that this transformation may have been just a phase in Fischer’s eventful life since his current generous girth seems to testify to the fact that he has less time for sports due to his busy schedule, has remarried and rediscovered gastronomic pleasures. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>389</sup> Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 60: “*In contemporary society, physical fitness is directed by entrepreneurs, not reformers; the primary goal self-improvement, not national strength.*”

<sup>390</sup> Here is a random selection of representative health and/or beauty internet blogs: <http://yourbodyyourtemple.net/>; <http://www.healthyfellow.com/>; <http://skincarebeautyproduct.blogspot.com/> or <http://beautyandtheblog23.blogspot.com/>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>391</sup> Cf. the editorial blurb on Ehrenberg, Alain, *Le Culte de la Performance*, Paris : Hachette, 2008 [Calmann-Lévy, 1991]: «*Le culte de la performance prend son essor au cours des années 80 à travers trois déplacements. Les champions sportifs sont des symboles d'excellence sociale alors qu'ils étaient signe de l'arriération populaire. La consommation est un vecteur de réalisation personnelle alors qu'elle connotait auparavant l'aliénation et la passivité. Le chef d'entreprise est devenu un modèle de conduite alors qu'il était l'emblème de la domination du patron sur l'ouvrier. Ce culte inaugurerait ainsi de nouvelles mythologies permettant à chacun de s'adapter à une*

Nevertheless, even though autonomy seems to be the hallmark of late modern performance, discipline has not really vanished from the scene but has been internalised in order to attain a socially acceptable or desirable version of autonomy. The above quote actually betrays this normalised internalisation: the sports champion is no longer a wonder or a freak of nature but a successfully disciplined Joe Bloggs –just as an actress no longer represents either a lowlife or an ethereal idol but a hard-working if talented individual. Similarly, consumption is no longer perceived as something that dominates consumers but a dimension that the latter should aptly enrol in order to design their identities. Finally, the last statement emphasises the fact that, beyond successfully managing other people, the manager has become a positive emblem of self-management. In all these examples, success or fulfilment is no longer a matter of fate but of sustained personal effort guided by subtle normative imperatives, even if the setting may appear easy-going or spontaneous:

Whatever the domain considered (corporation, school, family), the rules of the world have changed. They are no longer obedience, discipline or moral conformity but flexibility, change, speed of reaction, etc. Self-mastery, psychological and emotional suppleness, action potential mean that everyone must endure the burden of permanently adapting to a world that is precisely losing its permanence, an instable, temporary world, characterised by flux and see-saw trajectories. The readability of the social and political game has become blurred. These institutional transformations give the impression that everyone, even the most humble and fragile must bear the burden of choosing and deciding everything.<sup>392</sup>

Similarly, whereas the body long appeared to be a matter of fate –be it God- or Nature-given thus, to a large extent, monolithic and untouchable– the burden of (re-)designing it seems to have befallen even the most humble and fragile of us.<sup>393</sup>

### Don't you want a healthy body?

*Is there a new form of eugenics? Yes. Does it have anything to do with the eugenics of Nazi Germany? No. There are no evil powers, there is no conspiracy, there are no shady politicians*

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*transformation majeure : le déclin de la discipline au profit de l'autonomie. Épanouissement personnel et initiative individuelle sont les deux facettes de cette nouvelle règle du jeu social.»*

<sup>392</sup> Ehrenberg, Alain, *La fatigue d'être Soi. Dépression et société*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 1998, p. 200 : « *Quel que soit le domaine envisagé (entreprise, école, famille), le monde a changé de règles. Elles ne sont plus obéissance, discipline, conformité à la morale, mais flexibilité, changement, rapidité de réaction, etc. Maîtrise de soi, souplesse psychique et affective, capacités d'action font que chacun doit endurer la charge de s'adapter en permanence à un monde qui perd précisément sa permanence, un monde instable, provisoire, fait de flux et de trajectoires en dents de scie. La lisibilité du jeu social et politique s'est brouillée. Ces transformations institutionnelles donnent l'impression que chacun, y compris le plus humble et le plus fragile, doit assumer la tâche de tout choisir et de tout décider. »*

<sup>393</sup> Cf. also Goldenberg, Mirian, "The Body as Capital: Understanding Brazilian Culture", *Vibrant*, Volume 7, Number 1, January to June 2010, pp. 220-238, p. 235, available online here: [http://www.vibrant.org.br/downloads/v7n1\\_goldenberg.pdf](http://www.vibrant.org.br/downloads/v7n1_goldenberg.pdf): *"In a context in which beauty and physical fitness are no longer perceived as "the work of Divine Nature" and starts being conceived as the result of "work" performed on oneself, individuals have thrust upon them the absolute responsibility for their physical appearance. Denise Sant'Anna (1995) notes that, whereas in the first half of the twentieth century, when "Nature" used to be spelled with a capital "N" and it was considered dangerous to interfere with the body in the name of personal objectives and whims ingrained by fashion, today, liberty to act upon one's own body is incessantly stimulated and reinforced. Through the regular practice of exercise, proper eating habits, aesthetic surgery, cutting edge skin treatment, and cosmetics, aesthetic perfection is now assumed to be attainable."* [website accessed Aug. 2011]

who want to force a “Brave New World” upon us. Far from it. The new eugenics is a commercial eugenics. It is market steered. It is banal. It is friendly. Corporations simply ask their customers: “Don’t you want a healthy baby?”<sup>394</sup>

“Don’t you want a healthy body?” I originally assumed that Jeremy Rifkin<sup>395</sup> might have chosen a similarly arresting question to provoke his readers, had he analysed the fitness and wellness phenomena as critically as more hard-core body-centred biotechnologies. Unfortunately, when it comes to fitness and wellness, Rifkin seems to display much less critical discernment, as can be witnessed in an article published in a Luxemburger newspaper in 2006 and entitled “Growth through health and fitness: An answer to productivity and competitiveness problems in many of the world’s richest economies”:

Why should companies spend additional funds on promoting wellness? Because the return on investment (ROI) is nothing short of remarkable. For every dollar invested in comprehensive prevention and health promotion programs, these companies are saving \$3-8 in the form of reduced health costs and gains in productivity from lower absenteeism and presenteeism. The key to the success of all these programs is their voluntary nature and the incentives built-in to the process to motivate employees to become involved in changing lifestyle and becoming healthier. It should be made clear that a prevention and health promotion initiative is not to be regarded as a replacement for existing government health care coverage, but, rather, a complement, a way of assisting workers to become healthier and lead more productive and happier lives.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> As quoted in German in *der [im]perfekte mensch: vom recht auf unvollkommenheit*, Ein Rundgang durch die Ausstellung im Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin, s. l.: Stiftung Deutsches Hygiene-Museum; Deutsche Behindertenhilfe – Aktion Mensch e.V., 2002, p. 116: „Gibt es eine neue Form der Eugenik? Ja. Hat das irgendwas mit der Eugenik in Nazi-Deutschland zu tun? Nein. Es gibt keine bösen Mächte, es gibt keine Verschwörung, es gibt keine zwielichtigen Politiker, die uns eine „Schöne Neue Welt“ aufzwingen. Im Gegenteil. Die neue Eugenik ist eine kommerzielle Eugenik. Sie ist marktgesteuert. Sie ist banal. Sie ist freundlich. Konzerne fragen einfach ihre Kunden: „Wollen Sie nicht ein gesundes Baby?“. Similar versions of this quote can be found in: Rifkin, Jeremy, “Technology: Genetics. Let us not play God”, Extracts from a lecture given at the Technology Teach-In, New York, February 2001 and reproduced in *Resurgence*, Issue 208, September-October 2001, pp. 16-18, available from: <http://www.foet.org/global/BC/Resurgence-%20September%202001.pdf>, p. 2 [17]: “We cannot discuss a biotech revolution without introducing the term ‘eugenics’. We normally think of Nazis and their social eugenics. We fool ourselves that such a thing cannot happen in democratic societies. But let me warn you that this new eugenics is friendly. It’s banal. It’s commercial. It’s market-driven. Don’t we all want a healthy baby? It’s the ultimate Faustian bargain. We all want our child to have the best advantages in life if we can afford them. Do you know any parent who doesn’t? But the problem is that it fundamentally changes the parent/child bond. That’s why it’s a new eugenics. The parent becomes the architect; the child becomes the ultimate shopping experience in this post-modern world.” Or in an interview with Amy Otchet, “Jeremy Rifkin: fears of a brave new world”, [no date], available from: <http://www.foet.org/press/interviews/fears%20of%20a%20brave%20new%20world.pdf>, p. 2: “Yes, but it doesn’t bear any resemblance to what we saw in Nazi Germany. The new eugenics is not social eugenics. It is banal and friendly. It is commercial and market-driven. Soon, prospective parents will be able to programme the biological future of their unborn children. They will feel pressure to rid their children of ‘undesirable traits’.” [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>395</sup> Jeremy Rifkin is a renowned economist and political activist. Among other activities, he founded and still heads the *Foundation on Economic Trends*. For more substantial information, cf. the biography provided on the website of his foundation: <http://www.foet.org/JeremyRifkin.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>396</sup> Rifkin, Jeremy, “Growth through health and fitness: An answer to productivity and competitiveness problems in many of the world’s richest economies”, *Wort*, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006, p. 14. He then proceeds to sketch how governments and industries should work together to promote health, enumerating incentives such as tax credits. A copy of the article can be found here: <http://www.foet.org/global/ED/Luxemburger%20Wort-%20June%203%202006.pdf>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

Ironically, this excerpt foregrounds the individual and voluntary nature of corporate health prevention, but while it sets boundaries to its position within general healthcare, it openly stresses a link between health and increased productivity as well as personal happiness. And more clearly than the biotechnology quote, it clearly emphasises the extremely attractive financial incentive for companies who decide to adopt preventive measures for their employees.<sup>397</sup> Strikingly, as we shall see in the course of this chapter, this wholesale, almost unquestioning embrace of fitness and wellness strategies has become an increasingly mainstream attitude that has spread well beyond the corporate world to include national as well as international governmental policies not to mention an increasingly individualised appropriation. Thus, I did not select Rifkin's initial statement because I intend to discuss biotechnologies and/or the reproductive perspectives they offer. Instead, just as biotechnologies hold the potential to customise the "design" of babies, fitness and wellness are ideologies that may lead to the instrumentalisation of consumers' relationships with their bodies.<sup>398</sup> In other words, what I am particularly concerned about here is not eugenics in the historical sense but a new, no less potent form of lifestyle discrimination that operates both in the professional and personal spheres. Compared to a long-term *transgenerational* race improvement project<sup>399</sup>, this form of lifestyle discrimination represents an *intragenerationally* normative approach to health and beauty optimisation, which pitches contemporary bodies against each other –in the spirit of "the self-actualisation of the fittest". Hervé Juvin, a French economist and essayist, aptly describes the transition between these two paradigms:

Most people were intent upon "leaving something behind". Today it is the contrary: my only true capital, my legacy, is my body, the time and the experiences I am entitled to. Before, I

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<sup>397</sup> Not so long ago, I discovered a good example of this financial incentive during a short holiday in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. An article in a local weekly entitled "How Micarna halved its absenteeism" details how the meat-packing plant belonging to the largest Swiss supermarket chain, Migros, managed to reduce its rate of absenteeism from 8.5% to 3.9% by means of a series of measures that can no doubt be ascribed to a wellness ideology. The strategies embraced range from the reintroduction of gymnastics, to the financial participation of the company in fitness club fees, free tea and fruit, table football in the group's cafeterias, job rotation to avoid monotony, not to mention a weekly massage session. Moreover, when employees are ill, their bosses must maintain regular contact and facilitate subsequent reinsertion. These efforts have earned the company the privilege of being labeled "Friendly Work Space" after having been hotly criticised in the early 2000s for offering particularly bad working conditions. However, these measures are not just part of an image-revamping strategy since every percent of absenteeism avoided represents a saving of 2 million Swiss Francs for the company, with an ROI rate of approx. 1:3. Cf. Maurisse, Marie, « Comment Micarna a divisé par deux son absentéisme », *L'Hebdo*, No 33, August 13th 2009. More recently, I stumbled upon an article detailing the health strategies implemented at the German chemical corporation BASF and their financial ROI: „*Er macht eine einfache Rechnung auf: Was ein Konzern heute in die Gesundheit seiner Mitarbeiter investiere, zahle sich für ihn langfristig mehrfach aus.*“ Cf. Schweiger, Stefan, „Prävention am Arbeitsplatz“, *Apotheken Umschau*, 15.07.2011, pp. 48-50, p. 50.

<sup>398</sup> Indeed, most fitness and wellness providers or mediators ask consumers whether they are earnestly seeking a healthy body or admonish them to seek health. Examples abound. Here are three randomly sampled from the internet: 1. Carter Vanessa, "Wanna be healthy? Exercise!", *Shout Out* [A Newspaper By and For Teens], no date, available online here: [http://www.sexchangeseverything.com/view\\_article.php?articleid=229](http://www.sexchangeseverything.com/view_article.php?articleid=229); 2. "Do you want healthy, beautiful skin that glows?" in Clark, Jamie, "5 Tips for Beautiful, Healthy Skin", 29.04.2006, available online here: <http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Tips-for-Beautiful,-Healthy-Skin&id=187566>; and 3. "Achieve Independent Health With Your Optimized Nutrition Plan: Getting Started", no date, available online here: <http://www.mercola.com/nutritionplan/index.htm>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>399</sup> For more on this historical vision of eugenics, cf. e.g. Weindling, Paul, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

was what I had received and what I was going to transmit. But more and more I am what I experience. My legacy is not to be used for transmission but to live more.<sup>400</sup>

Although this urge to live more and better may not appear to be directly tainted by the more sinister connotations of historically-understood eugenics, examining the development of fitness and wellness in a context as historically loaded as Germany still implies that these new ideologies have not emerged in a cultural and political void and that they have very tangible repercussions for the individual –be it in Germany or in other westernised economies:

The development of the various meanings of fitness accumulated during the period of the Third Reich, where military power, labor power and “power through joy” (Kraft durch Freude) reflected the fatal hegemony of the Third Reich. Today’s fitness ideology is characterized by “joy through power”, e.g., in body-building. People who do not fit the current fitness and body ideals, that is being fit, beautiful and muscular (muscular *and* thin for females) become marginalized. They become second class citizens, whose accomplishments do not get the same recognition (e.g. being selected for a job) [...].<sup>401</sup>

This state of affairs is particularly arresting in the U.S. where health insurance plans are usually private –in contrast with Germany’s still dominant “statutory health insurance” [gesetzliche Krankenversicherung] or the British “National Health Service”– and thus bound to corporate “goodwill”. This enables companies to set stringent exclusionary rules that often encroach upon employees’ private sphere: overweight, various types of legal and illegal substance abuse, risky leisure practices such as extreme sports are some of the most frequent and controversial issues at the heart of lifestyle discrimination.<sup>402</sup> Hence, in this context, considering the moral discomfort that most individuals still experience with the

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<sup>400</sup> Hervé Juvin interviewed by Vincent Giret & Bernard Poulet, « L'industrie du corps tourne à plein régime », *L'Expansion*, 01.01.2005, online: [http://www.lexpansion.com/economie/l-industrie-du-corps-tourne-a-plein-regime\\_23252.html](http://www.lexpansion.com/economie/l-industrie-du-corps-tourne-a-plein-regime_23252.html): « Pour la majorité des gens, il était bien de 'laisser quelque chose derrière soi'. Aujourd'hui, cela s'inverse : mon seul vrai capital, mon patrimoine, c'est mon corps, le temps et les expériences que j'ai à vivre. Avant, j'étais ce que j'avais reçu et ce que j'allais transmettre. De plus en plus, je suis ce que je vis. Mon patrimoine doit être utilisé non plus pour la transmission, mais pour vivre plus. » [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>401</sup> Cf. Volkwein, Karin A.E., “Introduction: Fitness and the Cross-Cultural Exchange”, in: *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., pp. IX-XXVI, p. XV. I would argue though that the thinness imperative is increasingly catching up with men. Witness the slew of admonishments contained in contemporary men’s magazines, such as e.g. *Men’s Health*: Thieme, Kirsten, „Ich krieg mein Fett nicht weg“, *Men’s Health*, 28.07.2011 German online edition: <http://www.menshealth.de/food/fettverbrennung/die-besten-fett-weg-tricks.17696.htm> or the specialised Men’s Health weight-loss website: <https://www.menshealth-abnehmcoach.de/abnehmen/landingpage.jsp> [Wir machen Männer schlank]. Otherwise, Jennifer Maguire comes to similar conclusions as Karin Volkwein: “[...] this history is marked by a long-term shift, whereby physical fitness as a means to achieve individual improvement has been largely decoupled from notions of societal improvement. This has meant a transition in the objectives of fitness from building a better society (through healthy bodies and moral characters) to better adapting to society (through attractive bodies and charming personalities.” Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit. p. 39. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>402</sup> The American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU] provides an enlightening Q&A page on the stakes of “lifestyle discrimination” here: <http://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/womens-rights/lifestyle-discrimination-workplace-your-right-privacy-under-attack>. Another helpful recent article on the legal limits of wellness programmes is: Mello, Michelle M. & Rosenthal Meredith B., “Wellness Programs and Lifestyle Discrimination – The Legal Limits”, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 359, 2, July 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, pp. 192-199, also available online here: [http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty/michelle-mello/files/Wellness\\_paper\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/faculty/michelle-mello/files/Wellness_paper_PDF.pdf). Lifestyle discrimination may also include other non-health issues such as e.g. political or sexual orientation. [websites accessed Nov. 2011]

concept of “designer babies”, I am curious about the factors that have favoured the rapid and seemingly little disputed adoption of fitness and wellness, hence the more or less explicit pursuit of “designer bodies”.<sup>403</sup> Concretely, I would like to rapidly sketch a historical backdrop that provides elements to understand how this new form of lifestyle discrimination has emerged and been appropriated. In other words, I seek to investigate how, in contrast with rabid nation-building political endeavours, the pursuit of a certain brand of beauty and health is now increasingly perceived as a very positive individual investment –and this despite (or because of?) its being quietly steered and contained by globalised corporations and co-opted international institutions.<sup>404</sup> Thereby, I hope to demonstrate how fitness and wellness have enabled a cultural shift from commodities and services considered as tools towards health prevention, promotion or enhancement to HLTs that blur the boundaries between work and leisure.

### **From the Bikini Girls to Jane Fonda**

A preoccupation with a normatively harmonious and productive embodiment is clearly not the exclusive preserve of our contemporary and/or western societies. Even without an extensive background in anthropology, ethnology or ancient history, it seems obvious that every civilisation has engendered more or less self-conscious and sophisticated “techniques

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<sup>403</sup> Mirian Goldenberg provides a fascinating analysis of the value of body capital in Brazilian society: *“It can be said that ‘the body,’ and all it symbolizes, stimulates in Brazilians conformity to a life style and to a set of rules of behavior. Obedience to these norms is rewarded by the sense of belonging to a ‘superior’ group. ‘The body’ is a value that simultaneously identifies one with a group while distinguishing him/her. This ‘body’ which is worked out, sculpted, chiseled, defined today constitutes a sign of a certain human virtue. Under the morality of ‘good shape’ and ‘fitness,’ working the body is an act pregnant with signification. ‘The body,’ more than the clothes, becomes a symbol which consecrates and makes visible differences among social groups. It embodies and synthesizes three interrelated concepts: 1) the body as an insignia (or emblem) of the effort each one has made to control, imprison, and domesticate the body in order to achieve ‘good shape’; 2) the body as a fashion icon (or brand), which symbolizes the superiority of those who possess it; and 3) the body as a prize (medal), deservedly earned by those who were able to achieve a more ‘civilized’ physique through their hard work and sacrifice.”* Cf. Goldenberg, Mirian, op. cit., pp. 236-237. Gunther Gebauer comes to similar conclusions, cf. Gebauer, Gunther, “On the Role of Everyday Physical-Fitness Sports in Our Times”, *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

<sup>404</sup> Strikingly, in her study on the very popular gymnastics system developed by the Danish Jørgen Peter Müller in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Maren Möhring shows how an economic understanding of the body was already subtly interwoven with an intergenerational eugenics: cf. Möhring, Maren, „Das Müllern. Systematisches Fitness-Training zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts“, *Fitness: Schönheit kommt von aussen*, op. cit., p. 80: „Das Müllersche System versprach, die Körperökonomie Gewinn bringend zu dirigieren. Es galt, sich einen ‚Fond von Gesundheit anzulegen, von dem in Zeiten der Knappheit gezehrt werden konnte. Systematisches Training diente somit nicht allein der Vermeidung von Verschwendung, sondern auch der Energieakkumulation. Innerhalb der als bürgerlich-kapitalistisch begriffenen Körperökonomie sollten Überschüsse nicht mehr (wie noch im Aderlass) ‚künstlich‘ verausgabt, sondern produktiv angelegt werden. Diese Investition hatte nach zeitgenössischem Verständnis auch positive Auswirkungen auf die Nachkommenschaft. Ein Mensch, der keine ‚rationelle Körperpflege‘ treibe, brauche das ‚Kapital von Lebenskraft, das er wahrscheinlich von gesunden Eltern geerbt hat‘, auf, und seine Kinder würden ‚um so schwächer‘ werden.“ [quotes from Müller, *Mein System*, 1908, p. 9]. However, as opposed to mainstream eugenics, contemporary fitness systems promoted the idea of perfectionability for everyone, albeit at a high personal cost and entailing a lot of guilt –an idea that has lost none of its pertinence today: „Im Gegensatz zu erbbiologisch-deterministischen Positionen wurde in der Fitness-Bewegung meist die Ansicht vertreten, das körperliche Ideal sei, zumindest potenziell, für alle erreichbar. Die Machbarkeit von Gesundheit und Schönheit zog (und zieht) allerdings auch die Verpflichtung nach sich, schweisstreibende Arbeit in den eigenen Körper zu investieren. Ist die körperliche Norm generell erreichbar, dann gelten mangelnde Schönheit und Krankheit als ‚selbst verschuldet‘. [quotes from Müller, *Mein System*, 1925, pp. 11-12]“ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 81.

du corps”,<sup>405</sup> as well as grooming, styling and caring ideals. But since my aims and my expertise are mostly centred on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I do not want to stretch either by going too far back. However, at this point, it may be useful to remember that phenomena that appear contemporary such as jogging, weight-lifting, stretching, face masks, acupuncture or (essential) oil massage, boast well-documented roots that stretch far back into Antiquity and beyond, from e.g. Greek and Roman to Egyptian, Middle-Eastern, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Middle- or South American civilisations to so-called “aboriginal” societies all over the globe. Particularly striking illustrations for our modern sensibility are for instance some of the “Villa del Casale” mosaics (dating back to ~300 AD) in Piazza Armerina, Sicily. Among other representations, the so-called “Room with Girls in Bikini” displays a series of women clad in sexy bikinis and engaged in e.g. weight-lifting, discus-throwing or running. Despite the fact that the women’s figures may not quite embody our current perfectly streamlined slimness and fitness ideals, as heralded by the likes of Jane Fonda in the 1980s, they nevertheless bear witness to the early intrusion of technology in the actively conscious design of healthy, attractive and high-performance bodies.<sup>406</sup>

At the other end of the historical spectrum, Jane Fonda, is a particularly emblematic figure for the new generation of health entrepreneurs. If she was initially primarily known as an actress, top-model, and a political –especially feminist– activist, she also gained a non negligible appeal as a fitness guru. The significance of the latter role increased to such an extent in the course of the 1980s that it almost overshadowed her other activities.<sup>407</sup> Her passion for aerobics, which she took up after having to give up ballet due to a foot injury, was disseminated via a number of workout videos and she shared her views on healthy eating, health, relationships etc. through a number of books. Indeed, to this day, her confident self-entrepreneurship is reflected in the store section of her official website offering products such as T-shirts, mugs, and fitness DVDs.<sup>408</sup>

### Married to mechanics: a story of embodied seduction and resistance

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<sup>405</sup> Cf. my discussion of Marcel Mauss in Chapter 3 (*Theory*).

<sup>406</sup> For photographic reproductions or added explanations and details, cf. e.g.: [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Villa\\_Romana\\_Del\\_Casale\\_Bikini\\_All\\_Girls.jpg](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Villa_Romana_Del_Casale_Bikini_All_Girls.jpg) or <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/832>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>407</sup> In contrast with Jane Fonda’s purposeful participation in the feminist agenda, I would argue that most of her disciples followed the less consciously political and more practical tack described by Maguire: “*The women’s movement gave to appearance management a political agenda and defense: taking care of one’s body was a reclamation of power and a way to progress up the occupational ladder. Exercise and fitness also provided a non-political avenue of participation in the women’s movement, creating opportunities of (literal) empowerment, without the often complex identity of a politically active feminist.*” Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 55. However, this form of empowerment should be critically assessed since just as other fitness practices, “*aerobics is oriented towards the prevailing slenderness and beauty ideals and furthers a one-dimensional corporeality based on appearance*” even if for women “[a]erobics seems to definitely be a source of self-confidence and self-esteem”. Cf. Pfister, Gertrud, “Women – Fitness- Sport in Germany. The Social-Scientific Perspective”, *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., p. 73. Cf. also Sage, George H., “The Political Economy of Fitness in the United States”, *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., pp. 121-122: “*The contours and meanings of the fitness movement has resulted in changing conceptions about women’s bodies. There have been progressive changes in attitudes toward female involvement in physical activities and an enlightened awareness of women’s physical potential as well. But the dominant focus in commercial advertising of health and fitness for women has packaged and synthesized physically active women in a series of images which reinforce traditional notions of gender and sexuality.*”

<sup>408</sup> Cf. <http://janefonda.com/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

So what distinguishes early body-design endeavours from the ones propounded by e.g. Jane Fonda in the fitness age? I would like to argue that a seminal influence in the philosophies underlying appropriate body management is the historical transition from what one could describe as “bodies using technology” to “technology using bodies”, in other words the long-drawn impact of the industrial revolution:

From its very inception, the history of industrial societies was a history of the human body. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century already, physicians, hygienists and social reformers were well aware of the impacts of modern “occupations”, industrial work conditions and the process of urbanisation on the bodies of both workers and city dwellers.<sup>409</sup>

The impact of the industrial revolution was not only felt on the shaping of the body at work or on bodies wending their way through urban landscapes but it also crucially catalysed a more precise delineation between work and leisure since leisure was conceptualised as the privileged arena to recuperate from the strain and vicissitudes encountered both at work and in the city. As we shall see in the following sections, the definition of the “work-leisure” counterpoint represents one of the greatest landmarks in the development of our contemporary understanding of well-being. As Kenneth Roberts puts it:

Our leisure is a product, first and foremost, of the modern organization of work. Some work has not been modernized; housework is an example. But in all modern societies work is ordinarily taken to mean paid work, and most paid work is modernized, meaning here that it is compartmentalized and rationalized.<sup>410</sup>

Prior to industrialisation, work in agrarian communities was primarily dominated by husbandry and seasonal imperatives, and leisure was not necessarily posed as the counterpoint of work because the boundaries between the two were much more fluid. Even in urban centres, work was not organised in order to tightly espouse the rigours of the factory clock and bodies were more likely to follow the cycles dictated by the alternation of night and day. But with the establishment of manufacturing and its machines powered by seemingly endless energy resources, bodies had to tune into new rhythms. These rhythms were no longer dictated by seasons, sunlight or its absence but by increasingly swift and sophisticated technologies. Ever increasing productivity and resistance to wear and tear thus became imperatives that human motors had to, perforce, be submitted to.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> *Physiologie und industrielle Gesellschaft: Studien zur Verwissenschaftlichung des Körpers im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, op. cit., p. 12: „Die Geschichte der Industriegesellschaft war von Anfang an eine Geschichte des menschlichen Körpers. Im frühen 19. Jahrhundert schon wurden Ärzte, Hygieniker und Sozialreformer der Wirkungen gewahr, die die modernen „Gewerbe“ und die neuen industriellen Arbeitsbedingungen und Urbanisierungsprozeß auf die Körper von Arbeitern und Stadtbewohnern ausübten.“

<sup>410</sup> Roberts, Kenneth, op. cit., p. 2. Some historians of housework may disagree with Roberts since there have been numerous attempts at compartmentalising and rationalising housework –even if it remains largely unpaid. However, as Ruth Schwartz Cowan pointedly analyses it, these attempts have hardly contributed to lightening the burden of women and increasing their free time –quite the contrary. Cf. Cowan, Ruth Schwartz, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, New York: Basic Books, 1983. Otherwise, for a nuanced discussion of the definitions and articulation of work and leisure, cf. Fogel, Robert W., *The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 67-74

<sup>411</sup> Cf. e.g. Schor, Juliet B., *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, New York: Basic Books, 1992, esp. Chapter 3 “‘A Life at Hard Labor’: Capitalism and Working Hours”.

The discovery of the thermodynamic laws not only spelt out the potential and limits of mechanical power deployment, it also fostered the emergence of new professions – such as physiologists, work scientists and nutritionists – geared towards the efficient management of the modern body. These professions attempted to transfer the model of energy conservation found in nature to bodies employed in the industry. Simultaneously, they tried to fight entropy by formulating and actively supporting measures against fatigue, e.g. through the optimisation of work ergonomics, the reduction of working hours, the determination of adequate calorie intake, etc. But fatigue proved a permanent challenge since the entropy of bodies seemed much more difficult to overcome than that of machines. Somehow, the “natural body” refused to be reduced to an “industrial body-motor”.<sup>412</sup> In parallel, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, increased industrialisation spawned a wealth of mechanistic metaphors to illuminate the body and its metabolism as well as specific machines to design and regenerate bodies:

[...] descriptions of the body as machine are not merely evidence of industrial strategies to increase worker productivity. They also indicate that individuals desired greater control over their bodies, over the way they performed, the way they looked, and the rate at which they decayed than any previous generation. For those on and off the assembly lines, mechanized physical metaphors could represent a desire to craft bodies into entities as powerful as machines. This possibility allows for a cultural context in which machines became agents for physical vigor and weapons against the threat of terminal fatigue.<sup>413</sup>

To some extent then, popular enthusiasm for fit bodies matched scientific and managerial interest but all were premised upon the recognition that industrial lifestyles were draining and required some form of compensatory input, whether under the guise of machines, electricity or radium. Indeed, the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries brought forth a surge of electro-mechanical appliances meant to relax, tone, stimulate, style or energise the body.<sup>414</sup> These were eagerly consumed in private homes and/or used in spas and gyms by men –and to some extent women– across classes, both in Europe and the U.S. The commercial success of these health gadgets reflected a belief, or perhaps more accurately a need to believe, that the awe-inspiring forces what powered modern life could also be harnessed to unblock, transfer and even create energy in the body.<sup>415</sup> This is perhaps the first instance of the

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<sup>412</sup> Cf. e.g. Rabinbach, Anson, *The Human Motor*, New York: Basic Books, 1990; Sarasin, Philipp, op. cit. & *Physiologie und Industrielle Gesellschaft: Studien zur Verwissenschaftlichung des Körpers im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, op. cit. However even today, in the realm of professional and extreme sports, the utopia of overcoming bodily limits remains alive and well, cf. e.g. Hoberman, John, *Sterbliche Maschinen. Doping und die Unmenschlichkeit des Hochleistungssports*, Aachen: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 1994.

<sup>413</sup> Thomas de la Peña, Carolyn, *The Body Electric: how strange machines built the modern American*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>414</sup> Such as so-called „Health Lifts“, Chiosso’s polymachinon, Sargent’s stomach pulley machine, electrotherapeutic appliances like Pulvermacher’s Belt and Suspensory appliance, or Vigoradium water dispensers (All examples drawn from Thomas de la Peña, Carolyn, *The Body Electric: how strange machines built the modern American*, op. cit.). I also came across a number of interesting examples in my own German research: e.g. an illustration featuring a man “enjoying” an electric bath with a “Wohlgemuth-Elektrischer Apparat” around 1900, from the Archiv Landesmuseum für Technik und Arbeit in Mannheim, or a Siemens “Protos Thermoroller” (a massage appliance using electrically generated heat) from the 1920s housed at the Siemens depot in Munich, or a 1928 prospectus for an AEG “Massage-Apparat” (a massage appliance involving a vibrating belt) found at the Deutsches Technikmuseum in Berlin.

<sup>415</sup> Thomas de la Peña, Carolyn, *The Body Electric: how strange machines built the modern American*, op. cit., p. 7. Cf. also Connor, J.T.H & Pope, Felicity, “A shocking Business: The Technology and Practice of Electrotherapeutics in Canada”, 1840s to 1940s, *Material History Review*, No 49, Spring 1999, pp. 60-70.

ambivalent role assigned to technology by modernity: on the one hand, technology was used to enhance bodily productivity and drained bodies' energy in the process but, on the other, technology was also considered a key-resource to fuel the regeneration of these very bodies.

### **Back to (which) nature?**

Gradually though and most noticeably in Germany, a number of novel streams in established scientific disciplines as well as new popular movements arose in reaction to this increasingly mechanistic or “technofix” view of the body –be it in terms of potential or limitations. Among a great variety of developments, one can quote early attempts at mainstreaming preventive and psychosomatic medicine as well as “holistic lifestyle” endeavours such as hygienism under various guises, the so-called “life reform” [Lebensreform] ideology or “free body culture” [Freikörperkultur often abbreviated as “FKK”] a.k.a. nudism or naturism. In their own specific ways, these ideologies contributed to setting the scene for an increased receptiveness to the needs of a “naturally” embodied consciousness, a consciousness poised to become much more mainstream towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, a closer examination of the Kaiserreich and Weimar periods in Germany reveals that many of the motives leading people to increased concern about their health are strikingly similar to our contemporary worries: a strong reaction against increased urbanisation and industrialisation (and conversely, the feeling of being alienated from nature), sedentary jobs, chronic “civilisation” diseases, and –most interestingly of all– stress, which tended to be labelled as “nervous disorders” (including “melancholia”, “hysteria” or “neurasthenia”). Subsumed under the latter were anxieties of performance, both bodily and mental, which were repeatedly invoked as powerful motivations to seek “natural” cures.<sup>416</sup> In turn, these anxieties of performance were strongly shaped by a discourse enshrining a new morality of

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<sup>416</sup> There is a wealth of excellent literature on the various reactions to “body mechanisation”. Cf. e.g.: Joachim Radkau's seminal *Das Zeitalter der Nervosität: Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler*, München & Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1998 (among other aspects, Radkau concentrates on the emergence of so-called “nervousness” or “neurasthenia”, psycho-physiological affections that would later be labelled as stress, burnout and eventually also clinical depression); *Die Lebensreform, Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst in der Moderne um 1900*, Eds Kai Buchholz, Rita Latocha, Hilke Peckmann & Klaus Wolbert, Ausstellungskatalog Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Darmstadt 2001 (this two-volume catalogue provides an eclectic mix of articles and illustrations on one of the most famous German-impelled holistic health movements); Hau, Michael, op. cit., (Hau's book provides a broad cultural history of body shaping during the Weimar Republic); Wedemeyer-Kolwe, Bernd, *Der Neue Mensch: Körperkultur im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004 (while Wedemeyer-Kolwe primarily focuses on “movement” cultures, he embeds his narrative in a much broader web including e.g. nudism or eastern mysticism); Stoff, Heiko, *Konzepte der Verjüngung vom späten neunzehnten Jahrhundert bis ins Dritte Reich*, Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004 (Stoff focuses mainly on the modern history of anti-ageing or rejuvenating practices involving a host of technologies including hormonal treatment); Möhring, Maren, *Marmorleiber: Körperbildung in der deutschen Nacktkultur (1890-1930)*, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2004. (Like Stoff, Möhring's focus narrows down to a specific aspect of the Weimar body culture, i.e. the German enthusiasm for nudism); Fritzen, Florentine, *Gesünder Leben. Die Lebensreformbewegung im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006 (In contrast with the abundance of books concentrating on the Wilhelmine and Weimar periods, Fritzen's study is one of the only narratives that strives to analyse the continuities and disruptions of the Lebensreform during the course of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus providing a very important bridge towards my own very contemporary interests). For the American context: c.f. e.g. Green, Harvey, *Fit for America: health, fitness, sport and American society*, Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, or *Fitness in American culture: images of health, sport, and the body, 1830 – 1940*, op. cit. These two volumes provide a welcome counterpoint to the German histories quoted, since while highlighting the specificities of the American context in terms of politics, medicine or religion, they present the reader with innumerable parallels between American and German –or more broadly European– health trajectories.

health: a personal and increasingly national or racial responsibility to cultivate health along strictly normalised lines separating the pathological (or degenerate) from the wholesome.

In parallel with these relatively mainstream movements, all of which developed influential ideas about the importance of both physical and mental fitness as well as nutritional hygiene while reinstating the body as a central locus for human well-being and development, a number of more isolated (and often eccentric) movements and individuals attempted to preach a redemptive gospel that more explicitly fed off the frustrations linked to the industrial age. Nevertheless, even these more marginal proponents did not necessarily or completely sever ties with the scientific “performance” ideologies permeating the age, since many of them were inextricably entangled in the new professions I mentioned above. Prominent examples include e.g. Dr Maximilian Bircher-Benner<sup>417</sup> and Dr Rudolf Steiner<sup>418</sup> in the German-speaking realm, or Sylvester Graham<sup>419</sup> and Dr John Harvey Kellogg<sup>420</sup> in the U.S. Maximilian Bircher-Benner is a particularly emblematic example of this curious blend between a modern scientific affiliation and a more esoterically “natural” orientation. The online Swiss Historical Lexicon provides this telling summary of his professional career:

B. first practised general medicine in Aussersihl. After a decisive experience that convinced him of the therapeutic value of a vegetarian diet in 1895, he founded a private clinic in Zurich that was specialised in dietetics and naturopathic healing. From around 1900, based on the notion of entropy as borrowed from thermodynamics, he attempted to found a new global dietetics and divided foods into three categories according to how much “live solar energy” they contained. In 1904, he founded the Lebendige Kraft (“living force”) sanatorium on the Zürichberg, an establishment that met with international recognition. B.’s hygiene was conceived as both preventive and curative and tended towards inner harmony while encompassing all areas of everyday life. Moreover, the link between body and soul was

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<sup>417</sup> [1867–1939, Switzerland & Germany], the “inventor” (or “adapter” since he was apparently fed a similar dish while hiking in the Swiss mountains) of the famous Birchermüesli (nowadays, the industrially processed version of this dish is more soberly known as “muesli”) and a promoter of vegetarian/wholefoods diets. Cf. e.g. Jagella-Danoth, Caroline, “Bircher [-Benner], Maximilian Oskar”, *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz – Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse – Dizionario storico della Svizzera*, entry No 14, 03/11/2010, online: <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D14295.php> or Furger, Sonja, „Mit Rohkost gegen die Degeneration. Vor 100 Jahren: Max Bircher-Benner gründet das Sanatorium ‚Lebendige Kraft‘“, *Schweizerische Ärztezeitung / Bulletin des médecins suisses / Bollettino dei medici svizzeri*, 2004, 85, Nr 5, pp. 236-238, also available here: <http://www.saez.ch/pdf/2004/2004-05/2004-05-019.PDF>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>418</sup> [1861–1925, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and Switzerland], a philosopher, pedagogue and occultist as well as the founder of anthroposophy and a promoter of holistic lifestyles. Cf. e.g. Goetheanum resources: <http://www.goetheanum.org/rudolfsteiner.html> & <http://www.goetheanum.org/121.html> or Gandlau, Thomas, “STEINER; Rudolf”, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Band X, 1995, Spalten 1294-1300, available online: [http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/s/s4/steiner\\_r.shtml](http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/s/s4/steiner_r.shtml) (contains a huge regularly updated bibliography). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>419</sup> [1794-1851, U.S.], originally a Presbyterian minister who became interested in healthy nutrition (we owe him the famous “Graham” crackers and bread) and lifestyle reform to combat ill health and immorality. For an overview of his biography and achievements (including links to contemporary references) cf. e.g. the following account on the International Vegetarian Union website: <http://www.ivu.org/history/usa19/graham.html>. Briefer overviews can be found here: e.g. [http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/people\\_places/view.jsp?itemtype=1&id=985](http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/people_places/view.jsp?itemtype=1&id=985) or here: <http://www.suffield-library.org/localhistory/graham.htm>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>420</sup> [1852–1943, U.S.] the founder of the famous Battle Creek sanatorium, the inventor of corn flakes (with his brother) and an advocate of “biological living”, a particular brand of health reform and eugenics. Biographies collected from a variety of referenced sources can be found here: <http://www.answers.com/topic/john-harvey-kellogg>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

particularly central to his theory. In 1923, B. founded a monthly journal *Der Wendepunkt im Leben und im Leiden* [translation note: “The Turning Point in Life and Suffering”]. He was not recognised by official medicine in the course of his lifetime but currently many of his conclusions about vegetarianism and whole foods have been acknowledged even if his global dietetics remain contested. B. was a reform physician who was particularly attentive to the interaction between food, the body and society.<sup>421</sup>

A number of aspects in Bircher-Benner’s career and ideas should be highlighted here since they also characterise the trajectory of many other health apostles of his generation: 1. a mainstream education in medicine (or another acknowledged academic discipline); 2. a personally “enlightening” experience or a sort of health “epiphany” (i.e. his raw foods treatment of a patient with a stomach disease not to mention his own jaundice)<sup>422</sup>; 3. a scientific borrowing from physics (here entropy) transposed to the physiological realm (leading to his concept of “*Ordnungsgesetze des Lebens*” [i.e. laws structuring life])<sup>423</sup>; 4. a marginal yet nationally and internationally recognised institutionalisation; 5. a holistic bent towards the attainment of inner and outer harmony; 6. an environmental understanding of health linking individuals to their milieu; 7. a mixed late modern recognition. However, what the Lexicon quote does not highlight is the fact that, even if they do not articulate an explicitly eugenic programme (as in e.g. John Harvey Kellogg’s legacy), Bircher-Benner’s theories nevertheless share the contemporary preoccupation with individual and national “degeneration” [*Entartung*], understood as an almost inevitable by-product of heightened industrialisation.<sup>424</sup>

Many of these personalities and the following they generated gradually gained larger audiences in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A common denominator was to conceive of a body that went beyond a purely mechanistic vision to include emotions, as well as the mental and spiritual dimensions of embodiment. These three realms could hardly be accounted for in the modern factory or office environment, where –linked to the diktats of

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<sup>421</sup> Swiss Historical Lexicon, op. cit. : «*B. pratiqua d'abord la médecine générale à Aussersihl. Une expérience décisive l'ayant convaincu en 1895 des vertus thérapeutiques du régime végétarien, il ouvrit à Zurich une clinique privée de diététique et de soins naturopathes. Dès 1900 environ, il tenta de fonder sur la notion d'entropie, empruntée à la thermodynamique, une nouvelle diététique globale, et subdivisa les aliments en trois catégories d'après leur contenu d'«énergie solaire vivante». En 1904, il ouvrit au Zürichberg le sanatorium Lebendige Kraft («force vivante»), qui jouit bientôt d'une réputation internationale. L'hygiène de B., préventive et curative, tend vers l'harmonie intérieure et englobe presque tous les domaines de la vie. Elle accorde une importance primordiale à la relation entre l'âme et le corps. En 1923, B. fonda une revue mensuelle, Der Wendepunkt im Leben und im Leiden. De son vivant, il ne fut pas reconnu par la médecine officielle. Actuellement, on admet beaucoup de ses conclusions sur la nutrition végétarienne et les aliments complets, mais ses concepts de diététique globale restent contestés. B. fut un médecin réformateur, particulièrement attentif à l'interaction de la nourriture, du corps et de la société.*» For personal comfort reasons, I have translated this quote from the French version of the entry, cf. <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/f/F14295.php?PHPSESSID=60f904e564f502ffeeb4f4e73c26a452B> but a German version is available <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D14295.php?PHPSESSID=60f904e564f502ffeeb4f4e73c26a452B>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>422</sup> Cf. Furger, Sonja, op. cit.

<sup>423</sup> Cf. Bircher-Benner, Maximilian, *Ordnungsgesetze des Lebens als Wegweiser zur Gesundheit*, Zürich: Wendepunkt-Verlag, 1938.

<sup>424</sup> For an enlightening current perspective on Bircher-Benner’s dietetics compared with today’s health boom and their relationship to governmentality, cf. Wolff, Eberhard, “Moderne Diätetik als preventive Selbsttechnologie: Zum Verhältnis heteronomer und autonomer Selbstdisziplinierung zwischen Lebensreformbewegung und heutigem Gesundheitsboom”, *Das präventive Selbst: Eine Kulturgeschichte moderner Gesundheitspolitik*, Eds Martin Lengwiler, Jeanette Madarasz, Bielefeld: transcript 2010, pp. 169-201.

streamlined production— long, dangerous and exhausting hours, the monotony engendered by repetitive tasks, and the suppression of individual initiative and creativity continued to prevail. The essence of these movements can thus be seen as an attempt to re-access a sort of “prelapsarian” state of natural holistic health, mostly in reaction to what was construed as the artificiality of industrially or technically determined lifestyles.<sup>425</sup> As a recurring motif, it dominated alternative health theories of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but after WWI, it became increasingly influential in a much vaster popular realm. This *weltanschauung* often indicted modern science’s role in the dissolution of traditional values:

Science had declared humanity’s life and soul a senseless product of mechanism so people now treated one another as mere machines. It was said that the spread of mechanistic, instrumentalist thinking into all areas of professional and cultural life had given rise to a cynical, this-worldly attitude and a decline in morality and idealism. Traditional ideals of learning and culture were in crisis, the young people were alienated, and the arts had degenerated into exercises in absurdity and self-absorption. The nihilistic message of scientists who apparently valued *Technik* over soul and integrity was even blamed for the devastation of the lost war [...].<sup>426</sup>

This disenchantment resurfaced cyclically in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Early roots can be perceived all the way back to 19<sup>th</sup> century syndicalism and the (proto-)fascist movements of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> before culminating in the sweeping social movements of the 1960s-70s embracing very diverse but often interlocking causes such as civil rights, libertarian ideologies, feminism, ecology or even New Age spirituality. These successive and sometimes parallel movements often championed one of the two following perspectives. Either they openly pitted technology and the industries producing them against an unspoiled primeval nature that had to be regained by returning to a lifestyle devoid of the artificial intrusions of modernity –in sum, a type of Thoreauian ethic– or they left unexplained and unresolved the tensions between the imperatives of a modern, productive and efficient lifestyle and a model of untainted natural living seen as a regenerative refuge and the epitome of an economically and ecologically sustainable lifestyle. Perhaps because it is characterised by a more entrepreneurial spirit, the latter ambivalent position seems to have left us with a more lasting if ambivalent legacy. Indeed, secluded and exclusive health farms and spas or Ayurvedic resorts (as the late modern offshoots of health clinics and sanatoria) have met with a surprising revival in the past couple of decades –not least because they offer the illusion of a low-tech or “friendly-tech” refuge against contemporary stress and burnout. But in parallel, other “natural” products such as Graham crackers, cornflakes or muesli owe their enduring mass appeal to intensive industrial production and distribution. These developments point to what can either be read as an irreducible ambivalence in the

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<sup>425</sup> Maren Möhring aptly analyses this ambiguous process she labels as the „Ver(natur)wissenschaftlichung des Körpers“ [“re(natural)scientisation of the body”, a concept that is difficult to translate: it aims to encapsulate both the increasingly scientific and naturalistic perceptions of the body while playing on the German word “Naturwissenschaft”]. Concretely, she witnesses how nudist discourse (her main focus) uncomfortably negotiates the transition between a natural philosophy [Naturphilosophie] and the natural sciences [Naturwissenschaft]. On the one hand, because natural instinct is deemed lost, the backing of the natural sciences is legitimised in the search for or rediscovery of natural laws –hence as a tool to appropriately regulate the use of natural health techniques. But on the other hand, the discourse on nudism also vehemently denounces the excesses of science especially in terms of its absolutism and claims towards exclusive expertise. Cf. *Marmorleiber: Körperbildung in der deutschen Nacktkultur (1890-1930)*, op.cit., pp. 262-265.

<sup>426</sup> Harrington, Anne, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler*, Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996, p. xv.

late modern management of the relationship between nature and technology or it can be interpreted as a more or less tacit acknowledgement that nature and technology have become inextricably co-dependent.<sup>427</sup>

Nevertheless, whether industrially mainstream or naturally marginal, what these new professions, movements and products did manage to establish were a number of semiotic shifts on the path of body technologies towards HLTs. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, nutrition, movement, cosmetics and alternative health practices were increasingly utilised with the aim of consciously enhancing the performance and aesthetics as well as the well-being of bodies. This shift was heralded by e.g. the coexistent interpretations of whole grain bread as a complex carbohydrate and mineral conglomerate (providing useful calories and micro-nutrients) and as a “quintessence of life-giving solar energy”. Moreover, both industrial and natural factions –however grudgingly for the former– came to admit that bodies’ optimal functioning could only be obtained through the alternation between work (or careful training and monitoring) and play (or cycles of rest and regeneration).

### **From the design of physics to the aesthetics of the physique**

In the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially from what is sometimes described as the 3<sup>rd</sup> industrial revolution (i.e. the generalised introduction of computer-steered command and communication systems from the early 1970s onwards), the increased automation of factory and office processes implied that bodies could be increasingly dispensed with. However, the subsequent emergence of the so-called service economy and its heavy computer reliance demonstrated that, if many bodies were no longer put under the strain of matching the speed of a conveyor belt or of massive repetitive stress injury due to dangerous and monotonous movements, they were nevertheless presented with another insidious challenge. This challenge was sedentariness and its cohort of attendants, the so-called “lifestyle” or “civilisation” diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, etc.<sup>428</sup> Additionally, the gradual but increasingly ubiquitous dissemination of television, video games and the Internet as dominant and static leisure practices in westernised economies reinforced the urgency of rethinking the design of healthy bodies. The gradual demise of bodies designed first by agricultural then industrial practices – whether these were conceived as healthy or deforming– thus left the late modern body a prey to a painful type of superfluity and formlessness.<sup>429</sup> A redefinition of the value of embodiment was therefore required:

Because nowadays their physical performance hardly plays a role in paid employment any longer, bodies must now be designed with an orientation towards particular uses and valorisations. In this process, thermodynamics gives way to semiotics as a role-model

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<sup>427</sup> I have already discussed the nature-culture or nature-technology divide at length in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), especially in the “Under the sign of the body” and “Technology” sections, and discuss it more concretely in my case-studies, especially in Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics case-study*).

<sup>428</sup> Cf. my discussion of these diseases in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), “Embodied Consciousness” section.

<sup>429</sup> Cf. Penz, Otto, „Fit for the Looks: Heavenly Bodies“, *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., p. 34: “Under postindustrial conditions we encounter two paradoxes. Firstly, the less we need the body in terms of strength and endurance at the work place the more people are concerned with their fitness. [...] Secondly, the more Western societies are ageing the stronger becomes the emphasis on a youthful appearance.”

discipline. The technologisation of the body in the 20th and 21st centuries thereby neatly fits into the technologisation strategies characteristically implemented for inert products.<sup>430</sup>

In this vision then, the long-drawn design battle over the importance of function versus form loses much of its impetus. Once function no longer really fosters distinction and/or discrimination, form (or aesthetics) and especially subjective well-being can also become central driving forces behind the technological management of the body. Thus, provided one can count on an initially healthy constitution, adequate financial resources, motivation, willpower, etc., the apparent uselessness of the body is gradually transformed into a huge field of self-actualisation possibilities. However, the formability of the body –but also its frequent resistance to moulding– coupled with the array of choices available, has precipitated the need for new types of guidance since bodily boundaries have become contested. Indeed, bodies are increasingly viewed as nomadic –straddling a number of parallel realms– and the negotiation of personal bodily space therefore becomes an urgent existential pursuit. According to the geographer Gill Valentine:

An individual may experience multi-faceted, overlapping, and fluid understandings of how they should be producing and regulating the space of their body which may not be completely congruent or consistent, and sets up tensions and conflict between different bodily ideals and sets of regulatory practices in different locations.<sup>431</sup>

In fact, as Harvie Ferguson aptly describes it, contemporary body space goes well beyond the narrow shape or size of the body:

The classical body image may be thought of as shrink-wrapped to the surface of the material body, while the contemporary body image is much more loosely related to its corporeal form. This is now a quite familiar feature of everyday life. We frequently refer to our “personal space,” which is both more extended and more variable than the severely localized space of bodily experience established during the classical period of Modernity. The automobile, for example, further extended this space, while the telephone and new electronic media of communication do so with at present incalculable effects.<sup>432</sup>

What is at stake here is the establishment of a microcosm, what one could define as a material and symbolic body ecology. Securing performance, aesthetics and well-being have

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<sup>430</sup> Cf. Wengenroth, Ulrich, Script for the „Geschichte der Technik in der Moderne. Teil 2: Seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg“ class, winter term 2009/10, [http://www.lrz.de/~Ulrich\\_Wengenroth/lehre/v-tg-postww1-ws09/v-tg20jh-ws10-01-12.html](http://www.lrz.de/~Ulrich_Wengenroth/lehre/v-tg-postww1-ws09/v-tg20jh-ws10-01-12.html): „Körper werden auch in einer Zeit, in der ihre physische Leistungsfähigkeit kaum noch eine Rolle für die Erwerbsarbeit spielt, anwendungs- und verwertungsspezifisch gestaltet. Semiotik löst dabei Thermodynamik als Modell gebende Disziplin ab, womit sich die Technisierung der Körper im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert nahtlos in die Technisierungsstrategien für nicht belebte Produkte einfügt.“ Wengenroth further explains the shift as follows: „Wie bei vielen anderen technischen Konsumgütern (Autos, HiFi-Anlagen usw.), geben technische Daten des Körpers nicht mehr Auskunft über dessen mögliche Bewährung gegenüber materieller Inanspruchnahme, sondern tragen zur sozialen und kulturellen Verortung in einer Vielzahl von Rollenangeboten bei. Der Bodybuilder braucht seine Muskeln nicht zur Arbeit oder zum physischen Überleben, ebenso wenig wie das Model auf sein niedriges Gewicht und seine große Schlankheit bei guter Hebelwirkung zur Überwindung schwierigen, weitläufigen Geländes angewiesen ist. Statt dessen passen sich die Körper in die Stilwelten der technischen Konsumgüter ein.“ [website last accessed April 2010; unfortunately, the source is no longer available]

<sup>431</sup> Valentine, Gill, “A corporeal geography of consumption”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 17, 1999, pp. 329–351, p. 348.

<sup>432</sup> Ferguson, Harvie, op.cit., pp. 50–51.

become overarching late-modern concerns that permeate almost all the realms of everyday life. Indeed, body preoccupations have contributed to blurring the classical division between work and leisure in that they entail the fundamental re-definition of these concepts. For example, many corporations now encourage their employees to care for their health – especially by making use of on-site or consultant-tailored fitness and wellness offers – between or beyond working hours in the hope of increasing workforce “happiness” and ... productivity.<sup>433</sup> In this context, the fitness and wellness ideologies have provided two significant attempts to bridge the gap between physics and aesthetics and between the work and the leisure spheres, whilst re-enacting many of the earlier tensions between functionalism and holism.

### **Fitness: fit for fun or fit for work?**

In America, the fitness movement found its post-WWII roots<sup>434</sup> with the startling discovery of a major discrepancy between American children’s weak muscular tonicity and that of their more robust European counterparts, linked to the wide implementation of the Kraus-

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<sup>433</sup> Dona Sofere (alias Dominique Annet) in an article entitled «Wellness Management: la clé du mieux-être en entreprise» provides an interesting if somewhat sweepingly superficial take on the dissemination of corporate wellness in Belgium «*Le Wellness Management fait son entrée en Belgique. Il devient un outil de management (des ressources humaines), fini le bricolage ! Le bien-être, le « Wellness », néologisme anglo-saxon, commence à faire partie de la vie des entreprises. Développé depuis huit ans en Amérique du nord, le concept a atteint la France il y a trois ans et perce aujourd’hui en Belgique. La pratique du massage entre dans les sociétés, le fitness management descend de la Hollande vers la Flandre, les parcs d’entreprises voire des parcs scientifiques voient fleurir crèches, centres de fitness et ‘facility services’. L’environnement de travail compte désormais. Le Feng Shui, notamment, commence à séduire et des ‘espaces détente’ sont créés. En Espagne, à Barcelone notamment, se développent des ‘espaces sieste’. En France, on préfère la relaxation. Le coaching fait l’unanimité et les séminaires de développement personnel se multiplient en Europe. Les actions qui tendent vers le mieux-être sont légions.*» (originally written for *RHTribune*, September 2003, Introductory text to the «Mieux-être en entreprise» report, downloadable here: <http://www.noetique.eu/articles/ressources-humaines-talents/wellness-management-cle-mieux-etre-entreprise.doc/view>; p. 1). Otherwise, here is a small random selection of specialised fitness and wellness service providers –who all boast similar sales arguments: <http://www.arsvivendi-fitness.de/betriebsfitness.php>; <http://www.24hourfitness.com/CorporateSalesIndex.do> & <http://www.harmony-fitness.ch/entreprises.asp>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>434</sup> As already hinted at in this chapter and in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*), the roots of our contemporary fitness ethic go way back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even beyond to... Antiquity. As Muriel Gillick puts it: “*Individual responsibility for health through clean and upright living – eating right, exercising, and abstaining from drink – is part of a venerable American tradition. The fundamental tenet of this tradition of physical hygienism, dating at least to John Wesley (whose Primitive Physick, published in 1764, regarded sickness as punishment for earthly sins), is that health results from living in accord with ‘the laws of nature.’ And, most hygienists have argued, since the laws of nature are God-given, it is a religious obligation to abide by them.*” Cf. Gillick, Muriel R., “Health Promotion, Jogging, and the Pursuit of the Moral Life”, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 9, 1984, pp. 369-387, p. 369. And fitness in the sense of “appropriate” or “suitable” actually dates back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. For a comprehensive overview of definitions, cf. e.g. Webster’s Online Dictionary (<http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/fitness?cx=partner-pub-0939450753529744%3Av0qd01-tdlq&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=fitness&sa=Search#922>). For a good summary, cf. also Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 2: “*Definitions of fitness also vary across time. Different aspects of bodies and selves have been problematized and valorized over time – character, attractiveness, happiness, strength, morality, intelligence, courage, honesty – and these changing bodily priorities reflect changing societal conditions.*” Furthermore: “*The lived definition of fitness is not clear-cut. It involves feelings of capacity, notions of control (over ourselves; over how others see us), and understanding of societal norms and expectations, be they articulated in advertising and the media in terms of beauty and youth, or in medical and government documents in terms of risk and health. Fitness is a complex concept, its criteria and objectives varying within and between individuals.*” Cf. *ibid.*, p. 2. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

Hirschland “*Minimum Muscular Fitness Tests in Children*”.<sup>435</sup> This testing can be seen in the light of the exercise physiology tradition “*the intellectual roots of [which] lie primarily in the military, in competitive sports, and, to a lesser extent, in the area of rehabilitation of those who have already had heart attacks.*”<sup>436</sup> The discovery of American “weakness” prompted a number of public health measures throughout the 1950s and 60s and thus paved the way for the doctrine underlying e.g. Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper’s new aerobics<sup>437</sup> gospel, which was launched in 1968:

Cooper advocated a philosophy that shifted away from disease treatment to one of disease prevention. ‘It is easier to maintain good health through proper exercise, diet, and emotional balance than it is to regain it once it is lost’ he said. Early in his career, Cooper stressed the necessity for providing epidemiological data to support the benefits of regular exercise and health.<sup>438</sup>

Fitness then was very much grounded in the preoccupation with the ills of sedentariness and the ensuing trends of preventive medicine.<sup>439</sup> However, the breakthrough of Cooper’s aerobic philosophy in Europe, as one of the core components of active fitness, took place almost two decades after its American launch –that is towards the early to mid-1980s.<sup>440</sup> From then on in Europe, the use of “fitness” as a term extended beyond describing an optimal state of bodily performance to include a set of ideas, practices and products geared towards the attainment of this state. Concretely, fitness was especially anchored in the movement practices – such as aerobics gymnastics and weight training – promoted by so-called “fitness clubs”, “fitness studios” and specialised gyms that mushroomed all over

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<sup>435</sup> Cf. Kraus, Hans & Hirschland, Ruth P., “Minimum Muscular Fitness Tests in School Children”, *Research Quarterly*, 25, 2, 1954, pp. 178-188. Cf. also: Dalleck, Lance C. & Kravitz, Len, “The History of Fitness”, online article available here: <http://www.unm.edu/~lkravitz/Article%20folder/history.html>: “*The Cold War, Baby Boomer era was marked by the development of an important factor influencing the modern fitness movement known as the ‘Minimum Muscular Fitness Tests in Children’ by Kraus-Hirschland (24). This study utilized the Kraus-Weber tests to measure muscular strength and flexibility in the trunk and leg muscles. It was reported that close to 60 percent of American children failed at least one of the tests. In comparison, only nine percent of children from European countries failed one of the tests. During the Cold War, these startling numbers launched political leaders into action to promote health and fitness.*” [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>436</sup> Gillick, Muriel R., op. cit., p. 371. In her article, Gillick convincingly traces the subtle trajectory of exercise physiology from the military to rehabilitation and later prevention of CHD (coronary heart diseases) and how this development contributed to the idea that “running is good for you”.

<sup>437</sup> The popular acception of “aerobics” immediately conjures visions of Jane Fonda lookalikes –dressed in leotards, leggings, legwarmers and sporting headbands– strenuously exercising in a fitness studio with loud disco music. But it should be emphasised here that the aforementioned discipline should be referred to as “aerobics gymnastics” since the official meaning of “aerobics”, a term coined by Kenneth Cooper, is more physiologically specific without being discipline-bound, to wit: “*In 1986, Dr. Cooper submitted the official definition to the Oxford English Dictionary. It reads, ‘Method of physical exercise for producing beneficial changes in the respiratory and circulatory systems by activities which require meeting a modest increase in oxygen intake and so can be maintained.’*” Cooper actually identified 41 aerobic disciplines, the top 5 being “1. Cross-country skiing; 2. Swimming; 3. Running or jogging; 4. Cycling; 5. Walking.” Cf. <http://www.cooperaerobics.com/About-Cooper/Aerobics.aspx>. Cf. also: Cooper, Kenneth H., *Aerobics*, New York: Bantam Books, 1968. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>438</sup> Ibid. Cf. also <http://www.cooperaerobics.com/About-Cooper/Dr--Kenneth-Cooper.aspx> & <http://www.cooperaerobics.com/About-Cooper/Cooper-Timeline.aspx>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>439</sup> These would eventually take the world by storm thanks to the WHO’s “Health for All” programme that was internationally endorsed in 1985. Cf. *The Sociology of Health Promotion*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. „25 Jahre im Rückblick: Eine neue Sportart entwickelt sich“, online article available here: [http://www.fitnessonline.at/wissen/aerobic/geschichte/geschichte\\_1.htm](http://www.fitnessonline.at/wissen/aerobic/geschichte/geschichte_1.htm) and Dalleck, Lance C. & Kravitz, Len, op. cit. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

Europe in the course of the 1980s. These new institutions considerably broadened the spectrum of practices offered by extant sports clubs and gyms. Furthermore, women gained increased access and soon became lead consumers in the field, due to the impulse of prominent ambassadors of aerobics gymnastics such as the actresses Jane Fonda in the U.S or Sydne Rome in Europe.<sup>441</sup> Over time, the age range of practitioners also grew to include teenagers and more mature consumers, there again under the impulse of various show-business and sports celebrities.<sup>442</sup>

In terms of the actual practice of fitness disciplines, a strong emphasis was laid on the importance of cardio-vascular training: that is increasing the heart rate at regular intervals in order to compensate for the risks linked to static professional activities.<sup>443</sup> This was achieved by performing rapid workouts in- or out-of-doors –with or without weights, machines and other accessories– involving the various muscle groups of the body.<sup>444</sup> Paradoxically:

The point of fitness training is to improve the body, with help from its own exertions, to go far beyond its normal abilities. The body's production of muscle, red blood cells, nerve paths, blood vessels, etc. is so optimized that nature is outwitted by nature itself; thus nature develops abilities that far exceed what is necessary to survive.<sup>445</sup>

When performed indoors, the environment was designed to resemble a dance studio (usually also involving a loud musical accompaniment), with hardwood, plastic or rubber floors and largely mirrored surfaces, enabling participants to both follow the choreography of the fitness trainer and monitor the progress of their own movements and postures over time – not to mention the comparison of body shapes.<sup>446</sup> The promise of an ideally shaped,

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<sup>441</sup> Cf. e.g. “Jane Fonda’s Workout Record” released in 1982 (<http://www.discogs.com/Various-Jane-Fondas-Workout-Record/release/842499>) or Sydne Rome’s LP released in 1983 and entitled “Sydne Rome Aerobic Fitness Dancing” (<http://www.discogs.com/viewimages?release=1850862>). The fact that two main ambassadors of the aerobics wave belonged to the show-business arena may signal an interesting shift from overwhelmingly medical (or more generally academic) expertise (e.g. the aforementioned Dr. Cooper) to a more popular type of proficiency. I already alluded to this shift in the “Commodification” and “Embodied Consciousness” sections in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), when discussing the “recombinance” metaphor and the democratisation of expertise enabled by the concept of “embodied subjectivity”. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>442</sup> To name but a few: Claudia Schiffer, Cindy Crawford, Anna Kournikova, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Cher, etc. Cf. Brassfield, Marissa, “Famous Faces of Fitness: 10 celebrity workout videos to inspire Britney Spears”, *Trendhunter*, October 4th, 2008, online: <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/britney-spears-celeb-workout-video>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>443</sup> Cf. <http://www.cooperaerobics.com/About-Cooper/Aerobics.aspx>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>444</sup> A seminal influence in the development of contemporary exercise machines and (lay) weight-lifting practices in the U.S. was Jack Lalanne [1914-2011]. He is actually often credited as the “founder of the modern physical fitness movement” since in 1936 already, he launched a combination business including a gym, a juice bar and a health food store in Oakland. Cf. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/24/sports/24lalanne.html> & <http://www.jacklalanne.com/jacks-adventures/index.php>. From 1951, he also hosted a hugely popular fitness television show, long before the likes of Jane Fonda or Arnold Schwarzenegger dominated the mediated fitness field, a good example can be found here: <http://www.jacklalanne.com/watch-jack/>. Interestingly, both he and his wife reported a sort of health epiphany –involving a conversion to more movement and better nutrition– of the type mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, cf. <http://www.jacklalanne.com/jacks-adventures/elaine-lalanne.php> [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Gebauer, Gunther, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>446</sup> It should be emphasised that like prior holistic body movements, fitness practices more or less explicitly strive to reconcile a normalised aesthetic and anatomical view of the body with what can be described as physiological or functional normalcy/health, even if the former is usually subordinated to the attainment of the latter.

toned and resilient body (such as the ones displayed by Jane Fonda or Arnold Schwarzenegger) drove many fitness adepts to permanent injuries, due e.g. to the repeated impact of badly designed shoes on a hard surface and routines that were simply too taxing – not to mention the ingestion of steroids and other doping substances. Some individuals even met with a premature death linked to an overstraining of the heart.<sup>447</sup> Over time, these shocking developments spurred on the shift from so-called high-impact to low-impact aerobics or, more generally softer fitness routines. It also opened up the stage for increasingly stringent health guidelines or regulations, more serious professional training of fitness staff as well as the recourse to less violent or strenuous disciplines such as stretching, tai chi chuan and yoga and regenerative body practices like sauna, massage, guided relaxation, etc.

Besides indoor fitness, another prominent aerobic discipline proved to be jogging. Professional coaches Arthur Lydiard [1917-2004] from New Zealand<sup>448</sup> and Bill Bowerman [1911-1999] from the U.S.<sup>449</sup> are often credited for motivating early sporting enthusiasts to run. However, as another interesting example of the cross-cultural fertilisation I mentioned in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*), as early as 1955, a prominent German physician, Dr Ernst van Aaken [1910-1984] had already started theorising the benefits of long-distance running and openly promoting it for all (including women and children).<sup>450</sup> As the trainer of Herbert Steffny,<sup>451</sup> who was to become a prominent runner, running coach (of e.g. Joschka Fischer whom I mentioned earlier on) and running magazine editor,<sup>452</sup> van Aaken contributed in no small measure to the jogging boom in Germany. But the movement only truly became popular in the course of the 1970s –be it in Germany or the U.S. A landmark in jogging's dissemination proved to be the publication of *"The Complete Book of Running"* by Jim Fixx [1932-1984], a journalist whose enthusiasm for running led him to quit smoking and lose 30 kg –but did not stop him from dying at the age of 54.<sup>453</sup> Dr George Sheehan [1918-1993] is also often quoted as a major inspiration both practically –he took up running at 45 and obtained very impressive results by the time he was 50– and theoretically, as a columnist for a local paper before becoming the medical adviser for *Runner's World*, one of the most

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<sup>447</sup> Cf. e.g. Department of Kinesiology and Health, Georgia State University, "High Impact Aerobics", *The Exercise and Physical Fitness Page*, online resource, last modified 10.10.1997: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfit/aerobicd.html#Low-Impact>. Jogging should also be mentioned in this connection since the jogging boom took off in Europe roughly during the same period. The rationales underlying its eager adoption were similar to those governing aerobics and, in its infancy, it was plagued by similar excesses. Cf. e.g. Louie, Elaine, "AT WORK WITH: Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper; The Fit Commandment", *New York Times*, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995, available online: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=health&res=990CE4DB1139F931A25754C0A963958260>. This article interestingly stresses a shift in Cooper's philosophy over time towards a more gentle definition of health that no longer necessarily implies aerobic fitness: "In the 1980's, he began to question the benefits of intensive training, in part because in 1984, his friend Jim Fixx, author of "The Complete Book of Running" and a marathoner, died of a heart attack. In 1990, Dr. Cooper saw a study of the 2,300 runners in the 1987 Los Angeles Marathon indicating that 40 percent had a cold or the flu during the two months preceding the race. In 1989, the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research released its own study that showed that people could be healthy without being aerobically fit." [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>448</sup> Cf. Lydiard, Arthur & Gilmour, Garth. *Run to the Top*. London: H. Jenkins, 1962.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. Bowerman, William J. & Harris, W.E., with James M. Shea. *Jogging*, New York, Grosset & Dunlap, 1967.

<sup>450</sup> Cf. <http://www.dr-van-aaken.com/index.htm>, <http://www.dr-van-aaken.com/vita.htm> & <http://www.dr-van-aaken.com/publikationen.htm>. Cf. also Volkwein, Karin A.E., op. cit., p. XVI. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>451</sup> Cf. <http://www.dr-van-aaken.com/methode.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>452</sup> Cf. <http://www.steffny.de/pages/Interview.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>453</sup> Fixx, James, *The Complete Book of Running*, New York: Random House, 1977.

popular runners' magazine.<sup>454</sup> Thus, interestingly but rather unsurprisingly, in contrast with aerobics gymnastics, the jogging constellation was initially dominated by masculine role-models.<sup>455</sup>

As Muriel Gillick has shown,<sup>456</sup> beyond issues of heredity and unhealthy lifestyle, a number of experiments carried out by cardiologists demonstrated that, on average, regular jogging not only improved resistance to CHD (coronary heart disease) but could also prevent heart attacks. According to her analysis, however, it was not the medical aspect that proved most decisive for jogging's popular take-off.<sup>457</sup> Indeed, in parallel with budding medical interest in the discipline, popular enthusiasm was already there in the 1960s, particularly in the upper-middle class. Typically, middle-aged politicians and executives took up the practice in the wake of a sort of "mid-life crisis" (although Gillick does not use the term herself), when they realised that they had unhealthy lifestyles involving smoking, high cholesterol & overweight. Jogging thus became a form of salvation, an insurance of sorts against heart attacks, even before conclusive medical evidence was truly provided in medical journals. This perception was upheld by articles in a number of popular magazines such as *NYT Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, etc.

However, Gillick also indicted disenchantment with political, social and economic conditions in the U.S. as a main reason for the soaring popularity of fitness: "*The collapse of the liberal consensus – the belief that the strength and virtue of America had created peace abroad and harmony at home – coming on top of a shattered faith that American medicine could render the world safe from disease, led to the view that America was morally sick, in need of spiritual renewal.*"<sup>458</sup> Thus "[...] if there is a single, unifying theme underlying the popularity of running in both the sixties and the seventies, it is the appeal of the venerable notion of upright living as a means to personal and social renewal."<sup>459</sup> –echoing in this the admonitions to be found in the writings of 19<sup>th</sup> century hygienists and eugenicists. Before long, the practice of jogging experienced a demographic diversification: many more women and young people joined the craze but exercise still positively associated with income. Otherwise, the focus broadened from heart disease prevention to the effects of jogging on well-being as a whole and even on the mind. Its mass appeal<sup>460</sup> was further strengthened by the media, marketing, equipment, sporting events, the enrolment of athletes for promotion, etc.

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<sup>454</sup> Cf. <http://www.georgesheehan.com/welcome/bio.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>455</sup> For a good and compact overview of the jogging movement, its American and German appropriation and its links to medical prevention –especially linked to the fear of overweight, cf. Dietrich, Tobias, "Eine neue Sorge um sich? Ausdauersport im 'Zeitalter der Kalorienangst'", *Das präventive Selbst: Eine Kulturgeschichte moderner Gesundheitspolitik*, op. cit., pp. 279-304.

<sup>456</sup> Gillick, Muriel R., op.cit.

<sup>457</sup> The same can be said of food, cf. Conrad, Peter, "Wellness as Virtue: Morality and the Pursuit of Health", *Culture Medicine and Psychiatry*, Vol. 18, No 3, 1994, pp. 385-401, p. 386: "*While nutrition is a long-time health concern, and cholesterol and fat have been implicated by medical evidence as risk factors for heart disease (USDHHS 1991), the emergence of 'natural foods,' 'health foods,' and endless 'lite' preparations has outpaced the scientific evidence, less reflecting scientific findings, than a cultural interest in more 'natural' foods, and new corporate strategies for marketing food products. The important point here is that neither scientific medical findings nor government reports on health promotion are sufficient to explain the emergence of the broad-based interest and participation in wellness-oriented activities.*"

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid., p. 371.

<sup>460</sup> There were approx. 30 million joggers in the U.S. when Gillick wrote her paper [1984], cf. ibid. p. 383.

Over time, fitness –in its various incarnations– started to colonise an increasing number of everyday life realms. Brian Pronger aptly sums up the amazing contemporary breadth of the fitness constellation in both its material and service expressions:

The technology of physical fitness circulates in a consumer economy of goods and services. Services include membership in fitness and sports clubs and centres, which offer fitness appraisal and exercise prescription, exercise equipment and space, instruction, personal trainers, various aerobic exercise classes, massage, change rooms, showers as well as goods. Goods include exercise equipment, clothing, special foods, dietary supplements, therapeutic technologies, cosmetics, and body monitoring equipment such as weigh-scales, heart monitors, and fat callipers.<sup>461</sup>

In sum, fitness seems to have evolved from panic-induced and government-impelled controlling measures to counter the apparent physiological decay engendered by post-industrial lifestyles into much more subtly internalised disciplines –alternating effort/work and regeneration/play. As Jennifer Maguire sums it up:

[...] the fitness field illustrates the intended and unintended consequences of the body's place as a status object in contemporary consumer culture, in which occupation is privileged over recreation, form over function, and control over enjoyment. That is, for bodies that are fit for consumption, leisure is work, health is an appearance, and pleasure lies in discipline.<sup>462</sup>

What Pronger's and Maguire's otherwise pertinent analyses fail to recapture is the fact that fitness permeates a much wider realm of everyday life –including nutrition, cosmetics and alternative health practices– that is increasingly independent of the mediation provided by fitness clubs or gyms. Moreover, they do not emphasise the ideological cross-fertilisation between fitness in the leisure realm and fitness in the work or corporate sphere.<sup>463</sup> Indeed the latter aspect has a huge impact on the perception of body work and body leisure. In the following section, I examine it more closely under the wellness lens but my conclusions would be similar for corporate fitness.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Pronger, Brian, op. cit., p. 138. Cf. also e.g. Müller, Joni, „Ektomorph und mesomorph; Blick in die wunderbare Warenwelt der Fitness“, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung Folio*, May 2000, online magazine: <http://www.nzzfolio.ch/www/d80bd71b-b264-4db4-afd0-277884b93470/showarticle/78705341-5d51-4aac-b343-f0a2fbb710ce.aspx>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>462</sup> Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 208. However, in her introduction she also stresses that fitness is not a static constellation of imperatives but a dynamic field fostering navigation, negotiation, resistance and compliance, cf. *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>463</sup> Although she does frame the paradox of work within leisure: *“Thus, the cultural imaginary of leisure as a time of freedom from work and responsibility is accompanied by a parallel construction of leisure as a time of freedom to take up the work and responsibility of self-production.”* Cf. *ibid.*, p. 193. [emphasis in original] Glassner, however, considers both aspects. Cf. Glassner, Barry, “Fitness and the Postmodern Self”, op. cit., p. 187. Gebauer frames it yet differently: *“[...]fitness sport is no longer an independent social arena with its own privileges and overarching class differences; rather, it extends the features acquired in the serious domain of society, e.g., work, into the domain of the non-serious (leisure time)”*. Cf. Gebauer, Gunther, op. cit., p. 89. Personally, however, I would argue that the distinction between serious and non-serious is no longer tenable in a fit world, since the performance ethic seamlessly binds work with leisure –in terms of both fluid boundaries and the strict organisation of processes/training.

<sup>464</sup> From a European perspective that (at least initially) starkly differentiates between fitness and wellness, it may appear confusing to find out that, in the American “corporate health” sphere, the terms fitness and

### Wellness: buying into well-being?

Following a similar path to that of fitness, the seeds of wellness had already been planted in the U.S. by the late 1950s-early 1960s. Dr Halbert Dunn had then defined “*High-Level wellness*” as “*an integrated method of functioning which is oriented towards maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable. It requires that the individual maintain a continuum of balance and purposeful direction within the environment where he is functioning*”.<sup>465</sup> Despite its attention to “environment”, the discourse is still definitely performance-oriented (if not blatantly mechanistic) with its emphasis on “functioning”, “maximizing the potential”, “maintaining a continuum of balance” and “purposeful direction”. The coalescing of wellness ideas into institutionalised forms nevertheless took time even in the U.S.<sup>466</sup> As Jacqueline Hart perceives it, the debate around wellness issues really crystallised in the 1970s around two seemingly contradictory movements: “*the medicalization and demedicalization of American society*”.<sup>467</sup> The latter seems to have been mainly spearheaded by civil rights and feminist movements, as a reaction towards what they perceived as the excessive biomedical control over social problems.<sup>468</sup> As Hart puts it: “[...] *proponents of demedicalization typically view the patient as a health care consumer, an individual who might consult with the medical profession, but ultimately has sufficient knowledge to make informed decisions about their own care.*”<sup>469</sup> Medicalisation on the other hand, can be described as the recuperation of demedicalisation by the medical profession in the setting of public health goals with the strong backing of the state and the industry. These goals thus reoriented the profession towards preventive and psychosomatic medicine, whilst legitimising the perspective whereby individuals are fully accountable for their own health:

The second half of the twentieth century, then, witnessed a return to the more traditional nineteenth-century public health approaches with concerns about structure, environment, and ecology, which rather ironically, became known again as ‘the new public health’. A

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wellness seem to be used interchangeably to define a variety of health-inducing measures introduced in both private companies and state agencies. Roy Shepard e.g. has provided a perceptive if now slightly outdated industrial fitness handbook (that could just as well have been labelled as “industrial wellness”) , including its roots in the military, workers’ organisations and state initiatives, the assessment of stress in the workplace, attitudes towards leisure, health-screening and programming principles as well as cost/benefit analyses. Cf. Shepard, Roy J., *Fitness and health in industry*, Basel & New York: Karger, 1986. Shepard stresses that, in the U.S., corporate fitness started timidly in the 1960s, primarily targeting top executives, before more comprehensive programmes were implemented in the 1970s. Cf. *ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>465</sup> Dunn, Halbert, *High-Level Wellness for Man and Society: a collection of twenty nine short talks on different aspects of the theme*, Arlington, Va: R.W: Beatty, circa 1961, pp. 4-5. Cf. also: Dunn, Halbert , “High-Level Wellness for Man and Society”, *American Journal of Public Health*, February, 1959, pp. 786-792.

<sup>466</sup> The American National Wellness Institute, for instance, was founded in 1977 by Bill Hettler at Stevens Point University, Wisconsin. Cf. [http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id\\_tier=2](http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id_tier=2) & [http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id\\_tier=129](http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id_tier=129). For a very good and compact overview of the controversial acceptance of the term “wellness” in the U.S. as well as its gradual institutionalisation around John Travis, Donald Ardell and Bill Hettler, as ideological heirs of Halbert Dunn, cf. Zimmer, Ben, “On Language: Wellness”, *New York Times*, 16.04.2010, online edition: [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/18/magazine/18FOB-onlanguage-t.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/18/magazine/18FOB-onlanguage-t.html?_r=1). For an older and more subjective view, cf. also: Ardell, Donald B., “A (Very) Brief History of the Wellness Concept”, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000, online: <http://www.seekwellness.com/wellness/reports/2000-12-29.htm>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>467</sup> Hart, Jacqueline Anne, *The Wellness Ethic in Action: a Case Study of Company X*, PhD Dissertation in Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, 1999, p. 32.

<sup>468</sup> Cf. e.g. Burt Ruzek, Sheryl, *The Women’s Health Movement: feminist alternatives to medical control*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.

<sup>469</sup> Hart, Jacqueline Anne, *op. cit.*, p. 31-32. Cf. also Maguire, Jennifer Smith, p. 48.

broader focus became apparent within clinical medicine, where the focus has been on the individual within his or her psycho-social context. Lifestyles and health behaviour became concerns of public health and clinical medicine. Patients began to be drawn into the diagnosis and treatment of the disease. They became not just consumers of health services but also quasi-producers of their health status. A theoretical shift reflecting these changes can be identified which undermines more traditional oppositions between health and illness. Health promotion has emerged against this changing theoretical backdrop.<sup>470</sup>

Relatively early on then, the North American context seems to have fostered strongly institutionalised organisations –both on the level of corporations, universities, insurances, etc. and on the level of state administration and agencies– in order to encourage individuals to take concrete measures to improve their health.<sup>471</sup> This in turn was and is still reflected in the commercial health offer (e.g. in terms of functional food, health supplements and appliances, etc.). In Germany however, and in Europe to a large extent, developments have been almost reversed, since strongly socialised health systems have only recently undergone extensive reforms and are now periodically threatened with partial privatisation and/or dismantlement due to the perception of uncontrollable costs.<sup>472</sup> Hence, from the early 1980s in Germany, it is the industry, services and media that have helped to usher in an era of heightened body awareness by pushing a great variety of holistically-bent products on the

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<sup>470</sup> *Health Promotion: Disciplines, diversity, and developments*, Eds Robin Bunton & Gordon Macdonald, London & New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 13. For a more precise historical background, cf. also p. 14: “*Health promotion first appeared as a term and concept in 1974, when the Canadian Minister of National Health and Welfare, Marc Lalonde, published A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians (Lalonde 1974). It introduced into public policy the idea that all causes of death and disease could be attributed to four discrete and distinct elements: inadequacies in current health care provision; lifestyle or behavioural factors; environmental pollution; and finally, big physical characteristics. The basic message was that critical improvements within the environment (a structuralist approach) and in behaviour (a lifestyle approach) could lead to a significant reduction in morbidity and premature death. As a result of this report, the Canadian government shifted its emphasis in public policy away from treatment to prevention of illness, and ultimately to the promotion of health. The Lalonde report echoed the concerns of many who had become critical of a narrow view of health associated with the ‘medical model’. Basaglia has expressed such sentiments, arguing that the medical model somehow separates the ‘soma’ from the ‘psyche’, the disease from the patient, and the patient from the society in which he or she lives (Basaglia 1986). The roots of this model are said to lie in scientific explanations, aetiologies, clinical diagnoses, and prognoses that ignore the far more complex social issues facing individuals in the world, such as employment (or unemployment), housing (or homelessness), and low income, or cultures engendering behaviour harmful to health.*”

<sup>471</sup> This approach is convincingly described in *Promoting Human Wellness: new frontiers for research, practice and policy*, Eds Margaret Schneider Jamner and Daniel Stokols, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2000, p. 74: “*In conclusion, problems in health care might be characterized by the three A’s: affordability, access, and accountability. These three problems are interrelated. Health care became expensive because a traditional biomedical model rewarded providers for doing procedures on the basis of the diagnoses. The excessive expense of care made the costs prohibitive, and many people lost access to the system. However, the expensive system has been unable to demonstrate that it provides benefits to patients. An alternative to the biomedical model, known as the outcomes model suggests that population health status might be enhanced if resources are shifted away from procedure-based reimbursement and toward primary prevention.*”

<sup>472</sup> Cf. e.g. just one random example among hundreds of articles: [no author], “*Kranksein wird in Deutschland immer teurer*”, *Die Welt*, online edition, 06.04.2011, <http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article13087093/Kranksein-wird-in-Deutschland-immer-teurer.html>.

Otherwise, the following report provides a compact overview of health issues in Germany in 2007: “*Der Markt der Gesundheit*”, Focus medialine, December 2007, accessible online here: [http://www.medialine.de/media/uploads/projekt/medialine/docs/bestellung\\_download/marktanalysen/2007/foc\\_ma\\_gesundheit\\_200712.pdf](http://www.medialine.de/media/uploads/projekt/medialine/docs/bestellung_download/marktanalysen/2007/foc_ma_gesundheit_200712.pdf) [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

market. Taking advantage of a conceptual and institutional no man's land,<sup>473</sup> they have thus significantly contributed to the evolving of a specific wellness mediation discourse. And it is only in the early 1990s that some institutional efforts have been directed towards the analysis, containment and steering of the commercial wellness boom.<sup>474</sup>

These contrasting continental perspectives on the phenomenon can be strikingly illustrated by comparing two definitions. The first was found on the UC Berkeley wellness portal in 2002:

Wellness is a way of living that emphasizes such preventive measures as eating a healthy diet, making exercise an enjoyable part of your life, and making self-care decisions that will improve the quality of your life. This means reducing your risk for chronic disease, preventing injuries, banishing environmental and safety hazards from your home and workplace, and eliminating unnecessary trips to the doctor – but making best use of the health-care system when you need it. The premise of wellness is that you can live a long, healthy, and active life. All you need is the desire to do so – and the right information on which to base your actions.<sup>475</sup>

Wellness here is not envisioned as a temporary “feel good” fad: the emphasis is more on prevention, longevity, personal responsibility and a holistic, environmental approach to a healthy lifestyle than it is on “hedonistic” pleasure-seeking. Significantly, the holistic approach thus envisaged implicitly breaks down the division between work and leisure. Indeed, in order to be truly effective, wellness monitoring must be a constant conscious effort to streamline both work and leisure strategies in order to attain improved quality of

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<sup>473</sup> This is not to say that public health was inexistent in Germany but its late development (starting in the 1980s) means that it did not originally prove much of an ideological counterweight for the commercial fitness and wellness booms. For a very compact overview of the history of public health or “Gesundheitswissenschaften” in Germany, Wikipedia provides an exceptionally good and well-referenced article here: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gesundheitswissenschaften>. The history section explains the vast time-lag between Anglo-Saxon and German developments as a consequence of the national-socialist instrumentalisation of former public health interests, and its consequent ostracising in the post WW2-period. The resurrection of public health was apparently due to a joining of forces between hard and social science researchers in projects heavily financed by public institutions in a climate where social (especially patient-oriented) and environmental movements challenged the purely body-mechanical orientation of medicine. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>474</sup> Besides the slowly growing impact of public health initiatives (cf. previous footnote), 1990 witnessed the foundation of two private institutions for the promotion of wellness: the German Wellness Association [Deutscher Wellness Verband e.V. or DWV] in Düsseldorf and the European Wellness Union [Europäische Wellness Union or EWU] in Wesseling. One could also mention efforts such as the “Wellness-Urlaub in Ostbayern” [Wellness Holidays in East Bavaria] brochure published by the Tourist Office of East Bavaria, Regensburg, 1998 or “Gesucht: wellness” [Wanted: wellness], a booklet compiled and published by the Verbraucher-Zentrale Nordrhein-Westfalen e.V. [i.e. a prominent consumers association in the North-Western part of Germany], Düsseldorf, 2001, which aims to shed a critical light on the benefits and the traps of the wellness offer. For this information, I am indebted to the inputs of Lutz Hertel, the director of the German Wellness Association, both in terms of our talks and his article “Wellness und Gesundheitsförderung in den USA: Begriffsklärung, Entwicklungen und Realisierungen im betrieblichen Bereich”, *Zeitschrift für präventivmedizinische Gesundheitsförderung*, 1992, 4, pp. 36-48.

<sup>475</sup> Definition of wellness from the Wellness Letter: Foundations of wellness / UC Berkeley WELLNESS LETTER: [www.berkeleywellness.com/html/fw/fwintro.html](http://www.berkeleywellness.com/html/fw/fwintro.html). Significantly, by exclusively focusing on willpower and information in the pursuit of health prevention, this vision completely overlooks the socio-economic dimensions of health preservation, a dimension which a number of authors critically address and which I discuss more in-depth later in this chapter as well as in Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

life. In short, it represents a much more medicalised, risk-conscious approach than the one envisioned in the following satirical definition, drawn from the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* – a Swiss-German newspaper popular on both sides of the Rhine:

Wellness is the sluggish sister of fitness, enriched with a little hedonism and sensuousness. If the hallmarks of fitness are suffering, sweat and the fight against the inner couch potato, wellness can truly be identified as the loving care of the latter. Wellness is the mystical made flesh, the link between East and West, pleasure and duty, sports and fun, hot and cold, as well as new and old. It seems almost inconceivable that we have managed to survive without it for so long.<sup>476</sup>

However, despite or because of its irony, this definition does a really good job of recapturing the associations and contradictions surrounding the perception and practice of fitness and wellness in the German-speaking context.<sup>477</sup> It emphasises the affiliation of the two ideologies and points to a form of schizophrenic division of labour between these two realms of body management. On the one hand, fitness is seen as governed by a “controlling” discourse on the importance of appropriate physical training, physiological performance, rational shaping, etc. On the other, wellness is propelled by a form of “redemptory” discourse, a back-to-nature body ecumenism steered by the subjectivity of the consumer – in other words a “what feels good is good for you” exhortation.<sup>478</sup>

Moreover the sentence “*Wellness is the mystical made flesh, the link between East and West, pleasure and duty, sports and fun, hot and cold, as well as new and old*” is key to understanding the contemporary commercial wellness offer in Germany (and other parts of Europe). This bridging or rather encapsulating of dualisms is really the essence of Continental wellness. In order to recapture the driving force behind wellness, Claudia Freidl bases her analysis of this ideology on the concept of the “Multi-option Society”, developed by the Swiss sociologist Peter Gross,<sup>479</sup> which she succinctly sums up as follows:

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<sup>476</sup> Müller, Joni, Das Seelenheil im Dampfbad, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung Folio*, February 2000, online magazine, <http://www.nzzfolio.ch/www/d80bd71b-b264-4db4-afd0-277884b93470/showarticle/e3b0f399-0ab0-4b7b-92af-39bfb2f5170a.aspx>: “Wellness ist die träge Schwester der Fitness, angereichert mit etwas Hedonismus und Sinnlichkeit. Steht bei der Fitness das Leiden im Vordergrund, der Schweiß und der Kampf gegen den inneren Schweinehund, so kann Wellness durchaus als dessen liebevolle Pflege bezeichnet werden. Wellness ist gleichsam die Fleisch gewordene Esoterik, die Verbindung von Okzident und Orient, von Lust und Last, von Sport und Spass, von Heiss und Kalt und Neu und Alt. Schier unfassbar, dass wir es so lange ohne sie aushalten konnten.”. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>477</sup> A very interesting interview (by Roman Heflik and Manuel J. Hartung) of Marc Schwieger, an advertising professional also pointedly illustrates the semiotic flexibility of the wellness concept as perceived from a German point of view. Cf. „Wellness in der Werbung“, no date, available from: <http://www.geo.de/GEO/mensch/medizin/1836.html> [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>478</sup> This impression is confirmed by other sources. Cf. e.g. Kittner, Alma-Elisa & Scheller, Jörg, “Editorial”, *Weichspüler in Kunst und Konsum, Querformat*, Nr 3, 2010, p. 3: „Zu einem gelingenden Leben im postfordistischen Zeitalter soll heute mehr gehören als Leistung. Nur wer es fertig bringt, zumindest zeitweise im „Floating Tank“, in der „Yoga Oase“ oder bei der „Lomi Lomi Nui Massage“ den Hamsterrad der Wertsteigerungsspiralen zu entfliehen, demonstriert wahre Souveränität über Körper und Geist. Durch Teilhabe an der Wellnesskultur erklären wir uns zum Konsumadel und signalisieren, dass wir den Begriff „Psychosomatik“ ernst nehmen; dass wir uns nicht auf den Typus des homo oeconomicus reduzieren lassen, den die Fitness- und Bodybuilding-Bewegung mit ihren verschwitzten, verspannten und verbissenen Stallones oder Schwarzeneggers prägte.“

<sup>479</sup> Gross, Peter, *Die Multioptionsgesellschaft*, Frankfurt a/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994.

Contemporary society obeys an anonymous vortex that dissolves all customary types of duties and obligations. These are replaced by options that, henceforth, should be obeyed as realisable desires. The actualisation of as many options as possible becomes the epitome of existential purpose; a massive societal pressure to fulfil options develops. However people are confused by the variety of options and unable to cope. Indeed, multioptionality systematically fails to deliver what it promises.<sup>480</sup>

Even if multioptionality perhaps fails to deliver what it promises because it offers highly individual solutions to problems that can (or should) be framed in much broader socio-economic terms –an aspect I will be discussing later on in this Chapter–<sup>481</sup> it nevertheless has become a pervasively dominant mode of consumerism in general and wellness in particular. A special edition on wellness of *Querformat*, a magazine devoted to contemporary issues, art and popular culture, documents the wide ideological and socio-economic penetration of wellness in a broad variety of (sometimes unexpected) realms<sup>482</sup> –from art, to coaching, professional perspectives, brothels, architecture, music, etc.:

Wellness is deeply infiltrated in the daily life of affluent societies and, for a long time now, has ceased to offer pampering options only to the elites. Whoever cannot afford relaxing “wild flower compresses” or “mountain herb baths” in a Swiss luxury spa or an Ayurveda treatment in Sri Lanka, is presented with more affordable options. Beyond “sauna worlds” or “waterparks”, there are plenty of emotionalised product-ranges in the low-budget segment: harmony toast and relaxation tea provide the needed “balance”, aloe vera is found not only in cosmetics but also in yogurt that “indulges our senses”, and Marlboro even sells smoking as a relaxing Pilates exercise.<sup>483</sup>

Moreover, the search for existential meaning or purpose by means of a (w)hol(e)istic offer is a central if often latent motif of the wellness ideology. From the start, even in the U.S., wellness has been associated or “tainted” with (para-)religious or at least spiritual aspects – and this long before the likes of Dean Ornish, Deepak Chopra or Andrew Weil took it down clearly new-agey paths... Indeed, Donald Ardell one of the pioneer theorists and practitioners of North American wellness, reminds us that Halbert Dunn –the actual father of

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<sup>480</sup> Cf. Freidl, Claudia, *Wellnessboom. Erholung oder zu viel des Guten?* Düsseldorf: VDM Verlag, 2004, p. 106: „Die zeitgenössische Gesellschaft gehorcht einen anonymen Sog, der alle herkömmlichen Arten von Verpflichtungen, alle Obligationen auflöst; an ihre Stelle treten Optionen, denen man nunmehr als verwirklichtbaren Wünschen gehorchen soll. Die Realisierung möglichst vieler Optionen wird zum Inbegriff des Lebenssinns; es entwickelt sich ein massiver gesellschaftlicher Druck in Richtung auf Optionenrealisierung. Die Menschen sind jedoch durch die Optionenvielfalt verwirrt und überfordert und die Multioptionalität löst systematisch nicht ein, was sie verspricht.“

<sup>481</sup> I have already discussed this issue indirectly in the “Embodied Consciousness” section in Chapter 3 (*Theory*) when analysing the enrolment of consumer subjectivity as a key to the successful implementation of HLTs. To wit, I quoted Gerhard Schulze on wellness as part of the “experience society”: “it is rational to believe the effectiveness promises of the producer, because one thereby increases the likelihood that the promised effect will set in.”

<sup>482</sup> Weichspüler in Kunst und Konsum, *Querformat*, op. cit.

<sup>483</sup> Cf. Kittner, Alma-Elisa & Scheller, Jörg, “Editorial”, *ibid.*, p. 2: „Wellness ist tief eingesickert in den Alltag der Wohlstandsgesellschaften und beschränkt sich längst nicht mehr auf Verwöhnangebote für Eliten. Wem das nötige Kleingeld für entspannende ‚Heublumenwickel‘ oder ‚Bergkräuterbäder‘ in einer Schweizer Luxustherme oder für eine Ayurveda-Kur auf Sri Lanka fehlt, für den gibt es erschwinglichere Lösungen. Nicht nur ‚Saunalandschaften‘ und ‚Erlebnisbäder‘, auch emotionalisierte Produktwelten im Low-Budget-Bereich kümmern sich um uns: Harmonietoast und Entspannungstee bringen die notwendige ‚Balance‘, Aloe Vera findet sich nicht nur in der Kosmetik, sondern auch im Yogurt, der ‚unsere Sinne verwöhnt‘, Marlboro verkauft selbst das Rauchen als entspannende Pilates-Übung.“

the concept— had actually presented his initial series of lectures on wellness (before any publications) to a Unitarian Church audience.<sup>484</sup> In a later article, he seems to have completely forgotten this religious background when describing the following development in the wellness movement:

Now comes yet another schism, also somewhat religious, between quasi-spiritual wellness and secular wellness. The former is based on faith, emotions, supernaturalism, the recovery movement, wishful thinking, weepy/swaying hand-holding, New Age mysticism, guru-worship and all things antediluvian and reprehensible; the latter is based on science, personal responsibility, critical thinking, exercise and fitness and a conscious quest for added meaning and purpose in life. As you might intuit, I favor the latter school of wellness.<sup>485</sup>

In Ardell's case, the perception of a well-defined schism may well be a reflection of current American positions on wellness but his rather scornful appraisal of spiritually-oriented wellness seems to be more a function of his personal sensitivity since he is (self-?)described as "[...] *the Well Infidel [who] favors evidence over faith, reason over revelation and meaning and purpose over spirituality*" in the wake of an article anticipating the potential demise of religion.<sup>486</sup> However, as far as I perceive it, there is no clear distinction between the more material and the more soulful aspects of wellness in the German/European context. What is obvious there though is that the spiritual is strongly commodified in both materialised and embodied forms –along the principles of recombination. With the "Ananda Tea" example, discussed in the "Commodification" section of Chapter 3 (Theory), I provided a good example of the former while Freidl, in her discussion of the spiritual component of wellness, draws our attention to the latter:

The sporty-spiritual age has already begun. Books catering to the wellness generation bear the distinctive titles of 'The Spirited Walker', 'Sweat your Prayers: Movements as Spiritual Practise' or 'Fitness is Religion' by Ray Kybartas, Madonna's fitness coach. Sport is becoming a daily ritual, one covers one's daily training programme like a prayer that also provides spiritual fulfilment.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Ardell, Donald, A (Very) Brief History of Wellness, 29.12.2000, online articles available here: <http://www.seekwellness.com/wellness/reports/2000-12-29.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>485</sup> Cf. Ardell, Donald B., "What Does Wellness Mean? A Schism in the Field Leads to Two Very Different Takes on the Concept!", 10.02.2004, online: <http://www.seekwellness.com/wellness/reports/2004-02-10.htm>. However, Ardell emphasises the fact that wellness is a rather tolerant syncretic ideology, cf. *ibid.*: "Unlike the religious schisms I described earlier, the quasi-spiritual and the secular "wings" or schools do not perceive the existence of a split—or at least don't make a big deal about it! Furthermore, nearly everyone involved in wellness promotion seems to respect and enjoy everyone else's company, no matter what he or she believes or favors. At the annual NWC, leaders of both camps exchange ideas freely, applaud and support speakers on both sides of the ideological divide and selectively pick and choose aspects of philosophy and programming from the opposing camp". [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>486</sup> Ardell, Donald B., "Which Shall Come First - The Rapture or the Fall of Religion?", *TPJ Magazine*, 27.02.2011, available online here: <http://tpjmagazine.us/20110227ardell>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>487</sup> Cf. Freidl, Claudia, *op. cit.*, p. 45: „Das sportlich-spirituelle Zeitalter hat bereits begonnen, auf die Wellnessgeneration warten Bücher mit den bezeichnenden Titeln, wie ‚Spirited Walking‘, ‚Sweating your Prayers: Movements as Spiritual Practise‘ oder ‚Fitness ist Religion‘ von Ray Kybartas, dem Fitnesstrainer von Madonna. Der Sport wird zum täglichen Ritual, wie ein Gebet vollzieht man täglich sein Trainingsprogramm und findet darin auch eine seelische Erfüllung.“ [Translation note: I have corrected the English book titles in my translation since some of them are mistakenly quoted in Freidl's original text]

Freidl also emphasises that this spiritual aspect is not confined to liturgy but extends to sacred texts, such as health and wellness handbooks, as well as to the authority of health prophets or gurus emulating a perceivedly polyphonic (and sometimes even polytheistic) Eastern mystical tradition instead of the more centralised dogmatism of Christian belief and practice.<sup>488</sup> But there again, faithful to the recombance ethic described in the previous chapter, the Eastern characteristics retained, such as energy circulation or inner harmony, remain superficial tokens or signs extracted from (more) coherent cultural traditions. Just, as in other realms of consumption, spirituality in wellness also obeys the escalation imperative of *“Bigger, Better, Faster, More”*<sup>489</sup> – a dimension crucial to both the work and leisure realms.

Indeed, the ironical definition of wellness I quoted above, also posited it as the link between pleasure and duty as well as sports and fun. It hinged, if not explicitly so, on the gradual dimming of the distinction between work and leisure. Peter Becker, in his analysis of the German “movement” or sports scene analyses this blurring of boundaries as follows: *“In these past few years a holistic body ecology was developed in the expectation of a new reconciliation between inner and outer nature, which had been divided into two life realms by modernity, a reconciliation that would also reunite the two fields of knowledge pertaining to them.”*<sup>490</sup> His emphasis then is more on the interplay between a subjective inner reality and an outside world. He then concretely tracks a transition from so-called “old body movements” to “new body movements” characterised by a number of dichotomies.

The first dichotomy he discusses is a transition from a form of “we-proximity” emblematised by sports association programmes such as “Trimm dich” [shape up] or “Sport ist im Verein am schönsten” [Sports in a club is the most enjoyable]<sup>491</sup> to an “I-proximity” (e.g. body therapies, tai chi chuan, yoga, expressive dancing, shiatsu). This dichotomy points towards the tension between the need to connect/communicate with others and the need to appropriate the self –through body-mediated experience. The second binomial outlined by Becker contrasts body movements seen as isolated purveyors of security (e.g. training and fitness programmes to invest in the future of the body, where efforts are directed towards regeneration and increased performance in other domains) with holistic body and movement representations (e.g. non isolated movement forms which are loosely related to health and/or nutrition as well as the social and natural environment, e.g. sauna or hiking and more generally “softer” in- and outdoor practices). This opposition therefore highlights the tension between the body as a resource and the body as an ecosystem. Finally, Becker contrasts old body movements characterized by a dynamic impulse into the movement

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<sup>488</sup> Cf. Freidl, Claudia, *ibid.*

<sup>489</sup> Cf. Freidl, Claudia, *ibid.*, p. 32. NB: The quote refers to the title of a 1992 album by the “4 Non Blondes” band, cf. e.g.: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bigger,\\_Better,\\_Faster,\\_More!](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bigger,_Better,_Faster,_More!) [website accessed Nov. 2011]

<sup>490</sup> Becker, Peter, *op. cit.*, p. 147: *„In den letzten Jahren entwickelte sich eine ganzheitliche Leibökologie die in Erwartung der Wiederversöhnung von innerer und äusserer Natur, die durch die Moderne entzweiten Lebensbereiche und die ihnen zugeordneten differenzierten Wissensgebiete wieder miteinander versöhnen will.“*

<sup>491</sup> Two popular slogans launched by the “Deutscher Sportbund”: the first (under the motto “Aktion Sport für alle”) in 1971 (cf. [http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect\[\]=7627](http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect[]=7627)) and the second in 2000 (cf. [http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect\[\]=3177](http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect[]=3177)). Cf. also Mörath, Verena, *op. cit.*; „Sport für alle“ – hoher Anspruch und große Erfolge“ on the website of the *Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund*: <http://www.dosb.de/en/organisation/philosophie/sport-fuer-alle/> and a description of the aims of the previous *Deutscher Sportbund* (which was absorbed by the former organisation in 2006): [http://www.sportunterricht.de/lksport/c\\_lebens.html](http://www.sportunterricht.de/lksport/c_lebens.html). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

realm through progress, performance and competition –where the body is perceived as an instrument– and new body movements viewed as providing a realm of aesthetic experimentation where the body is seen as a bearer of signs. This third dichotomy thus emphasises the tension between controlling and playing with (or experiencing) the body.<sup>492</sup>

The author then emphasises that even though these dichotomies are a bit artificial, they make the fundamental options clear. Moreover, these options are reconcilable within individual lifestyles and indeed often complement each other harmoniously in everyday life. In this context, the new movement culture provides a form of repairing process that compensates for what is perceived as the loss of social relations and orientation models triggered by modernity. It offers “*counter-lifestyle-scenarios wherein identity sketches and lifestyle desires, which cannot be lived out in other realms, can be articulated and enables the longed-for bringing together of self-image and world-image*”.<sup>493</sup> Becker’s conclusions thus not only apply to the “movement realm” but can be adapted to other aspects of fitness and wellness such as nutrition, cosmetics and alternative or mainstream body therapies and practices. Nevertheless, this soothing and seemingly liberating vision of a harmonious co-existence between outside and inside, work and leisure or discipline and regeneration should not obscure the more troubling undercurrent I hinted at when discussing Jeremy Rifkin’s ambivalent views earlier on in this chapter. Indeed, wellness, just as biotechnologies, is implicitly predicated upon a corporate, highly commodified health ethos.

### **Fitness and wellness: a new form of internalised lifestyle discrimination?**

Alain Ehrenberg, a French sociologist, in his book on depression as the mental disease of the post-industrial era, traces the impact of post-Fordist production on contemporary “flexible management” strategies:

In the corporate environment, the disciplinarian (Taylorian and Fordian) models of human resource management are gradually being replaced by norms inciting the personnel to adopt autonomous behaviours, even in the lower ranks of the hierarchy. [...] The modes of regulation and domination of the work force are less based on mechanical obedience than on initiative: responsibility, the capacity to evolve and make projects, motivation, flexibility, etc. are the tenets of a new managerial liturgy. [...] Today’s human relationship engineers strive towards the production of autonomy. It is less a question of submitting the bodies than of enlisting the emotions and the mental abilities of each wage-earner.<sup>494</sup>

But the trends that apply to the world of work organisation –characterised by a gradual shift from a hard(-ware) to a soft(-ware) vision of human engineering– are also neatly mirrored by contemporary developments in the realm of health. As already hinted at in the “Commodification” and “Embodied consciousness” sections of Chapter 3 (*Theory*),

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<sup>492</sup> Becker, Peter, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., p. 150: „[...] *Gegenentwürfe von Lebensführungen, in denen sich Identitätswürfe und Lebenswünsche artikulieren können, die an anderer Stellen nicht gelebt werden können, bzw. in denen sich Selbstbild und Weltbild in eine ersehnte Einheit bringen lassen.*“

<sup>494</sup> Ehrenberg, Alain, *La Fatigue d’être soi : dépression et société*, op. cit., p. 199: « *Dans l’entreprise, les modèles disciplinaires (taylorien et fordien) de gestion des ressources humaines reculent au profit de normes qui incitent le personnel à des comportements autonomes, y compris en bas de la hiérarchie. [...] Les modes de régulation et de domination de la force de travail s’appuient moins sur l’obéissance mécanique que sur l’initiative: responsabilité, capacité à évoluer, à former des projets, motivation, flexibilité, etc., dessinent une nouvelle liturgie managériale. [...] les ingénieurs en relation humaine d’aujourd’hui s’ingénient à produire de l’autonomie. Il s’agit moins de soumettre les corps que de mobiliser les affects et les capacités mentales de chaque salarié* ».

individuals are no longer required to blindly follow dictatorial “body-mechanistic” laws from their GPs in the elaboration of health strategies. Instead, they are strongly encouraged to draw on a number of softer “bodies of knowledge” from a wide range of sources that –at least to some extent– take into account both the specificities of their individual physiologies and their subjective needs. Moreover, the active fostering of health and well-being is perceived as an inroad into successful personality management as well as an effective HR strategy:

Nowadays, employees are no longer willing to sacrifice themselves for a company that does not provide job satisfaction. People want to be happy at work. Hence companies have to prevent team haemorrhage as well as final departures by providing “better-being” in order to foster “better-doing”. Emotions and pleasure in the work realm –concepts that were long taboo– have thus gained in meaningfulness and dissemination. Managers are currently increasingly aware of the fact that happiness is the guarantor of an improved work performance. They have recently realised that employees’ achievements and efficiency are directly linked to their vital energy. In an age of transmodernity, neomanagement or more simply in an age when companies agree that investments in the “social pole” have become indispensable (now that the predominance of the economic and environmental poles has been questioned), Wellness Management provides a valuable option. Nowadays, it is one of the axes of prospective management.<sup>495</sup>

Nevertheless, just as “happy autonomy” is not a self-generating property in the corporate world –but has to be more or less subtly induced and controlled– there are matching incentives and strictures in body management. For the American context, Peter Conrad and Diana Walsh convincingly describe how in the course of the 1970s, so-called EAPs (employee assistance programmes), worksite “wellness” programmes as well as drug screening initiatives began to increasingly encroach upon employees’ private lives and lifestyles,<sup>496</sup> to wit:

Wellness programs consist of health education screening, and/or intervention designed to change employees’ behaviour in a healthward direction by reducing known health risks, especially those felt to be within employees’ own control. Programs range from single interventions to a whole menu of alternatives and in some cases include well-integrated long-term strategies [...]. Wellness programs may include hypertension screening and referral, aerobic exercise and physical fitness instruction, nutrition education and weight control, stress management, smoking cessation, instruction in how to avoid and/or live with

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<sup>495</sup> Sofere, Dona (alias Dominique Annet), op. cit.: «*Aujourd’hui, il n’est plus question de se sacrifier pour une entreprise qui ne vous donne pas du plaisir à travailler. Les gens veulent être heureux au boulot. Les entreprises doivent donc prévenir l’hémorragie dans les équipes ou les départs définitifs et apporter du mieux-être pour obtenir du mieux-faire. L’affectivité, le plaisir au travail, termes tabous il y a peu de temps, commencent à prendre sens et à faire tâche d’huile. Les dirigeants prennent actuellement conscience que c’est en étant heureux qu’on travaille le mieux. Depuis peu, ils ont acquis la conviction que l’efficacité, les résultats du personnel, dépendent de son énergie vitale. A l’heure de la transmodernité, du néomanagement ou plus simplement à l’heure où l’entreprise concède la nécessité d’investissements dans le « pôle social » (après la prédominance des pôles économiques et environnementaux), le Wellness Management apporte une réponse de choix. Il est aujourd’hui un des axes du management prospectif.* » .

<sup>496</sup> Until the 1970s, occupational health/medicine was strictly confined to problems directly caused by work or affecting work performance such as e.g. work-related injuries or alcoholism –and this for a number of reasons. Among them were occupational physicians’ reluctance to encroach upon the terrain of private physicians and unions’ concern over the intrusion of corporations into the private sphere of employees. Cf. Conrad, Peter & Walsh, Diana C., “The New Corporate Health Ethic: Lifestyle and the Social Control of Work”, *International Journal of Health Services*, Vol. 22, Nr 1, 1992, pp. 89-111.

back injury, cancer risk screening and reduction, self-care and health information. Many programs begin with some type of 'health risk appraisal' to quantify employees' health risks and inspire them to undertake a regimen to break their risky habits and presumably improve their health.<sup>497</sup>

The fact that companies have at last realised that health is not confined to the occupational sphere may be considered positive, however, the authors here perceive a potentially big problem in the generalisation of screening procedures and the fact that screening is progressively expanding to all sorts of diseases and (bad) habits, thus covertly contributing to a new breed of lifestyle discrimination.<sup>498</sup> However, the authors note that participation in these programmes is (still) voluntary but rendered attractive by a number of more or less coercive incentives -from sports gear and cash to a more intangible factor that may influence raises and promotions. Strikingly, the corporate fitness offer itself is a powerful incentive since *"In virtually all of the comprehensive programs we have visited or examined, fitness activities – aerobics, running, jogging, exercising with special equipment, and the like – are by some distance the most popular and frequently utilized of the program's offering."* However, participation in the programmes is difficult to assess and, ironically, they tend to attract the white-collar employees who seem to need them the least since they *"are younger, somewhat healthier, and already pursuing fitness on their own."*<sup>499</sup>

Moreover, *"although certain program components may be 'cost-effective,' in that they more than return the rather modest investments required to support them",*<sup>500</sup> the authors emphasise that even if health-care costs have sky-rocketed, the economic argument is not really watertight since health promotion rationales display serious conceptual flaws:

First, since spouses and dependents normally account for two-third or more of corporate health expenditures and retirees account for increasingly large shares of many firms' health costs, programs seriously directed at affecting the costs of employee health benefits would be marketed aggressively to these populations outside the active workforce, and seldom are. Second, any cost savings from preventing illness in the future by reducing stress, eliminating risk factors, or treating drug abuse are unlikely to be realized immediately except in the rare case. Most potential savings are deferred, yet turnover rates in U.S. industry are averaging as high as 50 percent in ten years, so it is unclear how much individual companies could accrue in cost savings. Third, for the many companies that cover retirees' health care, keeping future retirees alive longer could actually cost more, not less. Fourth, while controlling costs may be a stated rationale, it has been the rare corporation that has made any kind of attempt to track the economic impact of programs.<sup>501</sup>

Thus, despite the fact that the necessary cost-containment evaluations may be difficult and expensive to carry out, cost-cutting is debunked as an *"acceptable rationale"* for companies to cover the fact that the issue here is *"more about problems of social control in the workplace and workers' productivity than about problems of medical care cost control and workers' health."*<sup>502</sup> Conrad and Walsh perceive this trend as part of the historical

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<sup>497</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>498</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 99-100 & p. 104.

<sup>499</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>500</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*

development of worker control –from externalised to internalised measures and from exercising discipline to fostering devotion:

Rather than the formal rules of the bureaucratic model, emphasis is more squarely placed on ‘shared values,’ which are usually the corporation’s values. Whereas Taylorism standardized the work process, the new corporate health ethic standardizes the worker by selecting and shaping employees on the basis of their lifestyles. [...] Corporate goals remain unchanged – to maximize productivity and profitability; only the means to those ends is being transformed.<sup>503</sup>

Even if corporate health measures in Germany may still boast less of a stranglehold on workers than in the U.S., German workers as consumers can hardly avoid becoming the engineers of their own health even if they may have more of a choice between various strategic options. A good institutional illustration of this “reward and accountability” phenomenon can be found in the field of health insurance. In Germany, the last decade or so has witnessed an increase in voluntary disease prevention or management programmes marketed by health insurances.<sup>504</sup> While providing information, professional support and networking facilities in areas as diverse as dietary recommendations, sports advice or hygiene as well as a broad variety of fitness and wellness classes (not to mention material infrastructure such as so-called “health trails”), these programmes also require registered individuals to actively participate in terms of reporting to professionals, exchanging information with peers, attending workshops or conferences, eating healthily, working out regularly, etc. If participation in these programmes is still voluntary, one can easily foresee how the increasing privatisation of healthcare could lead to similarly compulsory (or at least more coercive) measures as in the U.S.

Thus, the trend towards autonomy and flexibility in a post-Fordist work organisation has direct consequences for bodies employed in this context. As Ehrenberg suggested, bodies in post-industrial economies may no longer be submitted to concrete mechanical moulding but

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., p. 106. The authors even ask: “Does the new health ethic foreshadow a return to the tenets of welfare capitalism, discredited four decades ago, now cloaked in less overtly paternalistic and perhaps more acceptable garb?” Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>504</sup> For instance, the AOK, a statutory health insurance, describes its bonus program [AOK Prämienprogramm] as follows: „Wir schreiben Ihnen Punkte gut: für sportliche Aktivitäten, für die Teilnahme an Veranstaltungen, für Vorsorgeuntersuchungen und vieles mehr. Diese Punkte können Sie gegen attraktive Prämien eintauschen.“ (From [http://www.aok.de/index.php?logurl=/index.php?bl\\_neu=4&logurl=/bay/rd/125459.htm&bl\\_neu=4](http://www.aok.de/index.php?logurl=/index.php?bl_neu=4&logurl=/bay/rd/125459.htm&bl_neu=4):). Another preventive programme listed on the same web page promises up to EUR 300.- in exchange for personal accountability providing „Sie leben gesund, nehmen alle Vorsorgeuntersuchungen wahr und brauchen eigentlich nie ein Rezept.“. Patients are even offered up to EUR 500.- if they are willing to forego some of the insurance’s services [the so-called „AOK-Wahltarife“]. Another relatively new offer is a chronic disease management programme [the so-called „AOK-Curaplan“] that encourages patients suffering from e.g. breast cancer, diabetes types I and II or coronary heart diseases to actively participate in preventive and monitoring measures (cf. <http://www.aok.de/?logurl=%2Fnavi%2Ftopnav%2Fsuche.php>). A similar incentive is also described in the field of dental health, when tooth replacement becomes inevitable: „Die AOK belohnt Patienten, die regelmäßig ihre Zähne gepflegt und Kontrolluntersuchungen beim Zahnarzt wahrgenommen haben. Sie erhalten einen höheren Zuschuss.“ [The AOK website was originally accessed in April and May 2007; unfortunately, the links are no longer valid –hence the original quotes are inaccessible– but these programmes still exist and the essence of the discourse remains very similar]. Other insurances such as BKK or Securvita provide similar incentives, cf. e.g.:

[http://www.bkk-deutsche-bank.de/content/leistungen\\_bkk-bkk\\_bonus\\_plus.html](http://www.bkk-deutsche-bank.de/content/leistungen_bkk-bkk_bonus_plus.html)

or

[http://www.securvita.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF-Dateien/krankenkasse/m-Bonusprogramm\\_70.pdf](http://www.securvita.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-Dateien/krankenkasse/m-Bonusprogramm_70.pdf)

(where –significantly enough– points are described as “health miles”...) [these websites accessed Aug. 2011]

their disciplining or conditioning is increasingly achieved through the emotional and mental incentives developed by human engineering. Since obvious mechanical work pressure can no longer be blamed directly for ill health –civilisation diseases often being the long-term, hard-to-trace multifactorial consequences of excessive sedentariness, not only can the province of health prevention be gradually shifted towards employees (hence consumers) but it can also be increasingly re-ascribed to the leisure sphere, i.e. beyond working hours. In this context, just as corporate employees have to show mental or emotional flexibility and initiative to cope with the unpredictable fluctuations of the global stock market, they must –as consumers– take responsibility for the growing immobilisation hence the fuzzy risk potential of their bodies:

Responsibility, like health, is a primary value, a lodestar on the horizon of modernity based on the philosophy of the Enlightenment. [...] in the slipstream of technological advances, a number of small and at first barely noticeable steps attach new meaning to the concept of responsibility by adapting it to what is technically feasible. Anyone who does not play along thus appears irresponsible – suspect, if not downright guilty.<sup>505</sup>

However, this sense of responsibility is engineered in such a way as to make participation in the system appear not only voluntary but even desirable. Indeed, ideologically speaking, the new individual management of the body as prescribed by the doctrines of fitness and wellness, somewhat chillingly echoes the “friendly” and desire-powered commercial eugenics so ironically described by Jeremy Rifkin in his initial quote.<sup>506</sup> But just as the new flexible work ethic is not articulated in a world of endlessly satisfying self-development and -fulfilment options, the desire for a healthy (i.e. a fit, attractive and well) body is anchored in an economy of lack. In fact more than the “desire”, one should probably speak of individuals’ increasing “need” for performance, resistance, resilience etc. –a need that is triggered by the perception of a myriad health threats in contemporary society:

The structuring of a new health consciousness is worthy of notice, a consciousness instigated by individuals’ discovery that they themselves must negotiate with the environment in order to remain healthy or to avoid illness. The popularisation of the stress concept, which was first conceived in a laboratory, points to significant adjustments: one is personally responsible for illness, one must become the mediator of one’s body –a seismograph measuring pressures– and one must cultivate scepticism towards food, and even towards one’s own nature. The body and the self thus gradually merge into a type of negative synthesis and illnesses can only be understood as an interaction between the body, the self and the dominating norms of society.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>506</sup> Cf. also Volkwein, Karin A.E., op. cit., p. XIV: *“While the previous fitness movements were dictated and supported from the outside, e.g., the military, national leaders, and employers, it could be argued that this new fitness development is driven by individuals from within. This might be a major reason why this latest fitness movement has been much more influential than its predecessors and is on the brink of becoming a ‘global’ cultural phenomenon.”*

<sup>507</sup> Rittner, Volker, op. cit., p. 47: *„Bemerkenswert sind die Strukturen eines neuen Gesundheitsbewußtseins, angestiftet durch die Entdeckung des Individuums, daß es selbst mit der Umwelt verhandeln muß, um gesund zu bleiben bzw. Krankheit zu vermeiden. Die Popularisierung des Streßkonzeptes, das zuerst in einem Labor konzipiert wurde, deutet auf wesentliche Umstellungen: man ist selbst für die Krankheit verantwortlich, man muß Moderator seines Körpers sein, Seismograph von Belastungen, skeptisch gegenüber der Nahrung, skeptisch gegenüber den eigenen Eigenschaften.(\*) Körper und Selbst rücken zusammen, in einer Art negativen Synthese, die Krankheiten lassen sich nur verstehen als Zusammenspiel von Körper, Selbst und herrschenden Normen der Gesellschaft.“*

In this model of health prevention, there is no room left for the agency of a divinity or fate external to the individual and less and less room for the agency of viruses, microbes or genetic eccentricities. Instead, the entire burden seems to rest on individuals' accountability: danger is ubiquitous and individuals must therefore cultivate a continuous awareness of inner and environmental threats while constantly negotiating with both. Thus, a culture of external risks upon which the modern subject had relatively little direct influence (in a centrally controlled biomedical model) has been replaced by an increasingly internalised risk consciousness that systematically confronts late modern subjects with their own potential and shortcomings. Thus, it is inappropriate lifestyle and misguided self-management that are seen as representing the truly endemic threats to health.

Muriel Gillick debunks this myth by reminding her readers that personal prevention provides but an illusion of control since heredity, culture and chance play a much greater role in the determination of mortality.<sup>508</sup> Moreover, even from a large-scale economic perspective, she posits that prevention may only save money in the short term.<sup>509</sup> Thus, her parting shot reminds her readers of the limits of personal prevention, while pointing to its potential ideological danger:

One of the great insights of the democratic political tradition of the past half century is the recognition that, even in America, much that needs improving is outside the personal purview, an understanding that the joggers seem to prefer to deny. And surely one of the major intellectual triumphs of the past hundred years has been the relocation of the basis of disease in science rather than in sin, a development which health promotion, for all its virtues, is at risk of undermining.<sup>510</sup>

In largely secularised societies, "sin" as a religious notion is likely to be replaced by a much more diffuse but no less potent sense of guilt that places the entire responsibility for health on individuals' shoulders.

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<sup>508</sup> Gillick, Muriel R, op. cit., p. 384. This seems to be underscored by the figures provided by George Sage illustrating the minimal improvement of fitness in American youth over the past 40 years, cf. Sage, George H., "The Political Economy of Fitness in the United States", *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., p. 382: "Certainly prevention does save money in the short run, by substituting inexpensive health education programs for expensive programs such as more health insurance coverage or provision of artificial hearts. Over the long run, though, the claim that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is more rhetoric than reality on a societal level: preventing sudden death from a heart attack at age 65 may well lead to greater medical expenses when that individual dies a lingering death from stroke or cancer ten years later." Gillick should know since she is an acknowledged specialist in the healthcare of elderly patients...

<sup>510</sup> Ibid., p. 384. She is rejoined here by Maguire: "[...] the delegation of responsibility for health to the individual is deeply problematic: health is perceived as a personal problem of choices and motivation, despite the fundamentally social and structural causes of illness and attitudes towards health." Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., pp. 46-47. Further Maguire elaborates as follows: "Drawing on Mills (1959), the fat/fit paradox of the past three decades, in which fitness industries have boomed alongside increasing rates of population inactivity and obesity, can be understood as the rational outcome of addressing a social, structural problem with an individualized solution. The result has been a further entrenchment of the existing class divide in health, and the rationalization of health and exercise as matters of appearance management and status consumption." Conrad and Walsh also concur: "[the] emphasis on individual responsibility and self-reliance can divert attention from environmental or social systemic problems and can serve as a rationale for reducing medical care expenditures." Cf. Conrad, Peter & Walsh, Diana C., op. cit., p. 99.

Over the course of two books, *“Illness as Metaphor”* and *“AIDS and Its Metaphors”*,<sup>511</sup> Susan Sontag has pointedly explored the metaphors linked to the experience of cancer (compared to tuberculosis) and later AIDS. Building, among others, on her own experience with cancer, she uncovers the frighteningly obscurantist reactions triggered by the onset of one of the most common modern-day diseases: *“Any disease that is treated as a mystery and acutely enough feared will be felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious. Thus a surprisingly large number of people find themselves being shunned by relatives and friends and are the object of practices of decontamination by members of their household, as if cancer, like TB, were an infectious disease.”*<sup>512</sup> Furthermore, not only do civilisation diseases threaten the protection or cohesion offered by one’s intimate sphere, they just as devastatingly impact one’s larger social and professional life: *“Since getting cancer can be a scandal that jeopardizes one’s love life, one’s chance of promotion, even one’s job, patients who know what they have tend to be extremely prudish, if not outright secretive, about their disease.”*<sup>513</sup> Thus, while sin was “simply” perceived as a misalignment from divine will, late modern guilt rests on much shakier ground since the multi-causality of most contemporary diseases makes it extremely difficult to identify a single agent or behaviour responsible for them.<sup>514</sup>

The anthropologist Emily Martin sheds an interesting light on this phenomenon through her research on the perception of immunity.<sup>515</sup> She especially investigates the power of bodily metaphors (present both in scientific and lay discourse) to encapsulate and structure biophysiological understandings of the body. This enables her to trace a metaphorical genealogy from a body viewed as a machine with sharp contours modelled on mass production/conveyor belt processes through a body seen as a castle with fortifications to a body interpreted as an extremely complex and often chaotic system, which paradoxically entails a much greater adaptability and flexibility:

This new type of body that is attuned to its environment presupposes that inner processes are the guarantors of health preservation. In stark contrast with the sharply designed and closed contours of body illustrations typical of the 1950s and before, contemporary pictures increasingly confront us with a body in movement, not quiet. Moreover it is a body that is utterly devoid of skin, thus uncovering the inner operations of our protective system.<sup>516</sup>

In this context, Martin points to a worldview that is gaining increasing significance in immunological circles – a worldview that substitutes the image of a “dance with” for that of a “battle against” external enemies.<sup>517</sup> Nevertheless, this nakedly flexible dance required from

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<sup>511</sup> Originally published in 1978 and 1988 respectively and available in a single book, e.g.: Sontag, Susan, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*, New York: Picador, 2001.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>514</sup> In Chapter 7 (*Conclusion*), I discuss the moral tenor of fitness and wellness in more detail.

<sup>515</sup> Cf. Martin, Emily, *Flexible Bodies. Tracking Immunity in America from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

<sup>516</sup> Cf. Martin, Emily, “Die neue Kultur der Gesundheit: Soziale Geschlechtsidentität und das Immunsystem in Amerika”, in: *Physiologie und industrielle Gesellschaft*, op. cit., p. 519: „Bei dieser neuen Art von Körper, der auf seine Umwelt abgestimmt ist, zählen für die Erhaltung der Gesundheit innere Vorgänge. In auffallendem Gegensatz zu den randscharfen, an den Konturen geschlossenen Bildern des Körpers in den fünfziger Jahren und davor zeigen uns daher die heutigen Bilder immer mehr einen Körper in Bewegung, nicht in Ruhe, und einen ganz und gar hautlosen Körper dazu, der die inneren Abläufe unseres schützenden Systems enthüllt.“

<sup>517</sup> In turn, Martin also comes to the conclusion that the flexibility entailed by this metaphor is a reflection of the „flexibility“ obsession typical of the professional realm: „Abgesehen von den Bildern des Körpers, die von

individuals does not really take into account the strain of permanent vulnerability, which is why Volker Rittner stresses the material and emotional need to erect a series of protective ramparts against insecurity:

The perception of stress, i.e. the increased perception of pathogenic factors such as the carcinogenicity of beer or chips and ambition-driven infarction risks, which like earlier epidemics or medieval plague outbreaks can just as surprisingly erupt out of normality, leads to an enhancement of health values and to a heightened demand for health, a type of health that departs from official normality and its underlying rationality. Vulnerable individuals thus seek to protect themselves by means of concrete defences, through a healthy and fit body that wards off danger, but which has to be supplied with a certain amount of movement and relaxation, through a concrete life world in the sense expounded by Schütz, that is through a string of trusted, close and intimate things, through behaviours and habits, in which concrete action, being with friends and naturalness play new roles. These are worlds that reject incongruities and thus the danger of stress.<sup>518</sup>

This vision therefore neatly ties in with the ideological tenets of fitness and wellness as I have striven to depict them in this chapter. It emphasises a vision of health prevention that can be envisaged as potentially endless concentric circles surrounding the individual. These circles do not seek to isolate a pathogen inside or outside the body (and its repercussions on the immune system) but are intended as protective (if breathable...) membranes that subjectively filter and ward off the threats of the environment –whether the latter is viewed as almost shrink-wrapped to the body or conceived as a much broader biotope.<sup>519</sup>

Strangely enough then, even though Foucault was not yet in a position to apprehend the repercussions of fitness and wellness for late modern subjects, his distinction between four types of technologies, which I mentioned in Chapter 3 (*Theory*), also uncannily applies to fitness and wellness, but with a twist. In this case, Foucault's definitions actually overlap because ALL four of them apply to fitness and wellness technologies. To quote him again:

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*Immunologen und von Nicht-WissenschaftlerIn gleichermassen hervorgebracht werden, haben unsere Forschungen auch gezeigt, dass Flexibilität, Anpassungsfähigkeit und die Fähigkeit, als Antwort auf eine sich ständig verändernde Umwelt behende und geschmeidig einen raschen Wandel zu vollziehen, zu den idealen Eigenschaften von Betriebsorganisationen, Regierungen, Bildungseinrichtungen und anderen Institutionen avancieren.“ Ibid. p. 519.*

<sup>518</sup>Rittner, Volker, op.cit., pp. 48-49: „Die Wahrnehmung von Streß bzw. die gesteigerte Wahrnehmung von pathogenen Faktoren, die aus der Normalität in ähnlich überraschender Weise herausbrechen können wie früher die Epidemien und Pestzüge des Mittelalters -die Kanzerogenität von Bier, von Pommes frites, die Infarktgefährdung durch Ehrgeiz usw.-, führt zu einer Aufwertung des Gesundheitsmotivs und einer verstärkten Nachfrage von Gesundheit, einer Gesundheit, die sich aus der offiziellen Normalität und ihrer Vernunft entfernt. Die verwundbaren Individuen suchen sich durch Ringe der Konkretetheit zu umgeben und zu schützen, durch den Ring eines gesund und fit gehaltenen Körpers, der die Gefährdung abwehrt, dem ein bestimmtes Maß an Bewegung und Entspannung zuzuführen ist, des weiteren durch den Ring einer konkreten Lebenswelt im Schützenschen Sinne, d.h. durch eine Kette vertrauter, naheliegender und intimer Dinge, durch Verhaltensweisen und Gewohnheiten, in denen die konkrete Tätigkeit, das Zusammensein mit Freunden, die Beziehung, die Natürlichkeit neue Rollen spielen. Es sind Welten, die Inkongruenzen und damit Streßgefährdung abweisen.“

<sup>519</sup> Gunther Gebauer still sees the fit body as “a kind of fortress. Like an armor, its task is to protect the person from sickness, aging, loss of attractiveness, incompetence. Skin, muscles, hair are honed for the defense against every possible threat to the person. The hardness of the armor also wards off the socially undesirable, locks out everything that one is not, to which one does not want to belongs – the fat, the flabby, the flaccid, as well as the features of other social groups or classes with which one does not want to be associated.” Gebauer, Gunther, op. cit., p. 89.

As a context, we must understand that there are four major types of these “technologies,” each a matrix of practical reason: (1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.<sup>520</sup>

Indeed, the HLTs engendered by fitness and wellness clearly participate in an ideology of production, transformation and manipulation of physical capital.<sup>521</sup> This can also be understood in the Bourdieusian sense of embodied capital. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*), Bourdieu distinguished between three main forms of capitals: economic, social and cultural. The cultural category he then subdivided into embodied, objectified and institutionalised. He saw embodied capital as the consciously acquired as well the passively “inherited” properties of the self.<sup>522</sup> Building on the notion of “embodied capital” initially developed by Bourdieu and later Chris Shilling,<sup>523</sup> Wolf-Dietrich Brett and Hans Peter Brandl-Bredenbeck show how the notion of embodied capital as bodily performance is currently if not eclipsed at least supplemented by other dimensions, such as a youthfulness, dynamism, sportiness, attractiveness etc. that facilitate the conversion of embodied capital into other forms of capital.<sup>524</sup> But, to come back to Foucault, HLTs also draw upon and create a complex and extensive web of signs –already partially discussed in Chapter 3 (*Theory*) but which will be further illustrated in Chapters 5 (*Food Case-Study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics Case-study*). Finally, they are situated at the crossroads between a controlling or disciplining impulse that tends to objectify the body both aesthetically and functionally (especially fitness) and an opportunity for a holistic if commodified self-(re)creation (particularly wellness).

In this chapter, I therefore hope to have convincingly demonstrated the profound ambivalence characterising the fitness and wellness ideologies –hence also that of the products, services and practices (what I have labelled as HLTs) they have generated. By means of a concise historical overview, I have attempted to show that if preoccupations with bodily design, productivity and self-fulfilment are not modern phenomena, the industrial revolution and its repercussions have conspired to radically alter the relationship between bodies and technology. In this paradigm, the body oscillates between a number of roles: a physically and emotionally burnt-out victim of the conveyor belt tyranny (as a by-product of

<sup>520</sup> *Technologies of the Self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 59: “Investments in self-presentation – through fitness activities, as well as dieting, cosmetic surgery, fashion and so forth – can thus be understood as modes of developing one’s physical capital in order to improve one’s exchange value”.

<sup>522</sup> Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, op. cit.

<sup>523</sup> Shilling shows how physical capital can be converted into the French sociologist’s initial categories of social, economic or cultural capital but beyond that, how these forms of capital are necessarily embodied. Cf. Shilling, Chris, “Educating the body: physical capital and the production of social inequalities”, *Sociology*, vol. 25, no. 4, 01.11.1991, pp. 653-672. For an apt exposition of this concept in the realm of sport, cf. Light, Richard, “The Body in the Social World and the Social World in the Body: Applying Bourdieu’s Work to Analyses of Physical Activity in Schools”, online article: <http://www.aare.edu.au/01pap/lig01450.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>524</sup> Cf. Brettschneider, Wolf-Dietrich & Brandl-Bredenbeck Hans Peter, *Sportkultur und jungendliches Selbstkonzept: eine interkulturelle vergleichende Studie über Deutschland und die USA*, Weinheim & München: Juventa Verlag, 1997, p. 246. Even if their analysis is primarily premised upon young people, to my mind, it can be extended to older generations.

modern efficiency), a machine in its own right (potentially benefiting from the same rationalised resources as its industrial oppressor, i.e. electricity, radium, appropriate ergonomics, etc.) and a “natural” self-regenerating essence capable of escaping or subverting the “artificial” industrial order. Finally, I have shown how the sedentary aftermath of the industrial revolution, has turned this body-technology nexus upon its head since it locates bodies at the intersection between perniciously passive and regeneratively active technologies that definitively blur the boundaries between subject and object, inside and outside, work and leisure, nature and technology, physics and aesthetics, while reinstating individuals’ full responsibility in the production and preservation of health. In this sense then, fitness and wellness can definitely be viewed as a new form of internalised lifestyle discrimination embedded in the logic of late modern production and consumption.<sup>525</sup>

It is this trajectory of internalising self-discipline which I would like to examine in the following case-studies, Chapter 5 (*Food case-study*) and Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics case-study*), by concretely focusing on the discursive negotiation of health, beauty and well-being imperatives as they pertain to food and cosmetics during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have chosen to analyse discourse around food and cosmetics because these two domains display a shift in the tension between inside and out, as well as between deep and superficial action and transformation. Indeed, over time, even if the ingestion of suitable foods is seen as one of the main tools to sustain the health of the metabolism and hence also manage appropriate physical space –and, more generally, appearance– it is increasingly pushed as a mood and mind enhancer. Conversely, cosmetics are primarily geared at supporting external appearance since they are mainly focused on the skin. But since the skin is the body’s largest and most ubiquitous organ, it also represents a particularly revealing reflection of bodily age and inner imbalances. So similarly to food, cosmetics are increasingly mediated as contributing not only to the physiology of the skin but also to the maintenance of identity, youth and a healthful appearance.

Thus, as we shall see, although both food and cosmetics decisively contribute to appearance and health, they do so in very different ways. Food’s contribution is perceived as indirect: over the two decades under consideration, a number of dimensions are still being actively negotiated. Indulgence is pitted against duty, convenience against naturalness and modern healthfulness against traditional wholesomeness. Moreover, the effect of these dimensions on the body only becomes increasingly explicit –if still controversial– towards the end of the period analysed. In the case of cosmetics, the link between use and effect is perceived as much more direct: the skin must imperatively look good since it is one of the pillars of impression management. Here, performance is of the essence and no ideological compromises can be made: authentic nature is technologically produced.<sup>526</sup>

In sum, both domains become indispensable tools to reveal and fashion identities and lifestyles, thus belying the classical proverb “*Beauty is only skin deep*” and with a much less

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<sup>525</sup> As Heiko Stoff pointedly puts it: „*Der Konsumkörper ist weder heroisch noch utopisch, er ist nicht verbessert, sondern nur optimiert und verschiedenen Formen der Normalisierung unterworfen. Es ist ein Mensch, an dem die Spuren der Arbeit und des Lebens nicht sichtbar sein sollen.*“ Cf. Stoff, Heiko, op.cit., p. 514.

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Böhme, Gernot, *Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, op. cit., p. 191: „*Kosmetik ist der Versuch, Schönheit von einem traditionellen in einen modernen Wert zu transformieren, d.h. von etwas, das gegeben oder zugeschrieben wird, in etwas, das man durch Leistung erreicht.*“

elitist connotation than was probably originally intended by Brillat-Savarin with his maxim “Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are”.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Brillat-Savarin, Jean-Anthelme, *Physiologie du goût*, Paris: Gabriel de Gonet, 1848 [1825], Aphorisme IV: « Dis-moi ce que tu manges et je te dirai ce que tu es. » Accessible online here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22741/22741-h/22741-h.htm>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

## CHAPTER 5

### SOUL FOOD: A CASE-STUDY

*It's 1980. Why don't you eat according to contemporary standards? We land on the moon. Computers are a matter of course, technical resources in the home as well. Indeed, we are modern. But we still feed ourselves as if we were heavy workers. And that makes us sluggish. Therefore to remain flexible, we must change our habits. We must compensate for a mainly sedentary job and eat less "heavily". Instead we must eat food that is richer in minerals, vitamins and protein.*<sup>528</sup>

*The brilliant wellness-couple: yogurt plus aloe vera. With them, it is now really easy to bring more energy and happiness into your life. Aloe is a first step and yogurt a further one. So just begin the day with Emmi ALOE VERA SENSITIVE YOGURT, do yourself a favour, replenish yourself with vitality and wellness.*<sup>529</sup>

#### Introduction

At face value, the contrast between consuming cottage cheese in the early 1980s and eating yogurt in the early 2000s could hardly be greater. Both experiences seem to have been engineered in radically different ways. The *jocca* quote emphasises technology, rationality and modernity in the management of food and the tone is so admonishing as to border on the moralising.<sup>530</sup> Cottage cheese in this context is seen as a tool to maintain fitness. On the other side of the spectrum, the *Emmi* quote focuses almost exclusively on emotion and well-being and its tone is much more suggestive than imperative. Here the yogurt has acquired the status of an ally, it is personified to the point of becoming "sensitive", suggesting that it will adapt to the individual consumer's emotional state. It would thus be tempting to simplify the trajectory of food culture mediation in the course of these two decades by stating that discourse on food evolves from a highly didactic and normative stance to a much more wishy-washy feel-good rhetoric. But even if this evolution reflects the dominant trend, it obscures the fact that just as holistic dimensions are present very early on, disciplinary attitudes towards food consumption do not disappear over time but are packaged in an

<sup>528</sup> Excerpt from an ad for Kraft's *jocca* cottage cheese in *freundin*, Heft 3, 1980: „Wir haben 1980. Warum essen Sie dann nicht zeitgemäss? Wir landen auf dem Mond. Computers sind selbstverständlich. Technische Hilfsmittel im Haushalt auch. Wir sind also modern. Aber wir ernähren uns, als wären wir heute noch alle Schwerarbeiter. Und das macht träge. Um beweglich zu bleiben, müssen wir deshalb unsere Gewohnheiten ändern. Für die meist sitzende Tätigkeit einen Ausgleich schaffen. Und weniger ‚schwer‘ essen. Statt dessen eine an Mineralstoffen, Vitaminen und Eiweiss reichere Nahrung zu uns nehmen.“ [Emphasis in original].

<sup>529</sup> Publicity for Emmi's Aloe Vera Sensitive Yogurt, from the yogurt's website, <http://www.emmi-aloe-vera.ch/CH/index-aloe/aloe-body/aloe-body-wellness.html>: „Das geniale Wellnesspaar: Jogurt plus Aloe Vera. Damit ist es jetzt besonders leicht, mehr Energie und mehr Freude ins Leben einzubauen. Aloe Vera ist ein Baustein, Jogurt ein weiterer. Also einfach den Tag mit einem Emmi ALOE VERA SENSITIVE JOGURT beginnen, sich Gutes tun, Vitalität und Wellness tanken.“ The yogurt was launched in Germany in 2002, cf. <http://group.emmi.com/ueber-emmi/emmi-geschichte.html>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>530</sup> Modernity in this discourse is explicitly tied to technological milestones: landing on the moon, the dissemination of computers (although they are not yet that self-evident in everyday working life) and the "automation" of the home. Interestingly though, it points to the cultural time lag between the penetration or dissemination of technologies and their cultural appropriation in the sense of evolving habits. Sluggishness is pictured as the fruit of this lag and lighter food as the redemption. But this redemption is based on a theoretical understanding that consumers are no longer "heavy-workers".

increasingly subtle coating of healthy indulgence – as I’m about to demonstrate in the following examples.

But before analysing contemporary sources, I would like to clarify the aims of this case-study. Indeed, against the backdrop of a booming food history production –especially from a history of technology perspective, I feel the need to methodologically demarcate my endeavour.<sup>531</sup> As stated in Chapter 2 (*Methodology*), I exclusively focus on a media discourse analysis, i.e. on the basis of feature articles and advertising mainly drawn from so-called “lifestyle magazines”, I examine how the discourse on food has evolved over the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how it has contributed to the negotiation of “healthy lifestyle” representations. In this respect, my study is not directly concerned with the de facto evolving consumption of various foodstuffs during this time span,<sup>532</sup> even if many of the articles I quote allude to statistics that seem to confirm what might otherwise be lightly dismissed as inflated media trends. Instead, I wish to draw attention to the historically recurring rationales that in turn celebrate and anathemise particular foods, diets and the lifestyles they more or less explicitly emblematised. In this respect, the cultural negotiation of “healthy” versus “unhealthy” and its correlates is certainly one of the most striking phenomena:

What was considered physiologically superfluous decades ago –such as dietary fibre– is now judged absolutely necessary in a physiologically appropriate diet. What was healthy yesterday is condemned as unhealthy today. Why? Right or wrong, healthy or unhealthy, natural or artificial are cultural definitions that only approximately match biological requirements, but never directly respond to natural demands. Indeed, there are no inborn mechanisms which ensure that human beings eat healthily. When they consciously do so –as far as they are able to– they leave the natural sphere and already move into the cultural one.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> In the introduction to a special issue on food and nutrition of the *Technikgeschichte* journal, Karin Zachmann provides a nice and compact overview of the history of food and diets from this perspective, cf. Zachmann, Karin, „Einleitung“, *Technikgeschichte*, Bd 78, Heft 3, 2011, pp. 175-185. Footnote 11 provides a number of seminal bibliographical references on the technologisation of food.

<sup>532</sup> To do this would require accessing a much broader variety of sources such as e.g. the “Ernährungsberichte” published every four years by the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung* or the “Nationale Verzehrstudien I & II” [mid-1980s and mid-2000s respectively] commissioned by the *Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz*, that provide concrete insights into German food consumption and diet linked to socio-economic, epidemiological and environmental considerations. Moreover, to my mind, doing justice to these sources would require overstressing the aims and boundaries of an already substantial study.

<sup>533</sup> Barlösius, Eva, *Soziologie des Essens: eine soziale und kulturwissenschaftliche Einführung in die Ernährungsforschung*, Weinheim & München: Juventa Verlag, 1999, p. 37: „Was vor Jahrzehnten als körperlich überflüssig bewertet wurde, wie die „Ballaststoffe“, wird seit einigen Jahren als unbedingt erforderlich für eine körperlich angemessene Ernährung beurteilt. Was gestern als gesund galt, wird heute als ungesund verworfen. Warum? Richtig oder verkehrt, gesund oder ungesund, naturgemäß oder unnatürlich sind kulturelle Festlegungen, die den biologischen Anforderungen immer nur näherungsweise entsprechen, aber nie unmittelbar auf die Naturgebundenheit reagieren. Denn es gibt keine angeborenen Mechanismen, die dafür sorgen, daß Menschen sich gesund ernähren. Tun sie dies bewußt, soweit ihnen dies möglich ist, verlassen sie die natürliche Sphäre, und sie bewegen sich bereits in der kulturellen.“ Based on Helmut Plessner’s concept of human “natural artificiality”, Barlösius further elaborates: „Der Wandel der Vorstellungen über eine natürliche Ernährung veranschaulicht, daß Essen beim Menschen die anthropologische Qualität der „natürlichen Künstlichkeit“ besitzt. Denn wie der Mensch sein biologisches Bedürfnis nach Nahrung befriedigt, ist nicht biologisch festgelegt, sondern ist sozio-kulturell geregelt – also natürlicherweise „kulturell“. Offenbar zeichnet sich der menschliche Körper durch ein so hohes Maß an Plastizität aus, daß verschiedenste sozio-kulturelle Regelungen ohne körperliche Beeinträchtigungen möglich sind. Menschen müssen und können ihre Eßweise

### Setting the scene

In the Germany of the early 1980s, “rational” and “conscious” do not seem to be the prime epithets to characterise food consumption. Indeed, the publication of a report by the German Nutrition Society [DGE: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung] in 1980 triggers a number of articles that dissect the German population’s allegedly appalling nutritional habits:

An increasing number of Germans are eating themselves to death. More than half die of nutrition-related diseases. This was revealed in the newest nutrition report ordered by the Federal Ministries of Health and Food from the German Nutrition Society. Germans eat too much fat, drink too much alcohol, do not know enough about appropriate diet – and are overweight. [...] The mortality rate linked to nutrition-related diseases has never been as high as today. 55 per cent of Germans die of heart and digestion diseases as well as diabetes mellitus (50 years ago: 16 per cent). Since 1952, the incidence of heart disease has met with a 227 per cent increase.<sup>534</sup>

Professor Werner Kübler from Gießen University traces this rather sobering state of affairs back to the increase in animal fats and the decrease in mineral-rich foods within the typical German diet, even if the total energy ingested from food sources has remained unchanged for the past seven decades.<sup>535</sup> In terms of concrete nutritional habits, shopping is still largely performed by women (75%) mainly in supermarkets (52%) and they buy “*less potatoes, legumes, cereals and milk but more fruit, vegetables, cheese, eggs, meat (pork) and poultry.*” Three meals a day are still the rule but there is a trend towards the recommended five. Stew [Eintopf] and the Sunday roast are still once-a-week staples and soup features regularly in the diet of a quarter of the population.<sup>536</sup> But what worries most authors is the widespread nutritional ignorance of the German population:

Almost two thirds of homemakers still have no idea about the calorie requirements for an adult. And more than half do not know what calorie means, but are aware that joule has replaced the calorie concept. Three quarters of the population still believes that margarine contains less fat than butter.<sup>537</sup>

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*selbst bestimmen und schaffen.*“ For more insights into the entanglement of nature and culture in the food realm, cf. also Böhme, Gernot, *Leibsein als Aufgabe: Leibphilosophie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*, op. cit., pp. 261-291 (“Stoffwechsel”).

<sup>534</sup> Reinhardt, Karl-Walter, „Immer mehr Deutsche schaufeln sich beim Essen ein frühes Grab“, *Die Welt*, 29. Juli 1980, Nr. 174, p. 3: „Immer mehr Deutsche essen sich zu Tode. Über die Hälfte stirbt heute an ernährungsbedingten Erkrankungen. Dies enthüllte jetzt der neueste Ernährungsbericht, den die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung (DGE) im Auftrag der Bundesministerien für Gesundheit und Ernährung erstellte. Die Deutschen essen zu fett, trinken zu viel Alkohol, wissen nicht genug über richtige Ernährung – und sind zu dick. [...] Noch nie war die Sterblichkeitsziffer durch ernährungsbedingte Erkrankungen so hoch wie heute. 55 Prozent der Deutschen sterben an Krankheiten des Kreislaufsystems, der Verdauungsorgane und Diabetes mellitus (vor 50 Jahren: 16 Prozent). Gegenüber 1952 nahmen die Erkrankungen der Herzkranzgefäße um 227 Prozent zu.“

<sup>535</sup> Elvers, Karin, „Die meisten Deutschen wissen nicht genau, was sie essen: Noch immer zu viel Fett und zuviel Zucker, aber auch zuviel Alkohol“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Nr. 217, 18.09.1980, p. 8.

<sup>536</sup> Reinhardt, Karl-Walter, op.cit.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.: „Fast zwei Drittel der Hausfrauen wissen immer noch nicht annähernd den Kalorienbedarf eines Erwachsenen. Und die Hälfte weiß nicht was unter Kalorien zu verstehen ist, wohl aber, dass Joule den Begriff Kalorie abgelöst hat. Drei Viertel der Bevölkerung glaubt immer noch Margarine sei fettärmer als Butter.“

Another article goes even further by affirming that “[m]ost citizens are not really aware of what they are eating. They only make a superficial distinction between good and evil: protein, vitamin C, fruit and vegetables are healthy; overweight, fat and calories are unhealthy.”<sup>538</sup> Consequently, this ignorance is exploited by manufacturers to lend a better image to their products.<sup>539</sup> But significantly enough, the already mentioned Professor Kübler suggests a “functionalising” of food to compensate for vitamin and mineral deficiencies –as practised by Americans and Israelis. But the author of the article remains sceptical: “only time will tell if adding vitamins to pretzel sticks and raspberry ice-cream will really better compensate for nutrient deficiency in children, adolescents and women than a complex diet.”<sup>540</sup> On the basis of recent studies and statistics, the journalist Stefan Gergely goes even further in the analysis of Germans’ reticence to both lose weight and eat more healthily:

So many just do not want to admit that they are overweight, and when they do admit it, they are not interested in the health aspect of nutrition: this aspect is clearly secondary for the majority of Germans – for 70 percent of them food represents pleasure. Even if taste and health imperatives were irreconcilable, 46 per cent would opt for the tasty and only 26 per cent for the healthy meal.<sup>541</sup>

So what appears to be a cognitive dissonance is in fact rooted in a conscious choice: pleasure over healthfulness. Of course, consumers’ warped body image is no doubt also powered by the increasingly negative social perception of obesity. But the main motivation to slim is aesthetic rather than health-oriented, especially in the case of women. Hence, even if the younger generation no longer believes that children ought to “lick their platters clean”, energy intake is not (yet) influenced by better knowledge. Therefore, the ascetic guidelines of health apostles do not seem to influence the population and comfort foods and drinks [Genussmittel] are perceived as a necessary ill (or happiness technique) to counter the stress of everyday life.<sup>542</sup>

### **1980-1982: Traditional indulgence or slim discipline?**

This state of affairs is strikingly reflected in the bicephalous trend championed by the lifestyle press of the day –be in terms of feature articles or advertisements for food products. Indeed, there is a palpable tension between a traditional “comfort” food orientation and a more rational “healthful” approach. At first glance however, from our

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<sup>538</sup> Elvers, Karin, op. cit.: „Die meisten Bürger wissen nicht genau, was sie essen. Sie unterscheiden nur oberflächlich zwischen gut und böse: Eiweiß, Vitamin C, Obst und Gemüse sind gesund, Übergewicht, Fett und Kalorien sind ungesund.“

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> Furtmayr-Schuh, Annelies, „Zu wenig Eisen, zu wenig Vitamine: Neue Formen der Mangelernährung nehmen zu“, *Die Zeit*, Nr 42, 10. October 1980, p. 66: „Bemüht, einen Ausgleich für die Mangelernährung einzelner Gruppen der Bevölkerung zu finden, schlug Kübler vor, die beliebtesten Nahrungsmittel mit den jeweiligen Mangelsubstanzen anzureichern, wie das die Amerikaner und Israelis schon geraume Zeit praktizieren. Ob indes die Vitaminisierung von Salzstangen und Himbeereis die Mangelernährung von Kindern, Jugendlichen und Frauen besser als eine Komplexe Ernährung beseitigen kann, wird sich erst noch herausstellen müssen.“

<sup>541</sup> Gergely, Stefan M., „Die Summe aller Laster ist konstant: Genuß und Irrationalität bestimmen nach wie vor die Eßgewohnheiten“, *Die Zeit*, Nr. 30, 18. Juli 1980, p. 43: „Viele wollen also gar nicht wahrhaben, dass sie zu dick sind, und wenn sie es sich eingestehen, dann schieben sie trotzdem den gesundheitlichen Aspekt in der Ernährung von sich: Dieser ist für die Mehrheit der Deutschen deutlich zweitrangig – für 70 Prozent ist Essen ein Genuß. Selbst wenn die Geschmacklichen und gesundheitlichen Anforderungen unvereinbar wären, würden sich 46 Prozent für die schmackhafte, aber nur 26 Prozent für die gesunde Mahlzeit entscheiden.“

<sup>542</sup> Especially since researchers still cannot ascertain the individual risk linked to the consumption of a certain amount of a given “Genussmittel”, cf. *ibid.*

current perspective, mainstream German fare appears very rich and meat-intensive. For example, a *Brigitte* magazine feature entitled “*What are we eating today?*” includes recipes for smoked pork in a juniper and cream sauce, a potato and herring salad, Brussels sprouts with bacon or green cabbage with sausage dumplings.<sup>543</sup> Starches are overwhelmingly provided by potatoes and a number of dumpling variations. And although rice and pasta are staples, they are not as common as they will become later and they rarely appear as the basis of self-contained dishes (such as e.g. paella or pasta al pesto)<sup>544</sup> but instead as a rather bland starch complementing meat and vegetables. As to vegetables, preferences still seem to go towards the cabbage family –often in the guise of sauerkraut but also cauliflower or Brussels sprouts– as well as onions, cucumber, gherkins, carrots and other root vegetables. The most common fruits are apples, pears, oranges and berries. Exotic touches are provided by e.g. olives (usually as an appetizer) or fruit such as bananas, coconut or pineapple in salads or sauces. Most menus include elaborate desserts such as rich layered cakes or special chilled creams and ice-creams.

Even supposedly summery or light dishes may strike our contemporary sensitivities as rather stodgy. For example, under the title “*Light dishes that are easy to digest after the holiday splurge*”, an ad for *Pfanni* presents a selection of dishes prepared with its convenience dumpling mixes or potato specialities. Alongside such feather-light delights as rösti (Swiss Farmer-style roasted potatoes) with fried eggs or Franconian style stew with roasted meat sausage, one also finds an interesting recipe labelled “*Bohemian dumplings with ‘Hawaii’ goulash and green beans*” – the “Hawaiian” touch being provided by pineapple and pineapple juice.<sup>545</sup> In terms of exotic ingredients, most of them are provided by European neighbours reputed for their solid food. Indeed, Russian-style gherkins, creamy French cheeses and mustard, Hungarian salami or Dutch Gouda feature prominently. Similarly, the cooking feature “*The new cuisine*” in *Frau im Spiegel* presents an article on “exotic” food entitled “*Spicy vegetables from distant lands*”. The recipes however are neither South African nor Indian since distant lands are represented by France (ratatouille), Italy (stuffed zucchini with ginger sauce) and the Canary Islands (fennel Las Palmas).<sup>546</sup>

Advertisements for staple industrial food products generally reflect the above-mentioned “heavy and traditional” trends: full fat cheeses and cream, convenience potato specialities, canned sauerkraut and bottled gherkins, butter, margarine, cooking oils and fats star regularly. But interestingly, one can already detect a fundamental ambivalence in the advertisements for various types of lipids. *Palmin*, for instance is praised as “100% taste neutral” so that “meat tastes of meat, not fat” and is presented by butcher Jan-Jakob Harms from Hamburg against a background featuring large slabs of meat hanging from hooks, alongside a small portrait of a real old style roast with a thick layer of fat –a setting that

<sup>543</sup> „Was essen wir heute?“, *Brigitte*, Heft 1, 1980, p. 97: „Kasseler in Wacholdersahne“; „Kartoffel-Herings-Salat“; „Rosenkohl mit Speck“; „Grünkohl mit Bratwurstklößchen“.

<sup>544</sup> Cf. a few exceptions such as „Reis: Die besten Spezialitäten aus fünf Länder“, *Für Sie*, Heft 23, 26/10/80, p. 183: „Zaubern Sie doch einmal tolle Gerichte mit dem berühmtesten Korn der Welt. Denn Reis ist mehr als nur Beilage. Kostproben einiger Delikatessen finden Sie hier und beim Umblättern.“

<sup>545</sup> „Leichtere Gerichte, die nach den üppigen Tagen gut bekommen“, ad for *Pfanni* (*Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1980): „Rösti mit Spiegeleier“; „Suppentopf Fränkische Art mit gerösteter Fleischwurst“; „Böhmische Knödel mit Gulasch ‘Hawaii’ und grünen Bohnen“. In this light, one cannot help but wonder why British cooking always gets stigmatised...

<sup>546</sup> Blohm Hannelore, „Pikantes Gemüse aus fernen Ländern. Und wie man daraus kulinarische Leckerbissen macht.“, *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 40, 1982, p. 102.

would no doubt make any late modern health junkie swoon.<sup>547</sup> Another ad, this time for *Biskin*, a frying oil and fat, appears just as obnoxious for a contemporary sensibility since it shows TV cook Max Inzinger with a deep-frying stainless steel basket full of chips, towering above delicacies such as deep-fried “*little boats*” made of melon, served with ice cream and raspberries.<sup>548</sup>

But the above ads stand in sharp contrast with the numerous ads for *becel*'s diet vegetable oil, “plant cream” and margarine that display an elaborate “health-threat” rhetoric that warrants a full quote:

Heart and circulation diseases have constantly increased in all highly industrialised European countries. The most important risk factors are heavy smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight and especially a high cholesterol level, as is already the case for approx. 30% of our adult population. Hereditary factors, on which we have no influence, should also be considered. How can we live more reasonably? There is a whole range of measures. We should e.g. smoke less and move more. We can positively influence an increased cholesterol level by eating little fat and by paying attention to a balanced ratio of saturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids in our food. When overweight, we should also consume fewer calories. What role can nutrition play? Our affluent diet generally contains too much fat, especially saturated fat, but too little linoleic acids. This is why our diets contribute to increase the cholesterol level. And this can lead to arteriosclerotic heart and circulation damage. [...] Eating more consciously because it is reasonable: *becel* is part of it.<sup>549</sup>

Thus, the contemporary increase in civilisation diseases in industrialised countries is denounced before cholesterol is singled out for special management. Interestingly, civilisation diseases are implicitly considered as multi-factorial since a holistic approach – involving smoke reduction, movement and diet– is advocated as the best strategy. Even though the actual health explanations are rather sketchy, they still presuppose a certain familiarity with terms such as “cholesterol”, “saturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids” or “arteriosclerotic” –be it only as buzzwords.<sup>550</sup> Just as in the *jocca* ad I used as an introductory

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<sup>547</sup> Ad for Dr Schlink's Palmin [surprisingly not made out of palm oil but 100% coconut fat!] (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1980).

<sup>548</sup> Ad for Biskin Fett und Öl (*Für Sie*, Heft 5, 1980).

<sup>549</sup> Ads for *becel* Diät-Speiseöl, -Margarine, -Pflanzencreme (*Für Sie*, Heft 1, 1979 or *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 25, 1980): „In allen hochindustrialisierten Ländern Europas haben Herz- und Kreislaufkrankheiten ständig zugenommen. Die wichtigsten Risikofaktoren sind starkes Rauchen, hoher Blutdruck, Diabetes, Übergewicht und besonders ein erhöhter Cholesterinspiegel, wie er bereits bei etwa 30% unserer erwachsenen Bevölkerung nachzuweisen ist. Und auch erbliche Faktoren, auf die wir jedoch keinen Einfluß haben. Wie können wir vernünftiger leben? Es gibt eine ganze Reihe von Maßnahmen. Wir sollten z.B. weniger rauchen und uns mehr bewegen. Den erhöhten Cholesterinspiegel können wir günstig beeinflussen, indem wir weniger Fett essen und dabei auf ein ausgewogenes Verhältnis von gesättigten und mehrfach ungesättigten Fettsäuren in unserer Nahrung achten. Bei Übergewicht sollten wir außerdem kalorienärmer essen. Welche Rolle kann die Ernährung spielen? Unsere Wohlstandsnahrung enthält im allgemeinen zuviel Fett, vor allem zuviel gesättigtes Fett, aber zuwenig Linolsäure. Deshalb trägt unsere Ernährungsweise dazu bei, den Cholesterinspiegel hochzutreiben. Und das kann zu arteriosklerotischen Herz- und Kreislaufschäden führen. [...] Bewusster essen, weil's vernünftig ist: *becel* gehört dazu.“

<sup>550</sup> A number of similar ads could be quoted, e.g. for *Wasa* crisp bread (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 43, 1982): „20 Millionen Menschen unseres Landes geht dieses Thema an. 9 Millionen nehmen regelmäßig oder zeitweise Abführmittel. Mangelnde Bewegung und ballaststoffarme Ernährung sind häufig die Gründe. [...] Das sollten Sie wissen: Weißbrot enthält 1% Ballaststoffe, Weizenmischbrot (70:30) 2%, Roggenvollkorn-Laibbrot 6%, *Wasa PLUS* 20%.“ Or an ad for *neufarm* health-food shops (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 41, 1982): „Tun Sie was gegen Ernährungsschäden, bevor sie auftreten – mit Vollwertkost aus dem *neufarm-Reformhaus*! Namhafte Mediziner

quote, a conscience and rationality revolution is invoked as a means towards improved health and performance. Surprisingly, even ads for convenience food such as *Pfanni* potato specialties stress “*a modern and rational diet*”, including vitamins and minerals<sup>551</sup>.

Otherwise, ease and time saving in general seem to be gaining in popularity due to what is perceived as a hectic modern lifestyle. However, resorting to convenience food in daily cooking still seems to require elaborate justifications, as obvious from the rhetoric of an ad designed by the German fish industry [Fischwirtschaft]:

Frozen fish means you never get in a stew. If something interrupts your shopping –for example a particularly attractive special offer– or if you once have to stay longer at work, frozen fish helps you avoid embarrassment quickly and elegantly. It only requires a short defrosting and is ready in a flash – and with a little love and fantasy, fish fingers or frozen fish fillets are far from being just a stopgap solution. Indeed they become a meal that appeals to the whole family.<sup>552</sup>

In fact taking the “convenient” way out with frozen fish appears tantamount to a “nurturing betrayal” that can only be justified by emphasising the duties and temptations of working women, as characteristic of a mass-consumption society.<sup>553</sup> Similarly, in order to justify consuming cottage cheese as a regular and ubiquitous snack, *Kraft* –in another ad for *jocca*– dramatises the rhythms of modern corporate life, by emphasising the fact that performance is even required in the field of nutrition:

You have to be fully present all day long. Do you also apply this to mealtimes? Corporate executives are expected to stay mentally fit and active every day for twelve or more hours. But most don't live up to it. Almost nobody can cope with the many work and gala meals. Both heart and circulation are just too burdened. Thus changing one's eating habits becomes fundamental. Even a mentally strained individual does not need more than 9,200 to 10,400 joules (2,300 to 2,600 calorie) a day. 5 small meals a day –rich in protein but with less fats and carbohydrates) are ideal. [...]<sup>554</sup>

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*sagen heute, daß 60% aller Krankheiten durch falsche Ernährung verursacht werden – oft durch industriell denaturierte ‚Lebensmittel‘. Wer sich dagegen auflehnt, hat recht. Und hat als Alternative die Reformhäuser, die sich von Anfang an für möglichst naturbelassene Vollwert-Nahrung eingesetzt haben.“*

<sup>551</sup> Ad for Pfanni (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1980): „Kartoffeln enthalten viele wichtige Vitamine und Mineralstoffe. Und was für Kartoffeln gilt, gilt natürlich auch für Pfanni-Kartoffelbeilagen. Schonende Verarbeitung garantiert, daß die wichtigen Nährstoffe weitgehend erhalten bleiben. Alle Pfanni-Kartoffelbeilagen bieten Ihnen daher nicht nur Abwechslung, sondern auch eine zeitgemäße und vernünftige Ernährung. Mit Pfanni haben Sie für jeden Appetit immer die richtigen Beilagen im Haus.“

<sup>552</sup> Fischwirtschaft ad for frozen fish (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1980): „Mit tiefgekühltem Fisch kommen Sie nie ins Schwimmen. Wenn Ihnen beim Einkaufen mal etwas dazwischenkommt – etwa ein besonders hübsches Sonderangebot – oder wenn es in der Firma mal etwas später wird, hilft Ihnen tiefgekühlter Fisch schnell und elegant aus der Verlegenheit. Ohne langes Auftauen ist er im Nu zubereitet – und mit ein bißchen Liebe und Phantasie werden Fischstäbchen oder tiefgekühlte Fischfilets alles andere als eine Verlegenheitslösung. Sondern ein Essen auf das sich die ganze Familie freut.“

<sup>553</sup> The ad also goes on to invoke another healthful excuse: „Unsere heutige bewegungsarme Lebensweise fordert eine Nahrung mit viel EIWEISS und wenig Fett. Der Fisch ist in erster Linie Eiweißträger. Das im Fischfleisch enthaltene Fett ist wegen seines Gehaltes an essentiellen Fettsäuren ernährungsphysiologisch sehr bedeutsam. Außerdem ist Fisch noch reich an Vitaminen und Mineralstoffen.“

<sup>554</sup> Ad for *jocca* zart-körniger Frischkäse (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1980): „Sie müssen den ganzen Tag voll da sein. Bedenken Sie das auch beim Essen? Zwölf und mehr Stunden geistig fit und aktiv sein. Von den Führungskräften der Unternehmen wird das täglich erwartet. Doch die meisten leben nicht danach. Die vielen Arbeits- und Galaessen – das kann auf die Dauer kaum jemand verkraften. Herz und Kreislauf werden zu sehr belastet. Es ist

The ad suggests a new type of “lean management”: it advocates bypassing the drowsiness of the traditional business meal used to clinch a deal and replacing it with appropriate food portioning to ensure optimal bodily and mental performance throughout the day.<sup>555</sup>

Another startling contrast is provided by advertisements for mineral water. Most of them are promoted along traditional lines such as e.g. *St. Gero* that bears the usual stamp “*mineral spring recognised by the state*” and is supposed to support digestive functions and thus help the body to get rid of waste and poisons.<sup>556</sup> The bottle is pictured against a medieval illumination background no doubt representing the monk-saint holding a book. But ads for other mineral waters such as e.g. *Heppinger* take a totally different tack. The background here is a pretty and slim young woman in a leotard kneeling in a yogic position with hands extended. The caption states: “*Treat your body to something good. Heppinger mineral water*”. Even if the rationale invoked to drink it is still very specifically physiological, a small sentence suggests “*and because it tastes so good, one could almost forget how healthy it is*”.<sup>557</sup> Another ad for the mineral water shows a similar looking model also clad in a leotard engaging in a series of yogic positions –which, it should be noted, are just described as gymnastics– with a small commentary indicating the effect of the particular position. For instance, in the one where the model lies on the ground with her lower body and legs bent back over her head (in an s-shaped position), the caption states: “*activates breathing, stimulates the metabolism*”. The header above the woman spells: “*Can one activate the metabolism in 5 minutes, transform grey skin into a rosy complexion and feel energetic or very, very calm –at will? Yes with Heppinger music gymnastics*”. A coupon then advertises a brochure with two tapes to accompany this “*revolutionary balancing gymnastics*” –an interesting and rather puzzling way to introduce a yoga-type practice, or maybe a strategy to jazz/disco-up a discipline that may already have lost some of its appeal in the early 1980s.<sup>558</sup> Even though overlapping holistic practices are not clearly enunciated as a means to maintain or promote health, these ads are certainly forerunners of the more explicitly wellness ads to be found increasingly towards the end of the decade.

Light sodas have also begun to appear on the market. *Diät [diet] Fanta*, for example, is advertised with the picture of a giant bottle behind which a woman is almost entirely concealed (but we can still see that she is slim and that she is wearing a swimsuit and summery sandals): she just “peekaboos” with an alluring look below the following caption: “*This is the new Diät Fanta with which you indulge yourself in slimful fun. Diät Fanta – with a*

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*deshalb lebenswichtig, die Ernährungsgewohnheiten zu ändern. Auch ein geistig stark stapazierter Mensch braucht täglich nicht mehr als 9.200 bis 10.400 Joule (2.300 bis 2.600 Kalorien). Ideal sind 5 kleine Mahlzeiten täglich. Eiweißreich, doch arm an Fett und Kohlenhydraten*”. [emphasis in original]

<sup>555</sup> In all the jocca ads though there is a sense of imperative urgency: one is made to feel that the health of the nation is rapidly declining, that overall weight is soaring and that personal responsibility must be taken to halt this dangerous progression. Interestingly, in all the jocca ads, there is no detectable gender specificity in the discourse, perhaps betraying the more Americanised “public-health” style of a big food multinational.

<sup>556</sup> Ad for *St.Gero* „staatlich anerkannte Heilquelle“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 37, 1982).

<sup>557</sup> Ad for *Heppinger*, *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 38, 1982: „*Tun Sie Ihrem Körper etwas Gutes. Heppinger Heilwasser*“ and „*und weil es so gut schmeckt, könnte man fast vergessen, wie gesund es ist.*“

<sup>558</sup> Ad for *Heppinger*, *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 43, 1982: „*Aktiviert die Atmung, regt den Stoffwechsel an*“; „*Kann man in 5 Minuten den Stoffwechsel anregen, graue Haut in rosige verwandeln und nach Wunsch munter werden oder ganz, ganz ruhig? Ja. Mit der Heppinger-Musik-Gymnastik*“; „*Ausgleichs-Gymnastik völlig neuer Art*“

*strong taste of orange. And few calories.*<sup>559</sup> The soda is sweetened with saccharin, cyclamate and fructose and is officially targeted at consumers suffering from diabetes and overweight –as footnoted– but the iconography seems to clearly emphasise all women’s slimming mission. *deit*, a light lemonade in three varieties, displays a similar bias despite the small print that focuses on weight reduction for both diabetics and horizontally-challenged individuals. Indeed, an almost headless woman holds up a glass of lemonade with a straw to her painted lips with a perfectly manicured hand. And the glass has printed markings displaying the calorie contents of various beverages according to their volume. The scale ranges from super calorific whisky (125 kcal for 50 ml) to sweet sherry, sparkling wine, stout, apple juice, buttermilk and *deit* with lemon juice (5 kcal for 200ml). And the caption reinforces the message with: *“The slim pleasure with the least calories. deit® international: so that thirst doesn’t make you fat.”* The sweetener is not mentioned here but the text states that the drink has been produced exclusively with natural and mineral water sources.<sup>560</sup>

Actually, artificial sweeteners represent a real boom in the 1980s: *Assugrin*, *Natreen* and *Teekanne’s SüßFix* seem to hold the upper hand on the market. But all of them still seem to require elaborate explanations.<sup>561</sup> For instance, ads for *Assugrin* portray either the small cubes or the liquid version. The first ad portrays a variety of coffee specialties such as Turkish mocha or Irish coffee and the second displays a number of sweets –from cocktails, to jelly, fruit desserts, pancakes, pies and a fruit & rice salad. But both ads are captioned as follows: *“Sweeten better with a good conscience. The days of “sweet guilt” are now over. Indeed, sweetening with Assugrin means better sweetening: without calories and carbohydrates [...] Assugrin makes everything delightfully sweet. Like with sugar; but without aftertaste and without burdening [...] Assugrin is the ideal sweetener for modern cooking.”*<sup>562</sup> This type of rhetoric is typical of slimming products, since it tends to oscillate between a commanding moralising tone and a more apologetic, redeeming touch.

*Natreen* also offers both sweetener variations alongside additional products, such as jams, fruit spread, an orange drink and a diet dessert (with strawberry aroma). But instead of a diabetic target audience, the caption –which remains the same in all the ads– primarily addresses overweight individuals in need of nutritional guidance:

Many overweight individuals not only eat too much, they also eat the wrong way. Indeed, one should opt for 5 to 6 small meals a day instead of 3 large ones. Also, avoid readily assimilated carbohydrates, as they are normally found in sweetened foods, because these

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<sup>559</sup> Ad for Diät Fanta, *Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1980: *„Das ist die neue Diät Fanta, mit der Sie sich den Spaß schlankweg erlauben können. Diät Fanta – mit viel Orangengeschmack. Und wenig Kalorien.“*

<sup>560</sup> Ad for *deit*® international (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 24, 1980): *„Der schlanke Genuß mit den wenigsten Kalorien. deit® international: damit der Durst nicht dick macht.“*

<sup>561</sup> At this point, it should be noted that there seems to be a significant time lag between North America and Europe in the adoption of sweeteners, since North Americans were already familiar with saccharin and cyclamate in the 1950s and cyclamate was already included in diet foods such as canned fruit in the 1960s. Cf. De la Peña, Carolyn Th., *Empty Pleasures: the story of artificial sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda*, Chapel Hill [NC], University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

<sup>562</sup> Ads for *Assugrin*, *Brigitte*, Heft 5 & 20, 1980 or *Für Sie*, Heft 5, 1980: *„Mit gutem Gewissen besser süßen. Die Zeit der ‘süßen Gewissensbisse’ ist nun vorbei. Denn mit Assugrin süßen heißt besser süßen: ohne Kalorien und Kohlehydrate. [...] Assugrin macht alles lecker süß. Wie mit Zucker; ohne Nachgeschmack und ohne zu belasten. [...] Assugrin ist die ideale Süße für die moderne Küche.“*

carbohydrates significantly contribute to fat storage and thus strongly contribute to our excess weight.<sup>563</sup>

*SüssFix*'s emphasis is more on the body than the food since it displays a woman in a bikini jumping up with outspread arms. The model is slim but not as anorexic as her mid- to late 1990s counterparts. The caption is a play on words since it states that "*SüssFix macht süß*" [The meaning in German is both: Süßfix sweetens and makes (you) sweet]. Here, the dieting discourse is much less present: instead it transpires in the design of the container that shows a stylised hourglass figure.<sup>564</sup> Another type of sweetener, the hybrid *flaromleicht* ("light sweetness") contains mainly fructose as well as saccharin and cyclamate and is processed into granules similar to sugar. The layout combines both sweet foodstuffs and "light" people: a jumping man, an elegant woman dancing and a still unusual sight: a woman jogger.<sup>565</sup>

Later in the decade, artificial sweeteners begin to appear in other slimming products such as desserts, fruit drinks or chewing gum. *Orbit* chewing gum is actually an interesting example. The ads display women in sporty outfits (swimmer, tennis player, biker, fencer). Significantly, the fencer states: "*Sport alone is not enough... Of course I love to fence, since both I and my figure find it fun. But to remain really fit, one must do a bit more. Therefore I also pay attention to my figure while eating. I now often leave out a small meal and have a chewing gum instead in-between.*"<sup>566</sup> Hence, just as health, slimness requires a multi-strategy approach. Appropriate food combined with sport seems to represent an increasingly popular way to fight the flab as demonstrated by Ellen Wessinghage, a former German runner, who still does not have problems with her weight. The ad for *Bärenmarke's Die leichte 4*, a coffee cream with only 4% fat, is divided into two narrow photographs on both sides of a double page. The first page shows the athlete running –in a sweat-shirt and shorts revealing her slim muscular legs– in a park-like setting under the caption "*Staying in shape...*", while the next photograph shows her about to enjoy a nice cup of coffee: she is portrayed with a winning smile, seated at table in "civilian" clothes and holding a can of cream. The caption then reads: "*...is a pleasure for me*".<sup>567</sup> Slimming here is associated with an individualised and disciplined –if fun– pursuit.

In the early 1980s, other slimming foods are also becoming popular: *Hipp*,<sup>568</sup> for instance, under the caption "*Instead of starving*" provides convenience meals in seven variations with

<sup>563</sup> Ads for Natreen (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 23, 1980, *Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1980, *Für Sie*, Heft 4, 1980): „Viele Übergewichtige essen nicht nur zu viel, sie essen auch häufig verkehrt. So sollte man zum Beispiel lieber 5 bis 6 kleine Mahlzeiten am Tag zu sich nehmen als 3 große. Vermeiden Sie auch schnell resorbierbare Kohlenhydrate, wie sie in normal gesüßten Speisen enthalten sind, denn diese Kohlenhydrate tragen wesentlich zum Fettaufbau bei und haben somit starken Anteil an unseren "überflüssigen" Pfunden.“

<sup>564</sup> Ads for Süßfix (*Für Sie*, Heft 3 & 5, 1980, *Brigitte*, Heft 1, 1980).

<sup>565</sup> Ad for flaromleicht "leichte Süsse" (*Für Sie*, Heft 9, 1980).

<sup>566</sup> Ad for Orbit (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1983): „Sport allein ist nicht alles... Zwar fechte ich für mein Leben gern, denn das macht mir Spass und meiner Linie auch. Aber um richtig fit zu bleibe, muss man schon ein bisschen mehr tun. Deshalb achte ich jetzt auch beim Essen auf die Linie. Ich lasse jetzt häufiger eine kleine Mahlzeit aus und nehm' zwischendurch liebe mal ein Kaugummi.“

<sup>567</sup> Ad for *Bärenmarke Die leichte 4* *Bärenmarke* ["Die moderne Kaffeemilch mit 4% Fett"], *Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1980: „mehrfache deutsche Meisterin im 1500-m-Lauf. Figur-Problem kennt sie auch heute nicht.“; „In form zu bleiben... ist für mich ein Genuß“

<sup>568</sup> Interestingly, Hipp was originally only a manufacturer of baby formula and food (and a pioneer in terms of organic requirements) before branching out into diet foods (no longer available on the market) and into cosmetics. Cf.: <http://www.hipp.de/index.php?id=19>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

a calorie content ranging from 213 to 276 kcal. Interestingly, if it does suggest some alternative flavours to the regular German diet, it still reflects rather solid tastes since the dishes include a Mexican casserole, chicken with rice and peas, Serbian meat rice, Old German chicken casserole, spicy chicken salad, beef with a vegetable mix and veal dumplings with vegetables in a cream sauce.<sup>569</sup> Apart from the incongruousness of dumplings and cream in our current representation of diet fare, two aspects are striking and point towards a fundamental shift in dietary consumption and the influence it will have on the general diet: if meat is still pre-eminently present, chicken –as a lean flesh- is gradually eclipsing red meats, just as rice seems to be replacing potatoes as a slimming staple. Indeed, both ingredients are present in three of the seven dishes on offer.

Individual dietary discipline, this time directed not just at sports enthusiasts or professionals, is perhaps most convincingly encapsulated in the discourse surrounding *Du darfst* [you may], a product line offering ingredients that are traditionally considered fattening –such as jam, margarine or cheese– in a slimming version under the motto “*eating made-to-order*”. The accompanying text emphasises individuality again and again through the repetition of “I”, “myself” and “me” in contrast with the brand-name “you may”: “*I want to stay as I am... ..and I am not deluding myself: food does not make one slim. But I feed myself paying attention to calories and thus find it easier to remain in shape. ‚Du darfst‘ suits me, tastes good to me and agrees with me.*”<sup>570</sup> Thus a significant dialectic is built that highlights the internalisation of an outer imperative. If the stress here is not on a sporty lifestyle, the striking aspect is that the model watching her reflection as she walks by is not presented as an ex-obese (there is absolutely no intimation of a before and after state). Instead it suggests that all modern women should watch their weight in order to remain as they are. The slimming diktat is thus not based on a curative but on a preventive model, rooted in an increasingly hegemonic aesthetic representation of a womanhood that should remain forever young and slim.<sup>571</sup>

Other slimming foods include protein-rich drinks, purees, porridges or mueslis. The discourse surrounding all these products stresses the fact that effective, healthy slimming should ensure a sufficient intake of protein (THE panacea common to all these preparations) as well as dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals and should ensure that consumers remain fresh, energetic and performing. The special formulation of these products is supposed to spare consumers the complicated maths involved in calculating adequate nutritional intake.<sup>572</sup> In

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<sup>569</sup> Ad for Hipp Diät (*Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1980): “*Statt hungern*” Interestingly, these meals can only be purchased in pharmacies, drugstores and healthfood shops. This shows that many slimming aids are still viewed as therapeutic aids rather than regular food and it probably also entails that they are substantially more expensive than supermarket food, hence not affordable for all consumers.

<sup>570</sup> Ad for *Du darfst* product line (*Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1980): „*Essen nach Maß*“, „*Ich will so bleiben, wie ich bin... ..und ich mache mir nichts vor: Essen macht nun mal nicht schlank. Aber ich ernähre mich kalorienbewußt und bleibe so besser in form. ‚Du darfst‘ steht mir, schmeckt mir und paßt zu mir.*“

<sup>571</sup> Another ad for *Du darfst* Halbfettmargarine (*Für Sie*, Heft 7, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1980) displays an even more arresting layout: a woman is portrayed from the waist to above the knee (still in trousers) and her perfectly manicured hands hold the margarine at the height of her genital area, like a vine leaf in classical representations of nudity. While this layout suggests that the target for a light margarine is to avoid storing fat around the hip and thigh area, the strange “vine leaf” strategy may suggest that overweight is linked to a feeling of shame and maybe even a loss of sexual attractiveness. This truncated photograph seems typical of an internalised male-oriented gaze on the female body: it is not the overall harmony that counts but respecting the societal norm for a particular area.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. e.g. an ad for bioNorm Eiweiß Konzentrat, „-Flocken“, „-Müsli“, „-Vielkorn“, -Drinks (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1980).

this instance, *bioNorm*<sup>573</sup> sets out to partially disqualify sports as a slimming strategy in an ad first picturing a pair of trainers without any comment before stating the following:

Can one run away from one's excess weight? Running is healthy. Those who run or "jog" a lot do their heart a favour, as well as their circulation and performance. But that's not enough against overweight. The calories that you lose during a solid half-hour of jogging are easily regained with a small bottle of beer. If you add a small handful of nuts, you should jog for a further half hour. Thus it is more effective to go on a diet.<sup>574</sup>

The ad goes to explain how *bioNorm* products can contribute to a healthy weight loss but cautions with the following: "*Nevertheless: do not give up sport –on the contrary, it supports and promotes weight loss. Besides their diet, those who run or swim twice a week are more likely to become slim and active. And to stay that way.*"<sup>575</sup> The interdependency of slimming strategies is thus articulated in a more nuanced way than for other products. It also stands in sharp contrast to appetite suppressants –a seemingly flourishing market– that promise results with much less effort: a reduced appetite whilst preserving consumers' good mood, energy and freedom of nutritional choice. But in the case of suppressants, each ad displays a long list of indications and rather disquieting side-effects such as nervousness, increased heartbeat, palpitations and sleep disorders as well as many contraindications.<sup>576</sup> All ads are primarily targeted at a feminine audience. One ad, for *Recatol*, shows the rather slim torso of a woman in a flowery blouse with two hands "struggling" to button up.<sup>577</sup> While in another ad for the same product, a slightly plumper headless woman in bra and skirt struggles to zip up the latter.<sup>578</sup>

In sum, when analysing the discursive rhetoric of slimming, a number of (sometimes contradictory) strands can be detected. Slimness is intimately linked to health (vitamins and minerals, movement, etc.) and just as the more general management of health, slimming

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<sup>573</sup> Even the name of the product is also worthy of attention, since it suggests that there is a biological standard for slimness.

<sup>574</sup> Ad for *bioNorm* Eiweiß Konzentrat, „-Flocken, „-Müsli, „-Vielkorn, -Drinks (*Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1980): „*Kann man seinen Pfunden davonlaufen? Laufen ist gesund. Wer viel läuft oder „joggt“, der tut auch viel für sein Herz, für seinen Kreislauf und für seine Leistungsfähigkeit. Aber nicht genug gegen sein Übergewicht. Die Kalorien, die Sie zum Beispiel bei einem halbstündigen strammen Dauerlauf abtrainieren, haben Sie schon mit einem Fläschchen Bier wieder drauf. Und wenn Sie dazu noch eine Handvoll Nüsse essen, müssten Sie gar eine Stunde in Trab bleiben. Daher ist es wirksamer, eine Diätkur zu machen.*“

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>576</sup> Cf. e.g. ads for Woelm Pharma's *Recatol* [Abnehmen und Mensch bleiben.] (*Für Sie*, Heft 3, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1980).

<sup>577</sup> Ad for Woelm Pharma's *Recatol* [Abnehmen und Mensch bleiben.] (*Für Sie*, Heft 3, 1980).

<sup>578</sup> Ad for Woelm Pharma's *Recatol* [Abnehmen und Mensch bleiben.] (*Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1980). For those consumers wanting to take the easy way out by avoiding threatening side-effects, sparing the effort invested in strenuous fitness programmes or complicated diets, another contemporary non-food strategy was probably the best option, since it promised slimming without any sweat (Ad for *Slendertone*; *Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1980 or *Für Sie*, Heft 2, 1980): „[...]*Weil uns meist etwas anderes bewegt, als unseren Körper zu bewegen. Slendertone ist der moderne Weg, Bewegung in Ihren Körper zu bringen. Mit diesem hochentwickelten, elektronischen Trainingssystem können Sie jede Partie Ihres Körpers trainieren. Ohne Anstrengung, ohne Zeit zu verlieren.*“ . Another ad for *Slendertone* is even more persuasive (Ad for *Slendertone*; *Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1980): „[...]*Selbstverständlich sind stundenlange Waldläufe und mühsame Gymnastik sehr zu empfehlen. Aber wer hat dazu die Zeit, Die Ausdauer. Da ist erstens das Slendertone-Gerät! Die automatische Gymnastik mit Hilfe moderner Elektronik. Zeit –und mühesparend. Wirkungsvolle Körpertraining. Während Sie lesen oder sich entspannen. Dieses Training sorgt für „optische Gewichtsabnahme“. Weil es die Muskulatur strafft und in die natürliche Form zurückbringt.*“

represents an individual process that should be self-governed/steered. Individuality and self-confidence are thus reinforced in the process. Slimming also requires knowledge and rationality: i.e. knowledge of energy expenditure according to one's lifestyle, of the calorie content of various foods, etc. However, it should not spell renouncing, hungering and incredible effort but should be "fun" and "pleasurable" and remain "easy" and "humane" –in terms of both variety and convenience.

A fascinating reader's letter sent in by two *freundin* readers provides a significant counterpoint to the apparent slimming overload contained in the magazine's pages:

We have never written a reader's letter before. But we believe that your discourse on ideal weight and calories is gradually reaching such proportions that we find it really shameless. Hence, we would like to ask what your goal is? Indeed, we find that it is an attempt to limit personal freedom –and this in a women's magazine! Do you find it a worthy aim to be plagued with a bad conscience after every little piece of chocolate ingested? In your case, the following motto seems to apply: Man is allowed everything and woman nothing – for the benefit of man? We would like to know if your readers also find that the ideal weight is a reliable indicator to judge the worth of a person.<sup>579</sup>

In their reply the editors try to uncomfortably squirm their way out of the above accusations by stating that weight should not be used to judge an individual but they affirm that weight is a topic preoccupying a majority of the magazine's readership (men included since it appears that diets are often followed by husbands and male friends). Moreover "calories" and "ideal weight" are viewed as indispensable information in the realm of a slimming diet – but should not be interpreted as normative.<sup>580</sup> Nevertheless, the other concerns voiced under the same "Readers' Letters" rubric seem to lend additional "weight" to the two women's complaint, while indirectly paying tribute to the editors' assessment of women's "hunger" for slimming: from the woman who does not want to drink just mineral water when she goes clubbing, through the one who is searching for a diet supplement that can make her lose 6 kilos within 7 days (but the supplement should be dosed so that she does not crave sweets and her work does not suffer from it), to the woman who complains that she can't get going without milky sweet coffee and wonders if milk and sugar boast that many calories –considering that every diet recommends avoiding coffee cream and using artificial sweeteners.<sup>581</sup>

### 1983-1984: Foreign temptations and consumer education

Later in the 1980s, recipes get a little lighter and less traditional, especially in the summer months, e.g. "scalloped fish fillets with celery", "cold buttermilk and tomato soup" and

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<sup>579</sup> „Fragen Sie freundin. Ungleiches Recht für Männer und Frauen“, Readers' letter from Rita und Susanne R., Rautenberg, (*freundin*, Heft 3, 1980): „Wir haben noch nie einen Leserbrief geschrieben. Aber wir glauben, Ihr Reden über Idealgewicht und Kalorien nimmt langsam Ausmaße an, die wir unverschämt finden. Wir fragen deshalb, was Sie damit bezwecken? Wir finden nämlich, dass das ein Versuch ist, die persönliche Freiheit einzuschränken - und das in einer Frauenzeitung! Finden Sie es erstrebenswert, bei jedem bisschen Schokolade, das man isst, hinterher vom schlechten Gewissen fast erdrückt zu werden? Für Sie gilt wohl die Devise: Der Mann darf alles, die Frau nichts – zugunsten des Mannes? Uns würde interessieren, ob Ihre Leserinnen auch finden, dass das Idealgewicht ausschlaggebend ist für die Beurteilung einer Person?“

<sup>580</sup> Editors' reply to the above letter (*freundin*, Heft 3, 1980)

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*

“pasta salad with spinach”<sup>582</sup> Salads and vegetables seem to be also popular in season, with the occasional suggestion that they may also be consumed without meat. Indeed, a cooking feature in *Brigitte* even openly insinuates vegetarian subversion in the title “*Meatless Happiness: A new kind of celebration meal*” before pursuing “*Did you notice? Only the festive roast is missing in this rich meal! But give it a try – even without meat there’s no gaping hole on the menu*”.<sup>583</sup> Buffets style meals also seem to be popular, signalling a growing trend towards a preparation that allows for more time spent with guests.<sup>584</sup> A festive late Spring menu in *Frau im Spiegel* features veal steaks with basil –still apparently an exotic herb: “*If you aren’t acquainted with it, you should try it because it really goes well with meat and vegetables*”. But the really unexpected touches are to be found in the other courses, i.e. the tomato soup is prepared from a tin, just adding sliced pears, honey and Grand Marnier as well as a blob of whipped cream, the sorbets and “granités” are made out of coconut juice, Bourgogne, kiwis and orange juice and the cake for the Kaffee-Kuchen [coffee and cake] afternoon ritual is a layered melon cake prepared with a cake mix. Surprisingly, in contrast with former discourse on convenience foods and exotic ingredients, no excuses are listed here for using these short-cuts<sup>585</sup> and the exoticism of the fruits seems taken for granted.<sup>586</sup>

Actually, in terms of exotic food, the boundaries are gradually pushed further with e.g. a *Brigitte* series titled “*Foreign women cook in Germany*”, featuring e.g. “*Brazil dishes up*”.<sup>587</sup> But it is definitely in the convenience food sector that the foreign trend is the most patent: indeed, besides traditional dishes such as Iglo’s “*My favourite dish – marinated beef roast*” (presented under the caption “*At last an instant meal cooked in the good old way*”),<sup>588</sup> frozen pizzas and baguettes<sup>589</sup> seem to be hits with even Dr Oetker launching a not too orthodox Pizza Knusperia “*Bella Bolognese*”<sup>590</sup> –not to mention the extension of Iglo’s pioneering frozen pizza efforts.<sup>591</sup> Maggi also advertises a “*Fix*” for Bolognese pasta sauce.<sup>592</sup> And Iglo’s “*Schlemmerfilet [gourmet fillet] à la Bordelaise*” seems to be still holding its own ground under the label “*refined French*”.<sup>593</sup> Libby’s tinned salads represent a truly international offer, or at least a construction of exoticism, with varieties ranging from “*Napoli*” to “*California*”, “*Bombay*”, “*Valencia*” and “*Provencal*” [sic].<sup>594</sup> Nevertheless, some

<sup>582</sup> All in *Brigitte* Sammelrezepte (*Brigitte*, Heft 12, 1983): „Überbackenes Fischfilet mit Staudensellerie“; „Kalte Buttermilch-Tomatensuppe“; „Nudelsalat mit Spinat“.

<sup>583</sup> „Fleischlos glücklich: Festmenü der neuen Art“; „Haben Sie es bemerkt? Bei diesem üppigen Essen fehlt der Festbraten! Schmecken Sie trotzdem mal rein – auch ohne Fleisch bleibt hier kein weißer Fleck auf der Menükarte.“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 25, 1983).

<sup>584</sup> „Super Büffets. Für jeden Geschmack, für jede Gelegenheit“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 12.10.83, p. 182 ss.).

<sup>585</sup> Similar advice is given e.g. in an article on ice-cream desserts „Das Riesengrosse Eisvergnügen“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 22, 24.05.1984, pp. 52 ss.). An ice cream dessert covered in a meringue coating is described thus: „Arbeit macht das nicht, weil man nur Fürst-Pückler-Eis auf eine Biskuitplatte zu legen braucht und Baiser draufstreicht.“ (p. 52)

<sup>586</sup> „Wer es noch nicht kennt, sollte es unbedingt versuchen. Denn es paßt gut zu Fleisch und Gemüse.“, Blohm, Hannelore, „Das Menü des Monats. Zu Pfingsten: Kalbssteaks mit Basilikum“ [from „Die Neue Küche“ series] (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 24, 07.06.1984, pp. 46 ss.).

<sup>587</sup> „Ausländerinnen kochen in Deutschland“, „Brasilien tischt auf“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983, pp. 260 ss.).

<sup>588</sup> Ad for Iglo: „Mein Leibgericht – Sauerbraten“; „Endlich mal ein Fertiggericht, gekocht nach guter, alter Art“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 22, 1984).

<sup>589</sup> Ads for Iglo Bistro-Baguettes (*Brigitte*, Heft 12, 1983 or *Für Sie*, Heft 14, 1983).

<sup>590</sup> Ad for Dr Oetker Pizza Knusperia „Bella Bolognese“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983).

<sup>591</sup> Ad for Iglo Pizza Salami (*Für Sie*, Heft 18, 1983).

<sup>592</sup> Ad for Maggi Fix für Bologneser Soße (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 19, 03.05.84).

<sup>593</sup> Ad for Iglo Schlemmerfilet à la Bordelaise, „Raffiniert französisch“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983).

<sup>594</sup> Ad for Libby’s Salat-Buffer (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983).

German staples such as Kühne's "wine sauerkraut" or "gherkin specialities" appear to remain popular with its elderly maid icon as the guarantor of authenticity and tradition<sup>595</sup> –not to mention frequent ads for fatty meats and sausages.

Nevertheless, in 1983, one can detect an increase in the will of producers, professional associations and magazines alike to provide more information about single foodstuffs such as eggs, salt, sugar, olives, margarine, brown rice or yogurt –including potential health benefits and concerns. For instance under the heading "Salt: poison or medicine?", an article in *Brigitte* tackles salt from a number of angles, ranging from where salt comes from, to its role in the physiology of the body and examines recommended daily amounts for adults and babies, salt rich foods, salt surrogates, salt varieties as well as the role of salt in condiments and spice mixes. Responding to the title, the article also broaches the potentially adverse effects of salt, stating that –even though experts disagree– salt should not be a problem for healthy individuals since any excess is usually drained out of the metabolism. But it cautions individuals suffering from e.g. high-blood pressure or kidney problems against heavy use. However, the most interesting element is a reference to a new German law regulating the labelling of industrial food:

From the end of this year, almost all foods must be labelled with an index of all ingredients used. The sequence is determined by the quantities of each ingredient but without explicit mention of the weight. However, even if the sequence of ingredients provides a clue, this novelty does not suffice to effectively control the amount of table salt used. The order of ingredients can only provide indications.<sup>596</sup>

This law provides an interesting catalyser for the potential development of consumers' consciousness about and control of their food intake. In this respect, an interesting advertisement for sugar (by the sugar industry) aims to enlighten the average consumer on comparative energy intake:

If you think that by getting a nice egg from the fridge and leaving the sugar bowl in the cupboard you are saving on calories, you are up a blind alley. Indeed, 87 calories are hidden behind the fragile eggshell. That is more than two full cups of coffee sweetened with two lumps of sugar each, since a lump of sugar only has 12 calories. So it's not a question of what but of how much one eats. An adult only requires 2200 to 3200 kcal a day. Just as crucial is a varied and wholesome diet. Besides minerals and vitamins, protein, fats and especially carbohydrates are very important.<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Ad for Kühne Weinkraut (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1983) and Kühne Gurkenspezialitäten (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1983).

<sup>596</sup> "Salz: Gift oder Medizin?" (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1983, pp. 148/150): „Nach Ablauf dieses Jahres müssen nahezu alle Lebensmittel ein Verzeichnis der verwendeten Zutaten auf der Verpackung enthalten, und zwar in der Reihenfolge der enthaltenen Mengen, aber ohne Gewichtsangabe. Diese Neuerung reicht nicht aus, um den Kochsalzverbrauch zu kontrollieren. Die Reihenfolge der Zutaten kann nur Anhaltspunkte geben.“

<sup>597</sup> Ad for sugar „So ein Frühstücksei nimmt es gut und gern mit sieben Stück Zucker auf“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 23, 1983): „Wer morgens ein schönes Ei aus dem Kühlschrank holt, dafür aber die Zuckerdose im Küchenschrank läßt und meint, er spare jetzt viel Kalorien, der ist auf dem Holzweg. Denn unter der zerbrechlichen Eierschale verbergen sich 87 Kalorien. Das ist mehr, als wenn Sie zwei gut gefüllte Tassen Kaffee mit jeweils zwei Stück Zucker versüßen. Denn ein Stück Zucker hat nur 12 Kalorien. Es kommt nicht darauf an, was man ißt, sondern wieviel man ißt. Für einen erwachsenen Menschen reichen zwischen 2200 und 3200 Kalorien täglich. Ebenso wichtig ist eine vielseitige und vollwertige Ernährung. Neben den Mineralstoffen und Vitaminen gehören dazu Eiweiß, Fette und unbedingt auch Kohlenhydrate.“

Unsurprisingly the ad goes on to promote sugar as an easy-to-digest carbohydrate and to denounce the myth that sugar is the only enemy of teeth, pointing to the role of bacteria when dental hygiene is lacking. The text closes with a statement whereby sugar is “*as natural as milk, butter and bread and thus just as indispensable a food*”.<sup>598</sup>

Fats are also a target for a partly condemning, partly redeeming rhetoric. For example, *becel*, the diet fat producer I already mentioned, is intent on teaching consumers about poly-unsaturated fats, under the heading “*What percentage of polyunsaturated fats is contained in the new becel Diet-Margarine?*”<sup>599</sup> While the rest of the text never goes on to thematise this percentage, it is the object of a competition enabling lucky guessers to win a (from our perspective) rather clunky Unilife pulse monitor.<sup>600</sup> Indeed, the text emphasises that beyond a balanced ratio between saturated and poly-unsaturated fat, other health measures are crucial: “*Supplement a reasonable diet with enough movement. If possible in the fresh air. But don’t overstrain yourself. Measure your pulse rate regularly*”. This provides a good example of a holistic approach to health even if it remains rather sketchy in the early 1980s.

In terms of fat however, the most unexpected ad in 1983 is a CMA<sup>601</sup> ad for butter under the seemingly paradoxical heading “*Butter-light gourmet diet to lose weight*”. The illustration shows a butterfly (which, in this case, sounds quite literal in English...) made out of a butter shell and sprigs of herbs and four translucent white wings against the backdrop of an alpine field. And the text goes on to state: “*Now there’s a butter-light and digestible slimming diet for gourmets with weight problems. In terms of calories, butter stands comparison with margarine. Thus whoever wants to cut back on a couple of little pounds in a tasty way can do so with this diet.*” The rest of the text points to the cut-out coupon to order the diet recipes emphasising that “*all recipes have been dietetically tested and are nutritionally balanced*”. The reader is then left with the following “parting shot”: “*Enjoying butter is as modern as ever!*”<sup>602</sup> This ad convincingly illustrates to what extent the dieting craze has seeped into contemporary mentalities, since even the most traditionally stigmatised food is made the tool of a slimming strategy –especially since it is not explicitly included in an Atkins-style food plan. But the ad is cautious about not going too far. The wording is carefully selected: the diet does not promise a drastic weight loss but is designed for those who just want “*to cut back on a couple of little pounds*”. And it rightfully demystifies the popular belief that butter is more fattening than margarine. Finally, in the oil arena, an article on olives entitled “*Olives provide a lot more than oil*” details the different olive types and their origins as well

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.: „Zucker ist so natürlich wie Milch, Butter oder Brot und genauso ein unentbehrliches Nahrungsmittel.“

<sup>599</sup> Ad for becel margarine (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1983): „Wieviel Prozent mehrfach ungesättigte Fettsäuren enthält die neue becel Diät-Margarine?“, „Ergänzen sollten Sie eine vernünftige Ernährung durch ausreichende Bewegung. Am besten an der frischen Luft. Aber überanstrengen Sie sich nicht. Messen sie deshalb regelmäßig Ihren Pulsschlag.“

<sup>600</sup> If blessed with good eyesight, the reader may just be able to make out the percentage on the illustration featuring the four types of becel products (vegetable cream, margarine, oil and vegetable fat).

<sup>601</sup> Central Marketing Society for German Agriculture [Centrale Marketing-Gesellschaft der deutschen Agrarwirtschaft].

<sup>602</sup> Ad for CMA butter (*Brigitte*, Heft 11, 1983): “*Butterleichte Feinschmecker-Diät zum abnehmen*”, „Für Feinschmecker mit Gewichtsproblemen gibt es jetzt eine butterleicht bekömmliche Diät zum Abnehmen. Butter ist im Kaloriengehalt mit pflanzlichem Streichfett durchaus vergleichbar. Wer also auf geschmackvolle Art ein paar Pfündchen einsparen will, kann das mit dieser Diät.“; „Selbstverständlich sind alle Rezepte ernährungswissenschaftlich geprüft und ernährungsphysiologisch ausgewogen.“; „Butter genießen! Zeitgemäß wie eh und je“.

as ways of flavouring them with spices, herbs and vegetables or preparing olive paste.<sup>603</sup> However, surprisingly from our current vantage point, the article omits enumerating any health advantages linked to olive oil consumption (especially in relation to coronary-heart diseases) or vaunting the merits of the subsequently famous “Mediterranean Diet”.

Whole cereals also require intense explanations to dispel popular ideas about health and it appears that a fibre-rich diet has not yet been linked to the “vitamins-just-under-the-skin” creed since, on a double-page ad, *Schneekoppe* attempts to teach the reader how to guess the vitamin content of rice by means of its colour: “*Is skin colour a good indicator of vitamin content for rice?*”<sup>604</sup> Contrary to an article on eggs that demystified the popular creed whereby brown eggs are healthier than white eggs,<sup>605</sup> the text here confirms that colour is a good health indicator:

Indeed, whoever thinks that refined white rice is particularly nourishing is mistaken because once the bran has been removed, the second natural silver coating is also removed from white rice through polishing. In the course of this process, the rice germ is removed and it is precisely the germ that contains many vitamins as well as germ oil, i.e. things that contribute to bodily health and that should not be absent from a balanced wholesome diet.<sup>606</sup>

And the illustration shows an enlargement of two wooden spoons featuring the two types of rice, with captions repeating the information contained in the text. Otherwise, whole foods are still a minority phenomenon.

The milk product assortment shows at least two competing strands: the traditional versus the modern, global and sometimes lighter. The traditional trend emphasises local products with an argumentation revolving around the natural goodness of old-fashioned cheeses and yogurts, e.g. as in a *Landliebe* ad:

*Landliebe* is full-bodied fresh country milk, from selected farms, with a natural fat content and natural cream. *Landliebe* means fresh milk products with local fruit and garden herbs and without thickening agents or preservatives. Everything at *Landliebe* tastes as natural as in the good old days. *Landliebe* tastes as creamy and fresh as back then.<sup>607</sup>

The illustration is a painting of an idyllic German countryside location and the products are photographed on a bed of grass constellated with daisies. The other main competitor in the traditional offer is French cheese. There a slight culinary inferiority complex seems to

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<sup>603</sup> “Oliven liefern mehr als Öl” (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1983).

<sup>604</sup> Ad for *Schneekoppe* Natur-Reis (*Brigitte*, Heft 24, 1983): „Kann man an der Hautfarbe erkennen, wie vitaminreich der Reis ist?“, „Doch wer nun glaubt, daß ein vornehm blasser Reis besonders nahrhaft ist, der irrt. Denn weißer Reis wird nach dem Schälen von seiner zweiten natürlichen Umhüllung, dem Silberhäutchen, durch Schleifen getrennt. Hierbei wird auch der Reiskeimling entfernt. Gerade der Reiskeimling aber enthält viele Vitamines und Keimöl. Eben Dinge, die der Gesunderhaltung des Körpers dienen. Und die in einer ausgewogenen, vollwertigen Ernährung nicht fehlen sollten.“

<sup>605</sup> „Viele Fragen rund ums Ei“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 17, 1983, p. 144).

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>607</sup> Ad for *Landliebe* (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983): „*Landliebe*, das ist vollmündige, Frisch Landmilch. Von ausgewählten Bauernhöfen, naturbelassen im Fettgehalt und mit natürlicher Aufrahmung. *Landliebe*, das sind frische Milchprodukte mit heimischen Früchten und Gartenkräutern. Ohne Bindemittel und ohne Konservierungsstoffe. Bei *Landliebe* schmeckt alles so ursprünglich wie in der guten alten Zeit. *Landliebe* schmeckt so rahmig-frisch wie damals.“

resurface,<sup>608</sup> as in e.g. an ad for *bonbel* with a picture featuring snails, herbs, vegetables, a slab of cheese and a glass of Pastis with explanations about “*escargots à la Bourguignonne*” [Bourgogne-style snails] or “*Pastis*” under the small caption “*French for Gourmets*”.<sup>609</sup> An interesting crossover product, *Bressot*, a cream cheese with herbs from the Provence is presented as “*prepared in Germany in the French style*” –both on the pack, and in the commentary at the bottom of the ad. The accompanying “French kitsch” illustration displays a French couple –he middle-aged with a beret, a moustache, a pipe and a seductive smile, she young, pretty, with an elegant hat and blouse, make-up and earrings– exchanging views about the cheese. He states “*It’s Bressot’s seasoning that convinces me*”. To which she retorts: “*But Albert, what would Bressot be without its creaminess...*”<sup>610</sup>

The modern-global strand is characterised by lighter or functional products. For example, *Rotkäppchen*, a German Camembert seems to be giving in to a lighter trend, but without going all the way to a really “light” cheese like *Du darfst*. Instead, it is offered in both full fat (45%) and three quarter fat (30%) versions in the same ad, with captions respectively stating “*mildly aromatic*” and “*easily digestible*”.<sup>611</sup> Otherwise French brands such as e.g. *Danone* or *Chambourcy*, seem to dominate the global market with much more standardised products and a bit less emphasis on local or traditional goodness. Two points are noteworthy here. First, in an ad for Danone fruit yogurt with strawberry pieces it becomes obvious that actual fruit pieces are a novelty (compared to artificial flavourings?) since a small nutrition information table states: “*Besides real strawberry pieces, 100g of DanoFrucht contains ca. [...]*”.<sup>612</sup> Moreover the fat content is down to 2.0 g per 100g of yogurt, compared to the average 3.5-3.7 g in full fat yogurt. Surprisingly, this fact is not highlighted as an advantage, but then diet yogurts have not yet appeared on the market.<sup>613</sup> The other highlight of the day is *Chambourcy’s* ad for so-called *Bifighurt*® from its “Green Container: For a Healthy Life” product line:

New. It tastes quite different. Its effects are completely different. It also has a totally different culture. Hence it really cannot be compared to yogurt. Indeed it’s a pure and healthy Bifighurt®. So, please, what’s a Bifighurt®? Bifighurt is a creamy and mild sour milk product with a special new “bifighurt, bifidus” culture, exclusively manufactured by Chambourcy. This bifidus assists your daily digestion and produces mainly dextrorotary lactic acid. Thus it is particularly digestible and provides new energy. Bifighurt, with its natural fat

<sup>608</sup> Particularly striking evidence for this phenomenon is provided in an ad for Biskin oil that promises to teach consumers 1000 words to help decipher French or Italian menus by attaching new vocabulary to every bottle of vegetable oil. The illustration shows a chef against a Riviera-style setting holding a bottle of Biskin and pointing to the food on the table, saying: “*Voilà! Les côtes de veau et la salade niçoise avec Biskin Öl – hmm...vraiment excellents!*”. A German translation is provided underneath in small print. Ad for Biskin Reines Pflanzenöl, (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 21, 17.05.84).

<sup>609</sup> Ad for Bel Bonbel (*Für Sie*, Heft 15, 1983): „*Französisch für Genießer*“.

<sup>610</sup> Ad for Bressot (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1983): „*nach französischer Art in Deutschland zubereitet*“, „*Mich überzeugt die Würze von Bressot*“, „*Aber, Albert, was wäre ein Bressot wohl ohne seine Cremigkeit...*“

<sup>611</sup> Ad for Rottkäppchen Camembert (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 21, 1984): „*Aromatisch mild*“ & „*Leicht bekömmlich*“.

<sup>612</sup> Ad for Danone Dano Frucht (Brigitte, Heft 9, 1983): „*Außer richtigen Erdbeerstücken enthalten 100g DanoFrucht ca.: [...]*“

<sup>613</sup> More practically, as pointed out by Ulrich Wengenroth –my most attentive reader to date– this may simply be due to the fact that producers make more money by separating (at least part of) the cream from the milk...

content of at least 3.7%, also offers all the important vitamins and minerals contained in good milk from the foothills of the Alps.<sup>614</sup>

Even if the local argument still holds some weight (and maybe helps to counterbalance the potentially alienating effect of this “new” bacteria strain) it is the health argument that stands to the fore. But explanations here are rather confusing since the precise effect of “*dextrorotary lactic acid*” is not spelt out except for its purportedly beneficial impact on digestion –a fact that will remain constant in the presentation of subsequent enhanced yogurts.

In terms of drinks, the natural appeal of mineral water remains a stable argument and is often perceived in a holistic way, as in this bucolic scene painted by *Hirschquelle*:

Nature is the best host. The nostalgia for the real and the right leads many back to the sources: Once again, you can smell home-baked bread, there is unsprayed fruit in the orchards, and connoisseurs enjoy extra-dry wine. Hence, it’s no wonder that a great still water from the Black Forest attracts more and more friends: *Hirschquelle*. It flows for all those who know how to enjoy life as in the good old days, when man still seemed innocent.  
615

Even if the ad goes on to list health indications, the emphasis here is really on the return to a primeval nature, away from the pollution and denaturalizing effects of modernity.

### 1985-1986: Faster, fresher and more dynamic

Towards the mid-1980s, the trend towards lighter food is confirmed: except for festive meals, there are less and less heavy cream sauces, meat cuts display less fat and are often braised, meat is served with a lot more vegetables and desserts although still manifold also tend towards exotic, lighter versions. Examples of dishes include “*stewed beef with paprika*”, “*pork fillet with Swiss chard*”, “*sautéed cucumber with meatballs*” or “*blackcurrant sorbet with sparkling wine*”.<sup>616</sup> Many recipes feature the number of calories/joules for either the main ingredient or per person & pro dish. Everyday recipes become more adventurous and include exotic touches such as “*onion risotto*” or “*fish fillet with curried onions*” –whereby “*Curry is an Indian spice mix that transforms the onions and the fish into an exotic, refined and low-calorie delight*”, thus highlighting readers’ potential lack of familiarity with Indian

<sup>614</sup> Ad for Chambourcy Bifighurt® (*Für Sie*, Heft 18, 1983): „*Grüner Becher: Für gesundes Leben*“, „*Neu. Schmeckt ganz anders. Wirkt ganz anders. Hat auch eine ganz andere Kultur. Ist also überhaupt nicht mit einem Joghurt zu vergleichen. Ist nämlich ein purgesunder Bifighurt®. Was, bitte, ist ein Bifighurt®? Bifighurt ist ein cremig-mildes Sauer Milch-Produkt mit der neuen Spezialkultur “bifighurt, bifidus”, die Chambourcy in einem Exklusiv-Verfahren verarbeitet. Diese bifidus macht sich um Ihre tägliche Verdauung verdient und bildet überwiegend rechtsdrehende Milchsäure. Ist also besonders gut verträglich und liefert neue Energie. Mit einem naturbelassenen Fettgehalt von mindestens 3,7% bietet Bifighurt außerdem alle wichtigen Vitamine und Mineralstoffe der guten Milch des Alpenvorlandes.*“

<sup>615</sup> Ad for *Hirschquelle* Heilwasser (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 20, 1984): „*Der beste Gastgeber ist die Natur. Die Sehnsucht nach dem Echten und Rechten führt viele zurück zu den Quellen: es duftet wieder nach selbstgebackenem Brot, in den Gärten wächst wieder ungespritztes Obst, und der Wein kann Kennern nicht trocken genug sein. Kein Wunder also, daß auch ein großes stilles Heilwasser aus dem Schwarzwald immer mehr Freunde gewinnt: Hirschquelle: Sie fließt für alle, die zu genießen verstehen. So wie damals, als der Mensch noch kein Wässerchen trüben konnte.*“

<sup>616</sup> All examples drawn from Brigitte Sammelrezepte (*Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1986): „*Geschnetzeltes Rindfleisch mit Paprika*“, „*Schweinefilet mit Mangold*“, „*Geschmorte Gurken mit Hackklößchen*“, „*Johannisbeer-Sorbet mit Sekt*“.

food.<sup>617</sup> And if stews still hold sway in the autumn and winter months, it is not only for traditional reasons but because they represent a gain of time. Indeed, everything is cooked together, they can be prepared quickly and in advance as well as cooked in large quantities and then frozen.<sup>618</sup> Often, cooking articles will focus on a seasonal or unusual ingredient, demonstrating different ways of preparing it –be it peppers (healthy and low-calorie),<sup>619</sup> curd cheese (versatile, inexpensive and low-calorie),<sup>620</sup> or cucumber (cheap and low calorie).<sup>621</sup>

A striking development is an increasing number of vegetarian menus and dishes, as e.g. in a *Brigitte* cooking supplement featuring 7 menus for gourmets with the following rationale: *“Vegetarian cooking is becoming more and more popular. It is varied, tastes new and is also healthy. Hence there are many reasons to try these still unfamiliar but enticing recipes”*.<sup>622</sup> Under the motto *“Refined food – without meat”*, *prima* even presents a monthly vegetarian cooking feature with recipes such as *“tomatoes with spinach and mozzarella”*, *“courgette with Balkan vegetables”*,<sup>623</sup> cold soups,<sup>624</sup> or *“wholemeal pasta with mushroom sauce”*, *“chervil cream soup”*<sup>625</sup> and even a “revolutionary” Christmas menu without meat: *“You can really feast at Christmas, even without meat. Here is our suggestion for a refined menu”*.<sup>626</sup>

International food also makes a breakthrough, mainly based on “holiday memories”, i.e. on particularly popular/affordable holiday destinations such as Italy,<sup>627</sup> Spain<sup>628</sup> and Greece,<sup>629</sup> with the occasionally more exotic invitation (such as China). Surprisingly, recipes are not just confined to cliché dishes such as *“dolmades”* [Greek stuffed vine leaves] or *“tortilla de patatas”* [traditional Spanish potato omelette] but also include less generic recipes such as *“mejillones Gallegos”* [Galician mussels] or *“lachanosalata”* [Greek cabbage salad]. Moreover, *“Rice like never before”*, an article in *prima* about rice, containing a lot of general and nutritional information on the cereal, makes one suspect that although it may be a staple in the German diet, it has not been exploited very imaginatively until then: *“The only competition for rice (besides pasta) is potatoes. But rice is almost more versatile. It is also easy to store when raw, can be kept and reused when cooked”*. Recipes include *“fried*

<sup>617</sup> Both recipes from „Zwiebeln: schöner essen im September“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 38, 11.09.1986, p. 59 ss.): *„Fischfilet mit Zwiebel-Curry Gemüse“*; *„Curry ist eine indische Gewürzmischung und macht die Zwiebeln mit dem Fisch zu einer exotisch raffinierten, kalorienarmen Leckerei“*.

<sup>618</sup> „Eintöpfe: Da ist alles drin“ (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986, p. 212 ss.).

<sup>619</sup> „Paprika“ (*prima*, Heft 8, 1986, p. 158 ss.): *„gesund und kalorienarm“*.

<sup>620</sup> „Quark“ (*prima*, Heft 4, 1986, p. 146 ss.): *„vielseitig, preiswert und kalorienarm“*.

<sup>621</sup> „Gurken“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1986, p. 160 ss.): *„preiswert und kalorienarm“*.

<sup>622</sup> „Vegetarisch genießen“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 16, 1986, p. 106 ss.): *„Die vegetarische Küche findet immer mehr Freunde. Sie ist abwechslungsreich, schmeckt neu und ist obendrein auch noch gesund. Viele Gründe also, Rezepte auszuprobieren, die man noch nicht kennt und die sich verlockend anhören“*.

<sup>623</sup> „Gemüse mit bunten Füllungen“ (*prima*, Heft 6, 1986, p. 144): *Raffiniert essen-ganz ohne Fleisch“*; *„Tomaten mit Spinat und Mozzarella, Zucchini mit Balkangemüse“*

<sup>624</sup> „Köstlich: Kalte Suppen“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1986).

<sup>625</sup> „Spinatstrudel mit Käse“ (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986): *„Vollkornnudeln mit Pilzsoße“*, *„Kerbelcremesuppe“*

<sup>626</sup> „Vegetarisches Festessen“ (*prima*, Heft 12, 1986): *„Auch ohne Fleisch können Sie am Weihnachten so richtig schlemmen. Hier unser Vorschlag für ein raffiniertes Menü“*

<sup>627</sup> „Tirami-Su: Nachtisch auf italienisch“ [Foto-Kochkurs] (*prima*, Heft 9, 1986, pp. 152-153).

<sup>628</sup> „Spanische Urlaubs-Erinnerungen“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 09.10.1985, p. 180 ss.).

<sup>629</sup> „Griechisch essen wie im Urlaub“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 25, 19.11.1985, p. 156 ss.).

*Chinese rice*“, *“rice balls with multi-coloured vegetables*“, *“vegetable risotto*” and *“meat skewers on courgette rice*”.<sup>630</sup>

As far as staples are concerned, the popularity of pasta seems to be growing fast –be it German or Italian. *Schüle Gold*, for example, advertises its wheat germ improved noodles with either a couple performing an acrobatic dance or trekking, alongside the caption *“Being fit is fun and tastes good”*.<sup>631</sup> *Barilla* is even so brash as to use an all-Italian caption over its ads *“La pasta Barilla. Un tema con variazioni.”* [Barilla pasta. A theme with variations], before presenting various typologies of pasta along with their breadth or length. The texts below the photographs aim to educate the German consumer about the origin of ingredients, the types of sauces that should be used to accompany the different types of pasta, and provide translations for concepts or ingredients such as *“pasta asciutta”*, *“pasta in brodo”*, *“pasta al forno”*, *“formaggio”*, *“salsa”* or *“sugo”*. But the most significant paragraph is no doubt the following: *“It will probably come as a surprise to you that our tagliatelle, tortellini, papardelle, lasagne, etc. are about to become as popular here in Germany as they are back home in Italy. Obviously, we are delighted.”*<sup>632</sup>

Meat, however, has not disappeared from the German diet, far from it, e.g. an ad for *Rewe* supermarkets displays a typology of Leberwurst [liver sausage],<sup>633</sup> moustachioed male models in traditional dress present huge platters of Hungarian salami, sausages and bacon,<sup>634</sup> and *CMA* presents a close-up of pork chops swimming in hot fat with the caption *“Meat is a must. Take a bite. [...] Meat is a piece of vital energy”*.<sup>635</sup> Talking of hot fat, *Rewe* presents a typology of fats that can be used to deep fry without burning or smoking. The ad stretching over a double page features a hot griddle type surface with close-ups of large blobs of fat gradually melting on the surface, a vision that may appear almost as distasteful as cheap pornography to our contemporary eyes.<sup>636</sup> In contrast, under the heading *“On the gastronomic road with Biskin”*, the brand displays recipes developed by chefs in traditional German restaurants. Here, however, even if fat is visible on some of the illustrations, the meat cuts themselves have become much leaner.<sup>637</sup>

This ambivalence between traditional and “light” also transpires in ads for butter. Two *CMA* ads for butter extol traditional food styling and consumption rationales – in stark contrast with *CMA*’s rather pathetic attempt to promote a butter diet in 1983, which I analysed above. Indeed, the clock seems to have turned back and the two ads foregrounding butter with meat and butter with fish try to revive the waning popularity of the animal fat & protein

<sup>630</sup> „Neue internationale Rezepte: Reis wie sonst nie“ (*prima*, Heft 10, 1986): „Reis wie sonst nie“; „Einzige Konkurrenz (neben Nudel) ist für Reis die Kartoffel. Er ist fast noch vielseitiger verwendbar, und: Er läßt sich roh gut lagern, gekocht gut aufheben und wiederverwenden“; „Gebratener chinesischer Reis, Reisbällchen mit buntem Gemüse, Gemüserisotto, Fleischspieße auf Zucchini-Reis“.

<sup>631</sup> Ads for Schule Gold pasta (*prima*, Heft 10, 1986 or *Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1986): *“Fit sein macht Spass und schmeckt”*.

<sup>632</sup> Ads for Barilla pasta (*prima*, Heft 12, 1986 and *Brigitte*, Heft 3, 1986): *„Es wird Sie vielleicht überraschen – aber unsere Tagliatelle, Tortellini, Pappardelle, Lasagne usw. sind auf dem besten Wege, hier in Deutschland genauso beliebt zu werden wie bei uns in Italien. Was uns natürlich freut.“*

<sup>633</sup> Ad for Rewe Leberwurst (*Brigitte*, Heft 3, 1986).

<sup>634</sup> Ads for Gutes aus Ungarn smoked meat (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1985 or *Für Sie*, Heft 25, 1985).

<sup>635</sup> Ad for CMA meat (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985): *„Fleisch muß sein. Beiß rein. [...] Fleisch ist ein Stück Lebenskraft“*.

<sup>636</sup> Ad for Rewe fats [Achtung, heiß und fettig] (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1986).

<sup>637</sup> Ad for Biskin geschmeidiges gehärtetes Pflanzenfett (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985 or *prima*, Heft 3, 1986): *„Kulinarisch unterwegs mit Biskin“*.

combination. In the first ad, a big slab of meat is pictured with a couple of onion rings, mushrooms, herbs and 3 butter shells in the foreground and the text trumpets the following: *“Butter’s nature cannot be separated from meat’s healthy vital energy [...] We need not renounce butter-refined pleasure. Indeed it has approximately the same calorie content as margarine. Naturally butter!”*<sup>638</sup> However, butter’s true nature remains just as mysterious as meat’s taken for granted *“healthy life energy”*. Before closing with the same slogan, the fish ad uses a similar tack: *“Butter’s nature cannot be separated from the healthy protein in fish. The healthy resources in natural foods are the basis of human existence. This is why human beings have always instinctively eaten what is good for them.”*<sup>639</sup> Additionally, both ads emphasise that butter is very easy to digest. Here again, the rhetoric remains very general, relying on simplified clichés such as fish’s reputation for lightness (without providing any remotely scientific backing) or a flimsy appeal to human beings’ *“surefire”* food instinct. A positive essentialist conception of nature is the tenor that remains with us. A mitigating factor here could be the fact that these ads stem from *stern*, a weekly news magazine, instead of a women’s magazine. Thus, it is quite conceivable that the rhetoric chosen for these ads remains more general –and less diet-oriented– in a magazine targeting both sexes. Indeed, the meat ad seems particularly fit to appeal to a masculine audience as conceived of then. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both ads sport a cut out tag to order the *“This year will be butter-light”* [Dieses Jahr wird butterleicht] recipe calendar.<sup>640</sup>

In 1986, the ads for butter and margarine take on an unmistakable health orientation,<sup>641</sup> The CMA butter ad shows a woman in tracksuit and trainers asymmetrically bent over, touching her right foot with her left hand and stretching the other arm towards the sky or the ceiling (the background is unspecified). The discourse has left the slimming diet rhetoric behind to concentrate on *“pure”* health aspects:

Butter’s nature involves a healthy diet. Whoever has maintained a healthy relationship with food can rejoice in butter. It is naturally so perfect that no nutrients need be added to it. It matures biologically and not technologically. Because it has always been produced naturally. This is why butter is so popular with nature-conscious people. It boasts a very large percentage of short-chained fatty acids that make it butter-light and butter-good to digest. With a melting point of under 35° C, it is below body temperature and thus very easily absorbed. Butter requires so little work from the digestive organs that it is also very appropriate in a liver- or gallbladder-friendly diet. Moreover, it also provides precious minerals, trace elements and important vitamins. Butter is a great contribution to our

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<sup>638</sup> Ad for CMA butter (*stern*, Heft 24, 1985): *„Zur Natur der Butter gehört die gesunde Lebenskraft vom Fleisch. [...] Auf butterfeinen Genuß brauchen wir nicht zu verzichten. Schließlich hat sie in etwa die gleichen Kalorien wie pflanzliches Streichfett. Natürlich Butter!“*

<sup>639</sup> Ad for CMA butter (*stern*, Heft 23, 1985): *„Zur Natur der Butter gehört das gesunde Eiweiss vom Fisch. Die gesunden Wertstoffe natürlicher Lebensmittel bilden die Grundlage der menschlichen Existenz. Darum essen die Menschen schon immer instinktiv das, was ihnen gut tut.“*

<sup>640</sup> But it should be noted that from the mid-1980s, slimming rhetoric is no longer the sole apanage of women, as illustrated by an ad for Mikro-Diät diet drink (*freundin*, Heft 12, 1985) under the caption *„Wer abnehmen will, muss leiden. Oder den Coupon ausschneiden“*. However, the illustration –no doubt unwittingly– lends a slightly ironic tinge to the appropriation of slenderness for men. A man whose attire consists in Hawaiian style boxer shorts and a pair of pilot-style glasses is pictured in a rather cramped position on the scales, his fists clenched in a victoriously sporty attitude, and a broad grin spread across his face.

<sup>641</sup> But, in all fairness, I should emphasise that the ads I have for that year are all drawn from women’s magazines....

healthy fitness [sic] and only contains about the same amount of calories as margarine. So enjoy its butter-delicious taste with a good conscience. Naturally butter!<sup>642</sup>

The rhetorical evolution is subtle but obvious here. Even though the appeal to an essentialist nature remains, there are more attempts at anchoring this worldview into a “scientific” discourse: expressions such as “short-chained fatty acids”, “melting point”, “liver”, “gallbladder” or “trace elements” at least pay tribute to this will even if the explanations remain sketchy and rather unconvincing from a nutritional or physiological point of view. Paradoxically, while a scientific view is implicitly courted, technology is obviously rejected since it appears to stand in the way of nature. This polarity obscures the fact that butter has long been a technological product that does not just happen in a modern refrigerated environment. However, this rejection of technology can also be read as a stab at margarine – often viewed as a techno-artificial product– thus contributing to a long-established war or at least rivalry between the two products.<sup>643</sup> Two health scripts are opposed here: an apparently unadulterated process vs. a technically supported one, two versions that today’s health discourse often reconciles into a “technonatural” (or perhaps “supernatural”) narrative – as we will note further.

In contrast, margarine seems less intent on defending itself against butter but just as intent on being associated with fitness and active leisure, as displayed in two ads for *Flora soft* promoting two competitions to win fitness holidays (including swimming, surfing, tennis, volleyball, archery, golf and waterskiing). The caption reads: “*Being and staying fit! With Flora soft!*”. In both ads, the female model is dressed in white fitness gear. Paradoxically, in the first ad, the model is riding an exercise bike [Heimtrainer] on a grassy surface against a natural background while making a victory sign with one hand. Unsurprisingly though, the runner-up prizes are 111 *Tunturi* exercise bikes. The hotel picture here concentrates on a coastal view with a windsurfer.<sup>644</sup> The later ad displays the model riding a regular bike on a lawn with legs outstretched and an enthusiastic smile. In this case, the runner-up prizes here include 33 light athletic bikes [Leichtlaufräder] with six gears or 333 soft jogging towels with the “Flora soft” stripes. The ad includes the mention that *Flora soft* is an official supplier for the West German Olympic team. A small picture of the Spanish hotel is included with a special focus on the pool.<sup>645</sup>

In terms of milk products, the subdivision between healthy, traditional and foreign remains, with the health discourse gaining in weight. A series of ads for *jocca* cottage cheese has relinquished health rhetoric brainwashing in favour of more targeted, lighter publicity with a

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<sup>642</sup> Ad for CMA butter (*Brigitte*, Heft 1, 1986), „Gesunde Ernährung liegt in der Natur der Butter. Wer sich ein gesundes Verhältnis zur Ernährung bewahrt hat, darf sich an der Butter freuen. Sie ist von Natur aus so vollkommen, daß ihr keine Nährstoffe mehr zugefügt werden müssen. Biologisch ist ihr Reifeprozess, und nicht technologisch. Denn sie entsteht, wie schon immer, auf natürliche Weise. Darum steht Butter gerade bei den Naturbewußten so hoch im Kurs. Mit einem sehr großen Anteil kurzkettiger Fettsäuren, die für butterleichte Verdaulichkeit und buttermilde Bekömmlichkeit sorgen. Mit weniger als 35° liegt ihr Schmelzpunkt unter der Körpertemperatur, darum wird sie besonders schnell resorbiert. Butter verlangt von den Verdauungsorganen so wenig Arbeit, daß sie z.B. im Rahmen einer Leber- und Gallendiät hervorragend geeignet ist. Dabei liefert sie auch noch wertvolle Mineralstoffe, Spurenelemente und wichtige Vitamine. Butter leistet viel für unsere gesunde Fitness und hat doch nur in etwa so viele Kalorien wie pflanzliche Streichfette. Freuen Sie sich guten Gewissens an ihrem buttermilden Geschmack. Natürlich Butter!“

<sup>643</sup> Cf. Pelzer, Birgit & Reith, Reinhold, *Margarine*, Berlin: Wagenbach, 2001.

<sup>644</sup> Ad for Flora soft (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1985): „Fit sein und bleiben. Mit Flora soft“.

<sup>645</sup> Ad for Flora soft (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1986).

series of at least three ads showing a middle-aged woman (“A conscious diet is a must for me”),<sup>646</sup> a middle-aged man (“A conscious diet keeps me fit”)<sup>647</sup> and a young senior woman (“Healthy eating makes me a lot more active”).<sup>648</sup> In all of them the sober caption reads as follows: “Jocca, the healthy & fresh snack”<sup>649</sup> and the small text extols healthy fresh milk, natural vitamins and minerals, a high protein/low fat content as well as a light and satiating effect. In contrast, müller sells its pure buttermilk with a more strongly gendered discourse: in the ad picturing a young woman, the caption reads “Makes you young and beautiful”<sup>650</sup> whereas the ad showing a young man reads: “Makes you as fit as a fiddle”.<sup>651</sup> However, both ads state: “Enjoy müller’s pure buttermilk daily. THE treatment for your body. With a lot of protein + lecithin + natural calcium + vitamins.”<sup>652</sup> Here buttermilk is explicitly marketed as medicine or therapy, thus hinting at food’s holistic impact.<sup>653</sup> A year later, i.e. in 1986, müller advertises its multivitamin buttermilk (with 10 fruits and enhanced with 10 vitamins) as “Cosmetics from the inside” displaying the made-up profile of a female model with perfectly manicured and painted finger nails sipping buttermilk from the pot with a straw. The text is a particularly arresting example of the gradual overlap or blending of discourses pertaining to previously separate realms –in this case food and cosmetics:

Here is reliable information about multivitamin buttermilk: the numerous vitamins cover the daily requirement of an adult and give her/him a seductive complexion. Calcium also has a beautifying effect (beauty for hair and teeth!), as well as protein (beauty for the muscles!), not to mention the small amount of only 0.13 fat (beauty for the figure!). What make-up can compare with this? (Pure buttermilk! An equally effective broadband cosmetic).<sup>654</sup>

Even milk tries to refresh its image by picturing young and dynamic people empowered by its content. A 1985 CMA ad shows a pretty teenager sitting on a motorcycle with a T-shirt emblazoned with the famous “Die Milch macht’s” [Milk is it!] slogan.<sup>655</sup> Her winsome smile is emphasised by the milk “moustache” left over from sipping at the big glass in her hand. An additional slogan simply states “Young. Fresh. Really powerful.”<sup>656</sup> Under the heading “Treatment time”, a contemporary ad by Milch aus Bayern displays a sauna environment with three senior men of different ages –all sporting Rubensian curves and all in a jolly good

<sup>646</sup> Ad for Kraft jocca e.g. (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986): „Bewußte Ernährung gehört für mich dazu“.

<sup>647</sup> Ad for Kraft jocca e.g. (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1985): „Bewußte Ernährung hält mich in Form“.

<sup>648</sup> Ad for Kraft jocca e.g. (*Bunte*, Heft 14, 1985): „Gesundes Essen macht mich viel aktiver“. It should be noted that it is the first ad in the food realm, where I have found a senior pictured in connection with fitness rather than just health maintenance, prevention or remediation.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.: „Jocca, der gesunde Frisch-Imbiß“.

<sup>650</sup> Ad for müller Reine Butter Milch (*stern*, Heft 21, 1985): „Macht jung und schön“.

<sup>651</sup> Ad for müller Reine Butter Milch (*stern*, Heft 24, 1985): „Macht kerngesund“.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.: „Täglich Müller Reine Buttermilch. Die Kur für Ihren Körper. Mit viel Eiweiß + Lecithin + natürlichen Kalzium + Vitaminen“.

<sup>653</sup> It also his is the first mention I have found of lecithin but no explanations are provided about its effects.

<sup>654</sup> Ad for müller Multi Vitamin Buttermilch (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1986 or *prima*, Heft 6, 1986): „Kosmetik von innen“; „Über Multivitamin-Buttermilch liegen folgende gesicherte Informationen vor: Die zahlreichen Vitamine decken jeweils den Tagesbedarf eines erwachsenen Menschen und geben seiner Haut einen verführerischen Teint. Verschönernd wirken ferner Kalzium (schön für Haare und Zähne!), Eiweiß (schön für die Muskeln!) sowie die geringe Menge von nur 0,13 Prozent Fett (schön für die Figur!). Welches Make-up kann sich damit vergleichen? (Reine Buttermilch! Ein ebenbürtiges Breitband-Kosmetikum).“

<sup>655</sup> Dating back to 1980, cf. <http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?Op=AddAgency&Id=6952> [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>656</sup> Ad for CMA milk (*stern*, Heft 18, 1985): „Jung. Frech. Echt stark“.

mood– enjoying a glass of milk because “*Milk time is anytime!*”.<sup>657</sup> A later ad shows three enthusiastic but slim women on a tennis court under the caption “*Enjoy success!*”; a glass of milk is foregrounded together with the “*Milk is it!*” slogan.<sup>658</sup> Otherwise, the traditional milk product assortment (including yogurt, cream cheese, brie-type cheese, blue cheese and curd) continues to play on the clichés of the German countryside –especially the Alps– and traditional-natural rich creamy goodness, while foreign cheese is mainly French.

In the convenience food realm, apart from the habitual Italian sauces, Chinese instant noodle pots, etc., noteworthy developments include the concept of “*Fast cooking*” as elaborated upon by Pfanni: “*Is fast, tastes good and looks great. If fast cooking is to be fun, you need the appropriate products. Pfanni fresh packs – straight from the pack into the pan. A quick tip: Pfanni – Fried potatoes with skewered meat/vegetables*”. Elaborate justifications no longer seem to be required. Fun, as a concept, suffices: a perspective confirmed by the illustration showing a modern thirty-something woman lying playfully on a couch, barefoot and dressed in leisurewear, a big basket with knitting yarn at her elbow and one hand stretched out holding a roast potato pack.<sup>659</sup> Another ad for Pfanni sums it up even more pointedly: “*Real fried potatoes that spell only fun and no work*”.<sup>660</sup> The “*cooking for singles*” theme also surfaces, as in a humorous ad for Sonnen Bassermann’s Schwetzinger asparagus cream soup. The illustration shows a can of soup, a key holder with a Spanish key-ring prominently displayed, a lighter, a biro and a folded newspaper displaying the personals page against a checkerboard background. The caption reads “*Friendly single m., good cook, seeks nice w. to play draughts*”.<sup>661</sup> However, singlehood here is not presented as a potentially enduring or positive state but just as a phase before companionship. Otherwise, the convenience food assortment displays more exoticism: starting with Italian specialities, it now includes not only Parisian onion soup or paella but also nasi goreng, bami goreng, chop suey, sweet&sour Chinese food<sup>662</sup> or zaziki.<sup>663</sup>

Furthermore, the convenience food assortment has grown to include genuine “*fast food*”, e.g. takeaway salads in the shape of McDonald’s Chef or Mexicana salads<sup>664</sup> or iglo’s frozen salad herbs full of “*healthy vitamins*”.<sup>665</sup> Actually, iglo has expanded its convenience offer to include a total of 15 “*Bistro*” menus –heralding the glamour of restaurant food at home (“*This is how you can open your own bistro at home*”)– of which four are “*light*” menus.<sup>666</sup> Pointedly, the ad comes with a competition enticing readers to win either 200 Bistro samples or 55 microwaves. It is actually the first ad I have unearthed that displays a logo with a wave and the caption “*Also microwavable*”. A contemporary article in *Frau im Spiegel* even provides a basic initiation to the microwave: “*Cooking with a microwave means saving: time,*

<sup>657</sup> Ad for Milch aus Bayern (*Bunte*, Heft 20, 1985): „*Kurzeit*“; „*Milchzeit ist jederzeit*“.

<sup>658</sup> Ad for CMA milk (*prima*, Heft 10, 1986): „*Hab’ Spaß am Erfolg!*“

<sup>659</sup> Ad for Pfanni (*prima*, Heft 7, 1986): „*Schnelle Küche*“; „*Geht schnell, schmeckt prima und sieht gut aus. Damit die schnelle Küche Spaß macht, braucht man auch die richtigen Produkte. Pfanni Frische Packs – aus der Packung direct in die Pfanne. Ein schneller Tip: Pfanni – Bratkartoffeln mit Fleisch/Gemüse-Spieß.*“

<sup>660</sup> Ad for Pfanni (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986): „*So richtige Bratkartoffeln, die nur noch Spaß und keine Arbeit machen.*“

<sup>661</sup> Ad for Sonnen Bassermann’s Schwetzinger Spargel (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1985): „*Symp. Jungges., guter Koch, su. Nette Frau z. Dame-spielen.*“

<sup>662</sup> E.g. ad for Dr Oetker’s „*Junge Küche*“ (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986).

<sup>663</sup> E.g. ad for Borgmann’s Zaziki (*Brigitte*, Heft 3, 1986).

<sup>664</sup> Ad for McDonald’s salads [Salat, Salat, Salat!] (*prima*, Heft 9, 1986) or [Grüne Wochen bei McDonald’s] (*Brigitte*, Heft 19, 1986).

<sup>665</sup> Ad for iglo Salat-Kräuter (*prima*, Heft 7, 1986): „*gesunde Vitaminen*“.

<sup>666</sup> Ad for iglo Bistro (*prima*, Heft 12, 1986): „*Wie sie Ihr Bistro zu Hause eröffnen*“; „*Auch für Mikrowelle*“.

energy, hence also money. And that is also the great advantage of this fast helper that is gradually beginning to conquer our kitchens” The article goes on to explain what microwaves are best suited for, that they cannot replace conventional cooking methods but only complement them, how they can be combined with other types of ovens and what containers should be used. It also provides a basic technical explanation and tries to dispel security concerns.<sup>667</sup> Illustrations include various microwaves and combined oven models with women using them, dishes that can be used both to cook and serve as well as *Dr Oetker's* “Mikrowellen-Kochbuch” [microwave cookbook].

A particularly striking contemporary ad is provided by *Siemens*. The first page shows a charming thirty-something young woman dressed in a suit with a butterfly collar and a tie but with long hair and well made-up. She sports a winning, ironic smile whilst holding her finger up in a slightly menacing way. Below the Siemens logo, the caption states: “*You’re going to eat whatever I serve you!*” and a small blurb near her raised finger reads: “*The new cuisine. Cooking with love and fantasy – a new type of versatile and varied cooking is emerging in an ever increasing number of households*”. The next page displays a combination oven, the so-called *Microwelle Plus* with the following statement: “*Crusty onion quiche, juicy chicken legs, pasta au gratin, delicious marzipan cake, everything in half the time; cooking what you like while remaining fit.*”<sup>668</sup> This ad is particularly subtle. On the one hand, the gestalt of the woman is typical of the eighties: she sports a perfect hairdo and make-up (and is associated with loving and creative cooking!) but the masculine connotation of the suit spells professional control over everyday life and hints at the fact that women increasingly combine an outer professional life with housework and are thus entitled to cooking helps (if only technical). They are also legitimised to impose particular food choices and cooking methods on the family – choices and methods that no longer require cowering excuses.

This ad builds on and to some extent transcends previous ads for pressure cookers and kitchen robots. In the previous year, modern pressure cookers appear to be making a breakthrough using the rationales of both speed and healthy cooking. An ad for *Silit's Sicomatic* shows a surprisingly plump woman in her kitchen – dressed casually but sporting a chef's hat. She has just filled the cooker with vegetables and is about to place the lid on it. Frau Heidi Brück is thus shown imitating a certain Albert Bouley, one of the best contemporary cooks in Germany,<sup>669</sup> by using the so-called “Biogaren” [bio-cooking] method: “*Cooking what tastes good while remaining fit.*”<sup>670</sup> Noteworthy here is the fact that – compared to the Siemens ad – the woman is the boss in her own home but still requires a famous male role-model to support her choices.<sup>671</sup>

<sup>667</sup> Interestingly, it states that all microwaves must be registered at the post-office but that this step is free of charge. Ziegler, Lydia, „Mikrowellengeräte: Die schnelle Welle für eilige Fälle“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 35, 21.08.1986, p. 36): „*Mit Mikrowellen kochen heißt Sparen: Zeit, Energie und damit Geld. Und das ist auch schon der größte Vorzug dieser schnellen Helfer, die ganz allmählich unsere Küchen zu erobern beginnen.*”

<sup>668</sup> Ad for Siemens *Microwelle Plus* (*prima*, Heft 5, 1986): „*Gegessen wird, was auf den Tisch kommt*“; „*Die neue Küche. Kochen mit Liebe und Phantasie – in immer mehr Haushalten halt eine neue, abwechslungs- und variantenreiche Küche Einzug; Krustige Zwiebel-Quiche, saftige Hähnchenkeulen, gratinierte Nudeln, leckerer Marzipankranz, alles in der halben Zeit; Kochen was schmeckt und dabei fit bleiben.*”

<sup>669</sup> Cf. e.g. <http://www.effilee.de/koch/bouley-albert-425> [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>670</sup> Ad for *Silit Sicomatic* (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985).

<sup>671</sup> Another ad for a number of Siemens kitchen robots shows less of an overt gender bias since the illustration portrays 2 couples relaxing after sport (they are all wearing leisure wear including wristband, headband or towel) enjoying a light snack with fruit juices, a sandwich, cereal and various healthy looking dishes on the table in the foreground under the caption „*So zaubern Sie Vielfalt auf den Tisch*“. Although there is no real intimation

In terms of drinks, fruit juices –especially functional- seem to enjoy a lasting popularity. Apart from the by then well-established *Trink 10* multivitamin drink (“*Vitamins energise the body and mobilise the mind*”),<sup>672</sup> the *Dr Koch* range in 1986 has been supplemented with a new *Plus E* drink, a fruit or vegetable blend enriched with vitamin E (“*The beautiful way of doing more for oneself*”). The illustration shows a young and pretty model with an intense and surprisingly serious stare<sup>673</sup> alongside the caption “*She feels fine. And it’s obvious*”. No precise explanations are given about the effect of vitamin E except that it makes one feel “*completely well*”.

Mineral water, however, seems to be by far the most popular drink. The traditional health discourse is still present (e.g. *St Gero* or *Evian*), but increasingly, it is embedded in the lifestyle of potentially stressed 1980s professionals. An ad vaunting the merits of *Hirschquelle* mineral water provides a convincing illustration of this phenomenon. It depicts “*the astounding healing water from the Black Forest*” on a double page. The first picture under the title “*Hirschquelle everyday*” depicts a bottle of *Hirschquelle* placed in a waterfall setting (with damp rocks as a backdrop and a river flowing at the bottom); water rises like a geyser at the mouth of the bottle. The second picture shows a man standing in his office, stretching his arms out whilst holding a glass of mineral water; a typewriter, documents, and the bottle are lying on the table. The atmosphere is bathed in a golden light that suggests the end of a fruitful afternoon’s work. The heading reads “*A prescription that Nature has written for you*”. The text under the two pictures first describes the mineral water’s long history and healing pedigree, providing information on its physiological effects, before suggesting a prescription:

Relax between two thoughts with a refreshing glass of *Hirschquelle*; this is a very simple way of contributing to your well-being. And because *Hirschquelle* also tastes good, this extremely healthy still water is a great thirst quencher for the whole family. Moreover, *Hirschquelle* helps to stimulate the appetite. –We live in an age that is rediscovering the unadulterated pleasures of nature. *Hirschquelle* belongs to it.<sup>674</sup>

The mineral water can thus be integrated into everyday work routines, providing a welcome break as well as fostering inspiration and even appetite. The striking contrast between a natural and a corporate environment is bridged by the fact that productivity can be stimulated through targeted natural recuperation [Erholung]. Moreover, the effects of the water are not purely physiological or even mental, they also connect the individual to a larger sphere, that of the natural ecosystem. And the fact that the family is also mentioned means that this product can easily transit from the realm of work to the realm of private life,

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of job-sharing, there is at least leisure-sharing... Cf. Ad for Siemens Küchenmaschine, Waffelautomat, Universal Toaster, Eierkocher, Warmhalteplatte & Zitruspresse (*Bunte*, Heft 17, 1985).

<sup>672</sup> This is one of the first instances where vitamins’ purportedly holistic effect is emphasised.

<sup>673</sup> Ad for *Dr Koch’s Plus E* (*prima*, Heft 6, 1986 or *Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1986): „*Vitamine bringen den Körper auf Touren, den Geist in Bewegung*“; „*Die schöne Art, mehr für sich zu tun*“; „*Sie fühlt sich wohl. Und das sieht man*.“; „*rundum wohl*“.

<sup>674</sup> Ad for *Hirschquelle Heilwasser* (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985): „*Ein Rezept, das die Natur Ihnen schreibt*“; „*Entspannen Sie sich zwischen zwei Gedanken mit einem erfrischenden Glas Hirschquelle, und Sie tun auf ganz einfache Art und Weise viel für Ihr Wohlbefinden. Und weil Hirschquelle auch gut schmeckt, ist diese urgesunde stille Wasser ein feiner Durstlöscher für die ganze Familie. Übrigens: Hirschquelle vor dem Essen zügelt den Appetit. –Wir leben in einer Zeit, die die unversfälschten Genüsse der Natur wiederentdeckt. Hirschquelle gehört dazu.*“

if not explicitly leisure. Thus, the underlying assumption is that *Hirschquelle* is a well-being enhancer in all circumstances.

*Staatl. Fachinger* takes a similar tack in an ad designed as a small 1-page feature article. Under the heading “*She feels happy as a clam*” [in German: as happy as a poodle],<sup>675</sup> it shows pictures of a woman smiling and relaxing on her sofa at home holding a... poodle, alongside the following introduction: “*A woman’s achievement calls for respect: she is active from dawn to dusk for both job and family. It is surprising that she still feels well despite this hectic lifestyle*”. She continues to smile while sticking a pencil in her hair and answering the phone at work (“*A woman achieves a lot – both on the job and in her household. Therefore, she must be healthy*”), she smiles on while playing tennis (“*Healthy eating makes her fit for sport, housework and her job*”) but her smile has become a bit of a distant mechanical smirk as she fills her shopping cart in the last photograph (“*Usually, there’s little time left for shopping. One has to think of everything – Fachinger for health, nibbles for the children, and hubby’s favourite food*”). The text goes on to extol how much a woman has to achieve in all these realms and emphasises that her well-being is not a matter of luck but the product of health, sport, the right food and... mineral water with various minerals and trace elements, like *Staatl. Fachingen* (“*It comes from the depth of the earth –pure as nature– it is only lightly sparkling and free from all environmental pollutants*”). And its effects are truly amazing: “*Well-being, enthusiasm and elasticity are maintained. It fuels performance and stamina and the entire organism retains its energy*”.<sup>676</sup> The emphasis here is on performance and endurance to counter the stresses of everyday life. From this perspective, women’s emancipation is more of an overwork/multitasking guarantee than a demand for a more balanced task-sharing, let alone striving towards a more fulfilling, balanced life. In contrast, a *Heppinger* ad, under the heading “*Healthy living tastes good*”, remain faithful to the cliché of the fit woman: this time, it portrays a dancer/gymnast performing an impressive caper as opposed to the previous model practising yoga postures. The aesthetic appeal seems to be dominant here, since posters of the ads can be ordered against 5 DM.<sup>677</sup>

Health foods seem to hold an increasingly strong position with the multiplication of ads for *neuform* health-food shops, showing Polaroid snapshots of customers in front of the shops in various locations. The examples I have collected include a man<sup>678</sup> and a woman with her little daughter.<sup>679</sup> Both ads emphasise the breadth of the offer –including whole foods, natural remedies, quality plant-based cosmetics and diet foods– and the competence of the staff. A later ad promotes a free issue of the “*neuform Kurier*” –a health food magazine– on children’s adequate nutrition for the beginning of the school year.<sup>680</sup>

<sup>675</sup> the literal German expression is “well like a poodle”: „*Sie fühlt sich pudelwohl*”

<sup>676</sup> Ad for *Staatl. Fachingen Heilwasser* (*prima*, Heft 6, 1986): „*Respekt vor dem, was eine Frau leisten muß: Von früh bis spät ist sie für Familie und Beruf auf Trab. Erstaunlich, daß bei all der Hektik sie sich wohlfühlt.*“; „*In Beruf oder Haushalt – eine Frau leistet viel. Deshalb muß sie gesund sein*“; „*Durch gesunde Ernährung fühlt sie sich fit für Sport, Haushalt und Beruf*“; „*für die Kinder etwas zum Naschen, für den Mann die Lieblingsesspeise*“; „*Rein wie die Natur kommt es aus den Tiefen der Erde, is kohlenensäurearm und frei von allen Schadstoffen unserer Umwelt*“; „*Wohlbefinden, Schaffensfreude und Spannkraft bleiben erhalten. Leistungsreserven werden aufgebaut, und der gesamte Organismus behält seinen Schwung.*“

<sup>677</sup> Ad for *Heppinger Heilwasser* (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986): „*Es schmeckt gut, gesund zu leben*“.

<sup>678</sup> Ad for *neuform Reformhäuser* (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985).

<sup>679</sup> Ad for *neuform Reformhäuser* (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1985).

<sup>680</sup> Ad for *neuform Kurier* (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 37, 1986).

As to health-connoted products, the popularity of muesli is consolidating. *Dr Kousa*, for instance offers three varieties in 1985: Bircher-Müsli [classic muesli], Früchte-Müsli [fruit muesli] and Schoko-Müsli [chocolate muesli]. Selling arguments include energy, high quality protein, easily digestible carbohydrates, minerals, B-complex vitamins as well as vitamins D and E plus fibre to naturally regulate digestion.<sup>681</sup> *Schneekoppe* is more ambitious in its teaching programme: it dismisses the modern breakfast involving a slice of toast and a sip of coffee, because breakfast should be the most important meal of the day since it determines the quality of performance and concentration. Along with the other nutrients enumerated in the *Dr Kousa* ad, complex carbohydrates are seen as the key to enduring performance –as shown in a small graph displaying comparative curves for the two types of breakfast. Predictably, the conventional breakfast curve peaks very rapidly around 9 am before vertiginously dropping shortly before eleven. In contrast, the muesli breakfast curve is much less impressive but keeps its adepts satiated until midday. The caption reads “‘Empty’ calories mean that energy is expended too quickly. Tiredness comes earlier and hunger quicker”.<sup>682</sup> But the most striking ad is for muesli bars by *Dr Oetker* under the heading “modern food”. The text states: “For us, ‘modern food’ spells products that particularly satisfy the demand for a conscious diet. Balanced products for breakfast or as a snack in-between.”<sup>683</sup> This is the first ad for a convenience health food I have been able to detect. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that it is not yet functional since no micro-nutrients have been added.

Otherwise, crisp bread represent an absolute hit. If heavy-duty health food discourse can still occasionally be found (as in an ad for *Nestlé’s Alevita* with its special low-salt crisp bread<sup>684</sup>), most other ads go for a much lighter note, emphasising the tremendous energy boost supposedly delivered by consuming crisp bread for breakfast. *Leicht&Cross*, for example, shows a woman at the breakfast table catching a pack of the crisp bread.<sup>685</sup> But it is a tame feat compared to the exploits performed by individuals consuming *Wasa* crackers. To the amazement of onlookers, Frau Dr. Siepe from Bielefeld literally flies out of the supermarket with her shopping cart like superman<sup>686</sup> and the supervisory board of Hermann Hase AG all perform handstands after a meal of crisp bread,<sup>687</sup> not to mention little karateka Mucki Anders who swings a fat sumotori above his head while another sumotori looks on aghast.<sup>688</sup> A year later, Elfie Strac’s consumption of *Wasa* crackers enables her to master a very particular kind of waterskiing, since the skis have been replaced by two male swimmers.<sup>689</sup> All these exploits are fuelled by the complex carbohydrates, the high quality protein, minerals and vitamins contained in the bread.

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<sup>681</sup> Ad for Dr. Kousa Vollkorn-Müslis (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1985).

<sup>682</sup> Ad for Schneekoppe Früchte-Müesli [according to the illustration, the assortment also includes Waldhonig, Vitamine Drink and Tomaten Trunk] (*Bunte*, Heft 15, 1985): „Leere’ Kalorien geben ihre Energie zu schnell ab. Man ermüdet früher und bekommt rasch wieder Hunger.“

<sup>683</sup> The soft varieties include chocolate, hazelnut or apple pieces and the crunchy varieties are represented by honey, raisins or coconut. Ad for Dr Oetker Müsli Riegel (*prima*, Heft 5, 1986): „Moderne Kost“; „Moderne Kost’ bedeutet bei uns: Produkte, die in besonderem Maße den Anforderungen an bewußte Ernährung entsprechen. Ausgewogene Produkte zum Frühstück oder als kleine Mahlzeit zwischendurch“.

<sup>684</sup> Ad for Nestlé Alevita Knäckebrötchen (*Bunte*, Heft 18, 1985).

<sup>685</sup> Ad for Leicht&Cross Knusperbrötchen (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 37, 1986).

<sup>686</sup> Ad for Wasa Köstlich (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1985).

<sup>687</sup> Ad for Wasa Vollkorn (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1985).

<sup>688</sup> Ad for Wasa Vollkorn (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985).

<sup>689</sup> Ad for Wasa Sport [ein Brot für Aktive] (*Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1986).

Finally, the first sports functional drink is *isostar* publicised as an “*isotonic thirst quencher to hang in there*”. Above it, a photograph displays male hands opening a can – the hands appear moist with sweat and one of the wrists conspicuously sports a tennis band that clearly spells “*exertion*”. And the text goes on to describe in detail how the body loses precious minerals when sweating and how this phenomenon ultimately leads to diminished performance: “*Even a loss of fluid equivalent to 2% of body weight can lead to a performance drop of 20%*”. Just below, a little diagram illustrates the evolution of performance with and without the intake of *isostar*. After a description of the physiological effects of the drink, one can read “*This is how you can counter decreasing performance and hold out longer*”.<sup>690</sup> In this case, the technoscientific discourse is particularly prominent in order to lend credibility to the new product.

Otherwise, women’s magazines continue to often feature articles on particular foods, drinks or seasonings (e.g. honey, milk, salt, water, etc.) with an analysis of their healthfulness, recommendations about how they should be used and areas or conditions where caution should be exercised. *prima* is the most consistent with a monthly nutrition feature that often enlists the knowledge of specialists to reassure and admonish consumers. From my perspective, the most interesting features are those which enable one to grasp the zeitgeist. The article on water, for instance, states that women and men drink respectively 1.14 and 1.86 litres per day, which is considered entirely sufficient and even excessive for men. In contrast, the lower liquid consumption of older people is condemned. But when the question arises as to the roles of various drinks in fluid consumption (bearing in mind that, in 1986, Germans drink way more coffee and beer than milk, sodas, mineral water, tea and wine) the answer runs thus:

Strictly speaking, coffee, beer, tea and wine should be considered as stimulants. Milk is a natural, fantastic blend of food and drink. So-called refreshing drinks [*soft drinks*] do not always live up to their name. (Mineral) water is the only physiologically correct drink that we need.<sup>691</sup>

Strangely enough, the diuretic property of the “stimulants” are not even mentioned – a property that should warrant a higher intake of other fluids to compensate for the water eliminated. Moreover, green tea or herbal teas are not yet singled out as good rehydrating drinks. Similarly, an article on milk implicitly admits that milk may be difficult to digest: indeed, it suggests blending it with fruit juices (strangely enough also citrus!). However, it does not mention its allergy potential at all which may either suggest that this potential has not yet been recognised amongst other allergens or that the German population is not yet as sensitive to lactose as the explosion of lactose-free drinks suggests in the late 1990s. Another interesting point at the end of the milk article is a question about the impact of the Chernobyl disaster on the quality of milk. The specialist interviewed – the director of the Institute for Chemistry and Physics of the Federal Agency for Milk Research in Kiel – begins by emphasising that a substantial (0.5l) daily intake of milk is a nutritional must that cannot be

<sup>690</sup> Ad for Wander *isostar* (*stern*, Heft 22, 1985): „*Isotonischer Durstlöscher zum Durchhalten*“; „*Schon ein Flüssigkeitsverlust von nur 2% des Körpergewichts kann zu einer Leistungsminderung von 20% führen*.“; „*So begegnen Sie dem Leistungsabfall und können länger durchhalten*“.

<sup>691</sup> „*Warum Wasser das wichtigste Lebensmittel ist*“ (*prima*, Heft 12, 1986): „*Strenggenommen sind Kaffee, Bier, Tee und Wein vor allem Genußmittel. Milch ist eine natürliche, genial zusammengestetzte Kombination aus Nahrungsmittel und Getränk. Sogenannte Erfrischungsgetränke machen ihrem Namen nicht immer Ehre. (Mineral-) Wasser ist das einzige, physiologische Getränk, das wir brauchen*.“

easily substituted. He then says that, despite the heightened caesium content in winter milk (due to the cattle being fed hay gathered in May), consumers should not give up milk since, as an optimal source of potassium and calcium, it hinders the stocking of caesium and strontium in bodily tissues.<sup>692</sup>

The most significant article in this series is entitled “*Is our food really quality food?*”.<sup>693</sup> It is actually based on an interview with Dr Fritz Weigang<sup>694</sup> who discusses questions of definition (what is quality when it comes to food?) as well as testing at various levels of production and at various stages of a product’s lifespan, etc. The most interesting issues pertain to the aftermath of Chernobyl as well as the Austrian wine scandal,<sup>695</sup> and questions include how consumers can recognise good quality, the presence of additives or pollutants and how they can be avoided, not to mention the relevance of organic foods. In response to the first question, Dr Weigang enumerates a number of necessary knowledge collection steps such as the external aspect of produce for vegetables and fruit, labels, and personal testing. He emphasises the importance of suppliers and food stores, encouraging consumers to complain about flawed products. But all these steps appear rather lame when considering either the Austrian antifreeze scandal or the impact of radiation contamination –both of which are difficult or nigh impossible to detect for lay consumers. As to additives and pollutants, the specialist answers:

There are dangerous substances such as environmental heavy metals, traces of insecticides, medication or other preparations, such as hormones in meat. There are the mostly unavoidable preservatives that kill bacteria and mould. Colourings are dispensable, vitamins and trace elements are useful to enhance foods and prevent disease. Approximately 50 to 90 percent of heavy metals such as arsenic and lead on the surface of vegetables can be removed by e.g. washing, brushing and peeling.<sup>696</sup>

From this answer, it appears that there are not many strategies to avoid pollutants and that even the most worrying –such as arsenic and lead– seem to be considered as normal side-effects of industrial processing that can be removed by careful home-processing. Preservatives seem equally unavoidable and it is taken for granted that vitamin and mineral enhancement is a GOOD thing. Against this background, it is rather unsurprising that Dr Weigang then states that comparisons between organic-dynamic and conventional produce have shown no quality differences. Finally, his assessment of the food situation is that

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<sup>692</sup> „Milch: Welche Sorten es gibt, warum sie immer noch gesund ist, wie sie frisch bleibt“ (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986).

<sup>693</sup> „Sind unsere Lebensmittel von bester Qualität?“ (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986, p. 190)

<sup>694</sup> Dr Weigang is a management consultant for quality assurance as well as the chairman of the “food quality assurance” research group at the German Society for Quality [Unternehmensberater für Qualitätssicherung und Obmann des Arbeitskreises “Qualitätssicherung bei Lebensmitteln” der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Qualität].

<sup>695</sup> Most notably the Austrian antifreeze scandal of 1985, cf. e.g.: Tagliabue, John, “Scandal over poisoned wine embitters village in Austria”, *New York Times*, 02.08.1985: <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/08/02/world/scandal-over-poisoned-wine-embitters-village-in-austria.html>.

[website accessed March 2011]

<sup>696</sup> „Sind unsere Lebensmittel von bester Qualität?“, op. cit.: „*Es gibt schädliche Stoffe wie umweltbedingte Schwermetalle, Rückstände von Insektengiften, Arzneimitteln und anderen Präparaten, wie Hormone im Fleisch. Es gibt die meist unvermeidlichen Konservierungstoffe, die Bakterien und Pilze abtöten. Farbstoffe sind entbehrlich, nützlich sind Vitamine und Spurenelemente zur Anreicherung von Lebensmitteln, um Krankheiten vorzubeugen. Schwermetalle wie Arsen und Blei an der Oberfläche von Gemüse z.B. können durch Waschen, Putzen und Schälen um 50 bis 90 Prozent reduziert werden.*“

overall quality is relatively high but that consumer knowledge is still relatively limited, and the article ends with the following parting shot: *“Indeed, in his opinion environmental pollution seems to represent the first health risk for food. However, wrong dietary habits are the decisive factor: too much, too fatty and too salty.”*<sup>697</sup>

### 1987-1990: Veggies galore for the light and fit wave

Towards the end of the 1980s, one witnesses the continuous progression and popularity of vegetables (e.g. *“savoy cabbage rolls, stuffed fennel”*)<sup>698</sup>, fish (*“salmon roll in oyster cream, turbot in orange sauce”*)<sup>699</sup>, the mainstreaming of vegetarian (e.g. *“green milletotto [i.e. millet-based risotto],<sup>700</sup> lentil soup,<sup>701</sup> jacket potatoes with tofu,<sup>702</sup> whole wheat pasta with spinach and cheese sauce”*<sup>703</sup>), and (pseudo-) foreign cooking (e.g. *“Chinese fondue, ragù alla Bolognese, tomato sauce with olives”*<sup>704</sup>) and sometimes a combination of both (e.g. *“Chung Chu salad, mangetouts with ginger”*).<sup>705</sup> In the latter article, a short presentation of ginger, glutamate (apparently still taken for granted at the time in Euro-Asian cuisine!), soy sauce, oyster sauce, shiitake and mu err mushrooms still seems necessary, whereas in the article on lentils featuring recipes that are not explicitly exotic, spices such as cumin and coriander no longer seem to require explanations. Whole foods also appear to be enjoying a breakthrough with a special monthly *“Slim & healthy”* feature in *prima*, which for the first time programmatically blends light and healthy foods.<sup>706</sup> Another new feature in *prima* is recipes for singles under the heading *“Quick and tasty”* including e.g. *“tomato risotto”* or *“cheese soup with toasted bread”*<sup>707</sup> or *“baked banana with chocolate sauce”*.<sup>708</sup> Microwave-cooking has also become a regular feature (e.g. *“apricot and wine jelly”* or *“pork roast with apricots”*).<sup>709</sup> And outdoor grilling, despite its reputed “healthfulness”, raises concern about carcinogenic fumes –when hot fat drops on the glowing embers.<sup>710</sup>

In terms of staples, soy oil, Italian pasta and muesli have joined the mainstream. Even brown rice is being offered by the *Uncle Ben’s* brand together with the approval and recipes of top chefs. Apart from the cook’s endorsement, a small blurb states (among other aspects) *“It contains almost all the important vitamins, minerals and fibre of the unhusked rice*

<sup>697</sup> Ibid.: *„Denn nach seiner Meinung stehen Umweltverunreinigungen bei Lebensmitteln an erster Stelle der Gesundheitsrisiken. Tatsächlich aber ist es das falsche Eßverhalten: zu viel, zu fett, zu salzig.“*

<sup>698</sup> *“Wintergemüse: knackig und gesund“ (prima, Heft 2, 1988, pp. 108 ss.): „Wirsinggröllchen, Gefüllter Fenchel“.*

<sup>699</sup> *„Fisch vom Feinsten“ (Frau im Spiegel, Heft 22, 26.05.1988, pp. 44 ss.): „Lachsroulade in Austerncreme, Steinbutt mit Orangensoße“.*

<sup>700</sup> i.e. a contraction between millet and risotto as a crossover dish in: *„Vegetarisch kochen: Hirse – in vier Variationen“ (prima, Heft 7, 1988, p. 163 ss.): „Grüner Hirsotto“.*

<sup>701</sup> *„Vegetarisch kochen: Linsen sind jetzt wieder gefragt“ (prima, Heft 2, 1988, pp. 112-113): „Linsensuppe“.*

<sup>702</sup> *„Pellkartoffeln mit Tofu“ (prima, Heft 5, 1988, p. 182)*

<sup>703</sup> *„Vegetarisch kochen: Diese Nudeln sind gesund“ (prima, Heft 1, 1988, p. 114): „Vollkornnudeln und Spinat-Käse-Sauce“.*

<sup>704</sup> *„Saucen“ (prima, Heft 6, 1988, pp. 184 ss.): „China Fondue, Ragù alla Bolognese, Tomatensauce mit Oliven“.*

<sup>705</sup> *“Vegetarisch kochen: Gemüse auf asiatisch“ (prima, Heft 8, 1988, pp. 130 ss.): „Salat Chung Chu, Zuckerschoten mit Ingwer“.*

<sup>706</sup> *„Schlank und gesund. Vollwertküche: Kalorientabelle“ [Exklusiv in prima!] (prima, Heft 5, 1988, p. 176).*

<sup>707</sup> *„Schnell und gut: Single-Rezepte“ [In jedem Heft] (prima, Heft 3, 1988, p. 116): „Tomaten-Risotto, Käsesuppe mit geröstetem Brot“.*

<sup>708</sup> *„Schnell und gut: Single-Rezepte“ [In jedem Heft] (prima, Heft 1, 1988, p. 112): „Gebackene Banane mit Schokoladensauce“.*

<sup>709</sup> E.g. *„Gut für die Mikrowelle“ (prima, Heft 5, 1988, p. 178): „Aprikosen-Wein-Gelee“; „Schweineragout mit Aprikosen“.*

<sup>710</sup> *“Ernährung. Grillen, ja. Aber richtig!” (prima, Heft 7, 1988).*

grain".<sup>711</sup> Otherwise, the usual niches can be detected in the dairy products offer, but a newcomer –BA [Bifidus Aktiv]– supplements the functional yogurt offer under the caption “An increasing number of women are discovering a new fitness appliance” while picturing a dynamic young woman in tights, high heels, a leotard and a tutu enthusiastically performing the splits over a four-pack of yogurt. On the packaging, one can read: “For your daily fitness: frees and activates the body with active bifidus cultures”. And the text goes on to explain how the yogurt stimulates the intestine, making one feel good and helping one to stay fit.<sup>712</sup> There again, if only on the rhetorical and visual levels, one witnesses the merging of two “fitness” realms: food and movement, since yogurt becomes a sort of fitness appliance that seems to unleash an amazing vitality. Technology, here in the guise of yogurt, seems to free the body so that it can rediscover its natural energy. Concretely, the allusion to a fitness appliance also suggests that indoor training is becoming normalised.

Along with the by then usual pizzas & noodles, convenience food is especially represented by innumerable sauces that are designed to be either cooked with the food or eaten as dips and mayonnaises. The penetration and “natural” dissemination of convenience and fast food in general can be measured by an ad for Kühne featuring mustard, salad oil, red wine vinegar, and various Italian style tomato sauces. The heading states “Quick and festive” and goes on to explain:

Who wants to be chained to the cooker when Father Christmas is standing at the door? Indeed, there are so many presents to be packed or made by hand, cards to be written, not to mention the fact that one would also like to have a little time for oneself. Hence, even if it gets hectic before Christmas – just relax and enjoy the Kühne way... By the way: Christmas grouches are bound to find an idea here for a quick meal on Christmas Eve.

The double page then features “quick tomato soup, spicy omelette, Friesland fry-up, fruity red beet salad”. A small inlaid picture shows three friends (a man and two women) enjoying a nice glass of wine along with the glow of candles. Thus apparently, excuses for incorporating convenience food –even into a festive meal traditionally requiring elaborate culinary preparations– need no longer be made.<sup>713</sup> In terms of convenience desserts, Dr Oetker’s Italian Zabaione complements the usual vanilla puddings and chocolate mousses, thereby displaying the penetration of foreign specialties into the rather conservative realm of puddings.<sup>714</sup>

Additionally, the “fit” discourse really seems to be making its mark alongside a timid but growing functional food offer. The *isostar* ad has become much more sober with a simpler slogan (“When you feel run down, isostar builds you up”) and explanations as well as a

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<sup>711</sup> Ad for Uncle Ben’s Vollkorn Reis (*prima*, Heft 6, 1988): „Er enthält noch so gut wie alle wichtigen Vitaminen, Mineral- und Ballaststoffe des ungeschälten Reiskorns“.

<sup>712</sup> Ad for Südmilch BA Bifidus Aktiv (*freundin*, Heft 11, 1988): „Immer mehr Frauen entdecken ein neues Fitness-Gerät“; „Für Ihre tägliche Fitness: befreit und aktiviert den Körper mit Bifidus Aktiv Kulturen“.

<sup>713</sup> Ad for Kühne products (*prima*, Heft 1, 1988): „Festliches ganz auf die Schnelle“; „Wer steht schon gerne am Herd, wenn der Weihnachtsmann vor der Tür steht? Schließlich gibt es noch so viele Päckchen zu packen, Geschenke zu basteln, Karten zu schreiben, und ein bißchen Zeit für sich selbst möchte man schließlich auch noch haben. Also: Auch wenn’s vor Weihnachten hektisch wird – nur die Ruhe bewahren und trotzdem genießen am besten auf die Kühne Art... Übrigens: Weihnachtsmuffel finden hier bestimmt eine Idee für ein schnelles Essen am Heiligen Abend.“; „Schnelle Tomatensuppe, Omelette pikant, Friesenpfanne and Fruchtiger Rote-Bete-Salat“.

<sup>714</sup> Ad for Dr. Oetker Zabaione (*prima*, Heft 6, 1988).

photograph showing a runner sitting beside the track taking a sip from an *isostar* can.<sup>715</sup> Under the heading “*Are you really fit?*”, Nestlé competes with a whole range of Nesfit products including “*Energy boosting muesli, energy bar, fitness wholemeal drink, energy vitamin block, canned ISO-mineral-drink, powdered ISO mineral drink, effervescent magnesium tablets, protein 60 and protein bars*”. However, the emphasis in the ad is on the importance of building complex carbohydrates reserves in order to enhance performance and fitness. The ad shows an illustration of a man playing tennis as well as a small photograph of Erberhard Gienger, a former gymnastics world champion who helped develop and test the product line. It should be noted that both *isostar* and *Nesfit* seem to primarily target a masculine audience as confirmed by the gender of the models and slogans such as “*For stamina, strength and fitness*”, since endurance and strength are still strongly connoted as masculine attributes.<sup>716</sup>

However, even more straightforward products –such as the BA yogurt mentioned above or grape juice– use women and fitness as an argument. Concluding a long description of grape juice’s effects on the organism, an ad concludes: “*Grape juice is nothing less than a fitness treatment for your body*”. And the illustration shows a short-haired, sportily clad young woman doing a one hand stand whilst holding a glass of juice with a greedy look, as if she were about to take a long sip.<sup>717</sup> Functional fruit juices such as *Dr Koch’s Trink 10* or *Plus E* seem to enjoy a sustained popularity while being especially targeted at women. An interesting argument surfaces in one of the ads, namely that of the price associated with good health. After extolling the vitamins in the drink, the model states: “*And I don’t mind paying the price since, as I said, nothing is too precious for my healthy diet*”.<sup>718</sup> Even though this argument does not seem to resurface in later ads, it is symptomatic of a new perception of the ultimate value of health. Since contemporary discourse does not yet associate beauty and maleness, an ad for *Plus E* justifies the use of a woman model by using the following caption below a photograph showing a female model about to sip from a glass of juice: “*You can do a lot for your beauty*”. The text further elaborates the point: “*Beauty includes bodily well-being. You can do a lot towards it, including PLUS E, the juice with a lot of vitamin E. The vitamin that helps protect your cells against premature aging. Hence a daily glass of PLUS E fruit or vegetables should be part of your beauty routine*”.<sup>719</sup> Other popular drinks include *Fixapfel*, a new fruit herbal tea sold with the slogan “*Appetite for nature*”,<sup>720</sup> and an interesting ad for *Nescafé’s Unser Bester* that, under the slogan “*I am so free [...] and Nescafé is part of it*”, shows a woman in an indeterminate setting laughing on the phone whilst holding a cup of coffee. The handwritten caption states: “*I live my life very*

<sup>715</sup> Ad for Wander Isostar (*stern*, Heft 42, 1987): „*Wenn sie abbauen, baut Isostar Sie wieder auf*“.

<sup>716</sup> Ad for Nestlé Nesfit products (*freundin*, Heft 12, 1988): „*Sind sie wirklich fit?*“; „*Energie-Aufbau Müsli, Energie-Riegel, Fitness-Vollkorn-Drink, Energie-Vitamin-Block, ISO-Mineral-Drink in der Dose, ISO-Mineral-Drink zum Anrühren, Magnesium-Brause-Tabletten, Eiweiß 60 and Eiweißriegel*“; „*Für Ausdauer, Kraft und Fitness*“.

<sup>717</sup> Ad for Traubensaft [Verein Pro Traubensaft, Bonn] (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 26, 1988): „*Traubensaft ist geradezu eine Fitness-Kur für Ihren Körper*.“

<sup>718</sup> Ad for Dr Koch’s Trink 10 (*stern*, Heft 46, 1987): „*Und das lass’ ich mir auch etwas mehr kosten. Denn, wie gesagt, wenn es um meine gesunde Ernährung geht, kann für mich nichts wertvoll genug sein*.“

<sup>719</sup> Ad for Dr Koch’s Plus E (*prima*, Heft 3, 1988): „*Für Ihre Schönheit können Sie vieles tun*.“; „*Zu gutem Aussehen gehört auch körperliches Wohlbefinden. Dafür können Sie viel tun. Auch mit PLUS E. Dem Saft mit viel Vitamin E. Dem Vitamin, das hilft, Ihre Körperzellen vor vorzeitigem Altern zu schützen. Deshalb gehört zur Schönheitspflege jeden Tag ein Glas PLUS E –Frucht oder Gemüse*.“

<sup>720</sup> Ad for Teekanne Fixapfel (*prima*, Heft 1, 1988): „*Lust auf Natur*“.

*spontaneously and take time for the things that I find fun*".<sup>721</sup> This ad is typical of what one could call a late modern manifesto –foregrounding individuality, freedom and fun as leading pursuits of a fulfilling life, examples of which will become increasingly frequent in the course of the 1990s.

The late 1980s seem to make a clean break with rich creamy sauces to favour light salads and vegetables in the summer and all-in-one dishes in winter such as stews with a low fat broth, wok-style dishes [Pfannen] where a number of ingredients are thrown in and braised together or pasta and soup dishes –thus sparing housewives time and energy. A long article in *Brigitte* on lettuce varieties details botanical specifics, preservation tips, taste and appropriate combination. The introduction states: *"Lettuce choice is increasing. There are more and more varieties to be found in the vegetables department. We tell you what they are called and how they should be combined. And we don't mince matters about quality"*.<sup>722</sup> Varieties examined include among others: lollo rosso, lamb's lettuce, dandelion, radicchio, oak leaf lettuce or arugula. The latter's incipient success is heralded as follows: *"From weed to salad: nowadays arugula is sold as roquette or rucola and is the next big thing. Arugula is mainly eaten in South Germany and is little known north of the Main"*.<sup>723</sup> If anything, the linguistic indication is another proof of how well a German product sells under the blessing of a French or Italian appellation... Two small blurbs at the end of the article aim to teach the reader about vitamins as well *"nitrates & co"*. Unfortunately, the rationales invoked in the latter appear more contradictory than really helpful:

Field-grown salads usually contain fewer nitrates than salads from greenhouses and cloches: the stronger luminosity in the field limits the nitrate concentration. When a salad gets little light, its nitrate concentration is correspondingly higher. This is why the light yellow lettuce heart, which is protected from the light by the large outer leaves, contains more nitrates, even though the older, green leaves are able to store more of this substance. Thus it is difficult to enounce a hard and fast rule. But remove the outer leaves because they contain more environmental pollutants than salad hearts.<sup>724</sup>

If anything, these explanations are a good instance of the environmental confusion triggered by an increasing number of food scandals. Surprisingly though, there is no mention whatsoever of alternative production methods such as so-called integrated or organic farming where pesticide/pollutant levels are considerably lower or even negligible.

But the main appeal of salads apart from their refreshing aspect is described in a *Bunte "Lifestyle: eating + drinking"* feature entitled *"Salad: take it lightly"*. A young healthy-looking

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<sup>721</sup> Ad for Nescafé Unser Bester (*prima*, Heft 6, 1988): *„Ich bin so frei [...] Nescafé ist dabei“*; *„Ich leb' mein Leben ganz spontan und nehme mir Zeit für die Dinge, die mir Spaß machen.“*

<sup>722</sup> *„Es grünt so grün... und neuerdings auch rot“* (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989, pp. 284 ss.): *„Die Salatauswahl wächst ständig, und immer neue Züchtungen füllen die Gemüseregale. Wir sagen, wie sie heißen und womit sie am besten schmecken. Auch bei der Qualität nehmen wir kein Blatt vor den Mund“*.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.* p. 288.: *„Vom Unkraut zum Salat: Heute wird sie als Roquette und Rucola angeboten und ist stark im Kommen. Rauke wird vornehmlich in Süddeutschland gegessen, nördlich des Mains ist sie wenig bekannt.“*

<sup>724</sup> *Ibid.* p. 288.: *„Nitrat und co“*; *„Freilandsalate enthalten meist weniger Nitrat als Salate aus Treibhäusern und Folien Tunnels: Die stärkere Lichteinwirkung auf dem Feld verringert die Nitratansammlung. Bekommt ein Salat wenig Licht ab, ist sein Nitratgehalt entsprechend höher. Deshalb sammelt sich in den hellgelben Salatherzen, die durch große Außenblätter vor Licht geschützt sind, tatsächlich mehr Nitrat. Und das, obwohl die älteren, grünen Außenblätter mehr von diesem Stoff speichern können. Feste Regeln lassen sich also nicht aufstellen. Entfernen Sie aber die äußeren Blätter. Denn dort sammeln sich mehr Umweltschadstoffe an als im Salatherz.“*

model (but not anorexic, it should be emphasised!) dressed in comfortable leisurewear is pictured holding a soft drink whilst grazing on veggies from a plate placed on the back of a sofa. The caption reads: *“Raw vegetable salads should be included in a summer diet. Lots of vitamins and almost no calories (provided one is careful with the dressing). Good for the figure”*.<sup>725</sup> This represents the ultimate consecration of a food already connoted as “healthy diet stuff”. The salad recipes themselves are becoming more elaborate, expanding horizons beyond the usual lettuce, potato, eggs, bacon or ham components to include recipes such as bean salad with mushrooms, melon salad with mint,<sup>726</sup> as well as more elaborate or paradoxically heavy concoctions such as *“wild rice salad with scampi”* or *“tortellini and bean salad”*.<sup>727</sup>

Otherwise, beyond the usual summer grilling tips, an interesting newcomer is Italian “antipasti”.<sup>728</sup> Eckart Witzigmann, the 3-star cook,<sup>729</sup> called upon as a food consultant for the *Bunte* “lifestyle” features, sums up the musts of this particular tradition, which can be interpreted as a light summer meal by the harried German housewife (*“There are only starters today. Antipasti like in Italy. Marinated, au gratin, refined. Served with crusty bread and summer wine. Basta”*):

I particularly enjoy antipasti, these small delicacies that are served before the pasta course on hot summer days in Italy. The ingredients should be of first-class quality and as fresh as possible. Extra virgin olive oil as well as high-quality balsamico or red-wine vinegar are a must. Extra-thin shavings of air-dried ham (Parma or San Daniele) as well as salami and coppa should be cut just before serving. Figs, melon and freshly baked country bread should also be served.<sup>730</sup>

Finally, another interesting trend that will be taken up even more enthusiastically at the end of the 1990s by health gurus such as Dr Strunz, are milk-shakes. The cook quoted above praises these beverages under the heading *“In the summer, shake instead of steak”*. After extolling the variety of ingredients that are available during the summer for these concoctions, he ends with two health/nutritional tips. First, because of their many vitamins and minerals, milk shakes are described as *“the perfect fitness conditioners for the heart, muscles, nerves and the brain”*. He also contends that during the hot season, when appetite wanes, shakes represent a perfect meal that satiates without weighing on the stomach. Moreover, they also contain few calories –depending on the ingredients used (they should always be prepared with low-fat milk). On the same page, somewhat contrasting with the

<sup>725</sup> „Salat: Nimm’s leicht“ (*Bunte*, Heft 34, 16.08.90, pp. 66-67): *„Rohkostsalate müssen auf den Sommerspeiseplan. Viele Vitamine, nahezu keiner Kalorien (wenn man beim Dressing aufpaßt). Gut für die Linie.“*

<sup>726</sup> Ibid.: *„Bohnensalat mit Pilzen“*, *„Melonensalat mit Minze“*.

<sup>727</sup> „Sommer-Party: Leichte Salate“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 19.07.1989, pp. 114 ss.): *„Tortellini-Bohnen-Salat“*, *„Wildreis-Salat mit Scampis“*.

<sup>728</sup> e.g. *„Frucht-gemüse: Jetzt zugreifen“* [prima Rezepte im August] (*prima*, Heft 8, 1990, pp. 124 ss.).

<sup>729</sup> Cf. <http://eckart-witzigmann.de/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>730</sup> *„Heute gibt’s nur Vorspeisen“* [*“Antipasti wie in Italien. Mariniert, gratiniert, raffiniert. Dazu knuspriges Brot und leichten Sommerwein. Basta”*] (*Bunte*, Heft 30, 19.07.1990, p. 68): *„Antipasti, die kleinen Köstlichkeiten, die in Italien vor dem Nudelgang serviert werden, liebe ich an heißen Sommertagen ganz besonders. Die Zutaten sollten von erstklassiger Qualität und so frisch wie möglich sein. Olivenöl, extra vergine, sowie hochwertiger Balsamico oder Rotweinessig sind ein Muß. Luftgetrockneter Schinken (Parma oder San Daniele) sowie Salami und Coppa sollten erst kurz vor dem Servieren hauchdünn aufgeschnitten werden. Dazu Feigen oder Melonen und ofenfrisches Landbrot.“*

aforementioned fitness discourse, a blurb on American ice-cream celebrates the new opening of Häagen-Dazs ice-cream parlours in all major German cities. However, it also stresses that “Only fresh ingredients are used for the production, no stabilisers or thickeners”,<sup>731</sup> which hints to a growing concern over the healthfulness of even “sinfully” fattening treats...

It should be noted that even in winter, the trend goes towards vegetable-rich dishes, e.g. an October feature on spinach in *prima* that includes exotic delicacies such as “lamb curry with spinach” or “spinach pasta with gorgonzola” amongst more mainstream recipes such as “spinach soup” or “German-style raviolis [Maultaschen]”.<sup>732</sup> Surprisingly, even tofu seems to have migrated away from the vegetarian pages to enter the mainstream in a December feature of the same magazine. The rationale invoked here is that: “Tofu really fits into a ‘slim-diet’ because it is healthy, low-calorie (only 71kcal/100g). Tofu contains little fat, hardly any cholesterol, many B-vitamins and a lot of iron”.<sup>733</sup> As a convenience health food, tofu also seems to have made a breakthrough earlier on in the year with the introduction of the Nuxo tofu salad assortment presented in the same magazine.<sup>734</sup>

Arguments of speed, health and price all combine to favour sautéed all-in-one dishes (e.g. tomato and chicken breast casserole, fennel and carrot casserole),<sup>735</sup> fast dishes, under the heading “Something hot fast: 20 dishes that take 20 minutes to prepare” promoted with the following rationale: “When you happen to be in a hurry, these super-dishes are exactly what you need because one feels better with something warm in one’s belly”.<sup>736</sup> Stews, but in a lighter disguise, remain popular for similar reasons, e.g. “stew with carrots and cheese balls”, “stew with kohlrabi and meat balls”, “stew with fish, spinach and green asparagus”<sup>737</sup> or “sweet and sour vegetable goulash”.<sup>738</sup>

Foreign food also enjoys a definite breakthrough that can be measured by the number of exotic ingredients or dishes comprised in otherwise more conservative recipe features such as collectable ones. A good example can be found in *Brigitte*: besides the unavoidable

<sup>731</sup> „Wenn’s heiß ist, bleib kalt“ (*Bunte*, Heft 32, 02.08.90, pp. 64-65): „Im Sommer: Shake statt Steak“; „die idealen Fitmacher für Herz, Muskulatur, Nerven und Gehirn“; Häagen Dazs: „Für die Herstellung werden nur frische Zutaten verwendet, keine Stabilisatoren oder Bindemittel.“

<sup>732</sup> „Blatt für Blatt Spinatgenuß“ (*prima*, Heft 10, 1990, pp. 152 ss.): „Lammcurry mit Spinat“, „Spinatpasta mit Gorgonzola“, „Spinatsuppe“, „Maultaschen“. It should be noted, however, that spinach is in season at that time, since it can be harvested in late autumn/winter. Cf. e.g.: [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinat#Anbau\\_und\\_Ernte](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinat#Anbau_und_Ernte) [website accessed Oct. 2011]

<sup>733</sup> „Tofu, der schlanke Sojaquark“ (*prima*, Heft 12, 1990, pp. 162 ss.): „Tofu paßt gut in die ‚schlanke Küche‘ weil er gesund und kalorienarm ist (100g haben nur 71 kcal). Tofu enthält wenig Fett, kaum Cholesterin, viele B-Vitamine und viel Eisen.“

<sup>734</sup> „Neu: Raffinierte Tofu-Salate für Feinschmecker“ (*prima*, Heft 2, 1990).

<sup>735</sup> „Aus der Pfanne: schnell und gut“ [Fleisch, vitaminschonend gebraten, und köstliches Gemüse. Kein Rezept dauert länger als 30 Minuten.] (*prima*, Heft 4, 1990, pp. 172 ss.): „Tomatenpfanne mit Hähnchenbrust“, „Fenchel-Möhrenpfanne“.

<sup>736</sup> „Schnell mal was Warmes: 20 Gerichte, die in 20 Minuten fertig sind“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1989, pp. 296 ss.): „Wenn Sie’s mal eilig haben, sind diese Super-Gerichte genau das richtige. Denn mit was warmem im Bauch fühlt man sich wohler“.

<sup>737</sup> „Alles unter Drei Mark: Leichte Frühlingseintöpfe“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 26.04. 1989, pp. 184 ss.): „Eintopf mit Möhren und Käseklösschen, Eintopf mit Kohlrabi und Fleischbällchen, Eintopf mit Fisch, Spinat und grünem Spargel“.

<sup>738</sup> „Gemüse: Gemüsegulasch Süß-Sauer“ (*prima*, Heft 2, 1990, detachable recipe): „Gemüsegulasch süß-sauer“.

Sunday family cake (here: *“chocolate apple cake with walnuts”*), dishes include *“chop-suey’ beef roulades”*, *“lobster with lemon aioli”*, and under the *“Vollwert”* heading a *“vegetable stew with oriental spices”*.<sup>739</sup> Otherwise, the foreign festival includes Russian, Indian, Syrian, North African, South-East Asian and Mexican influences, popularising dishes such as borscht, dhal, hummus, couscous, glazed duck or guacamole, often as part of a discovery menu for friends.<sup>740</sup> Reasons for including foreign foods in the German diet include reviving the use of healthy but rather unexcitingly prepared staples such as e.g. lentils or chick peas, experimenting with new spices or tackling whole food cooking from a more stimulating angle than just soups and stews. A good example of the latter is an article in *Brigitte* under the heading *“International Cuisine”* presenting Syrian food from a migrant’s perspective. The article entitled *“Syria’s spicy cooking: naturally oriented towards whole foods”* states the following in its introduction:

Sonia Hagemann has been living in the Münster region for the past six years and is a bit surprised: “Everybody is now talking about whole foods in Germany. That has never been an issue in Syria since we have been eating like that for centuries. Lentils, rice, chick peas, cereals, nuts, fruit and yogurt are the basis of our cooking.” And this isn’t just healthy, it’s also really exciting!<sup>741</sup>

Even political developments can pave the way for a cultural-gastronomic opening as in a *stern* article entitled *“A cuisine makes a state”* with the following introduction: *“Most people are acquainted with caviar and borscht. But almost no one is aware of the variety to be found in Russian cuisine. Thanks to glasnost and perestroika, the other traditional foods of this country are also worthy of our interest.”*<sup>742</sup>

As to products, the whole foods trend seems to be making its mark on most traditional staples. Trends I previously addressed, when discussing whole-wheat crisp-bread and muesli, are consolidated without additional health rationales. In contrast, an ad for wheat flour, *Aurora’s Urweizen* emphasises new characteristics:

You love nature. That’s a good reason to choose Aurora Urweizen. Indeed, the cereal grows without chemical insecticides or mineral fertilizers. By choosing Aurora Urweizen, you support environmentally friendly grain cultivation for a naturally conscious diet. Aurora Urweizen is available as light flour, type 550k, dark flour, type 1050 and whole wheat flour.<sup>743</sup>

<sup>739</sup> Sammelrezepte (*Brigitte*, Heft 24, 1989): „Schokoladen-Apfelkuchen mit Walnüssen“, „Rindsroulade ‚Chop-Suey‘“, „Hummer mit Zitronen-Aioli“, „Orientalisch gewürzter Gemüse-Eintopf“.

<sup>740</sup> Cf. the *prima* feature *“Cooking for friends”* that appears regularly in the course of 1990, (*“Kochen für Freunde”*, *prima*, 1990).

<sup>741</sup> „Von Natur aus vollwertig: Syriens würzige Küche“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1989, pp. 250 ss.): „Sonia Hagemann lebt seit sechs Jahren im Münsterland. Und wundert sich ein bißchen: ‚In Deutschland reden jetzt alle von der Vollwert-Ernährung. In Syrien war das nie ein Thema – weil dort seit Jahrhunderten so gegessen wird. Linsen, Reis und Kichererbsen, Getreide, Nüsse, Obst und Joghurt sind die Basis unserer Küche.‘ Und die ist nicht nur gesund, sondern auch noch überaus spannend!“

<sup>742</sup> „Eine Küche macht Staat“ (*stern*, Heft 50, 07.12.89, pp 135 ss.): „Kaviar und Borschtsch kennen die meisten. Welche Vielfalt russisches Essen bedeutet, weiß jedoch kaum jemand. Mit Glasnost und Perestrojka werden auch die traditionellen Speisen des Landes für uns interessant.“

<sup>743</sup> Ad for Aurora Urweizen Mehl (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1989): „Sie lieben die Natur. Ein guter Grund, sich für Aurora Urweizen zu entscheiden. Dann das Getreide für dieses Mehl reift ohne chemische Pflanzenschutzmittel und Mineraldünger. Mit Ihrer Entscheidung für Aurora Urweizen unterstützen Sie einen Umweltschonenden

Without organic ever being mentioned as an overarching label, this discourse seems to point towards at least an integrated type of agriculture. It is one of the first mainstream ads to mention the desirability of actually avoiding pesticides and mineral fertilizers. Furthermore, it is also one of the first mainstream ads (i.e. not linked to a health-food shop) to describe consumers' particular role in protecting the environment through their nutritional choices.

Another noteworthy development –which despite its apparent healthful consequences, stands in sharp contrast with the more ecological philosophy outlined above– is an increasingly all-year round supply of formerly season-bound vegetables and fruit, as typified by ads for Dutch greenhouse produce. Pointedly, the headings no longer refer to a seasonal appeal but simply state “*Now is Holland time!*” above enraptured portraits of a man biting into a tomato<sup>744</sup> or a woman eating cherries.<sup>745</sup> In both cases, the caption reads “*Having fun, living healthily, staying fresh*”. There again the health factor combined with fun seems to have become a major sales argument.

Finally, the most striking development is no doubt the one to be found in the meat realm, especially cold cuts. Whilst fatty salami style meat is still readily available and seemingly popular, ham is featured without the traditional thick layer of fat<sup>746</sup> and turkey slices seem to enjoy a growing popularity.<sup>747</sup> But the most explicit ad is the one for French turkey cuts sold under the *Chaillotine* and *Maitre Coq* brand names and advertised by an extremely slim and elegant French beauty, dressed in a very tight-hugging lycra-style mini-dress, with a metal belt underlining her slim waist. Other accessories include gloves, flat pumps, a hat and bulky plastic earrings. The accompanying text at the level of the model's midriff reads “*We must admit that when you buy fresh French turkey you get very few calories for your money.*” On the other side of the ad, a very low-cal recipe is featured with approx. 114 kcal per 100g of meat.<sup>748</sup> Turkey is thus hailed as a prime “weight-conscious meat”.

The milk product world is relatively stable with the habitual assortment of rich and creamy traditional butter, yogurts and cheeses. Foreign staples such as *Cantadou* cream cheese remain popular. And while the diet assortment is broadening, a few traditional brands try to adapt to the light trend. A good example here is *Bayernland*. Against a background featuring cream and cottage cheeses, a thoughtful fitness adept is portrayed, taking a break from her rowing machine routine under the following text:

The thing is: ... A lot of protein and a little fat do not exclude savouring Bayernland products. First of all, there is Bayernland soft cheese with spicy ingredients or pure to be mixed as you

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*Getreideanbau für eine naturbewußte Ernährung. Aurora Urweizen gibt es als Helles Mehl Type 550k, Dunkles Mehl Type 1050 und Vollkornemehl*“

<sup>744</sup> Ad for Dutch tomatoes [Holland – denn die Frische liegt nah!] (*Bunte*, Heft 27, 1990): „*Jetzt ist Holland Zeit!*“

<sup>745</sup> Ad for Dutch cherries [Holland – denn die Frische liegt nah!] (*prima*, Heft 4, 1990): „*Spaß haben, gesund leben, frisch bleiben*“

<sup>746</sup> Ad for Herta Westfälischer Saftschinken (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>747</sup> Ad for Gutfried Feines aus Geflügel [“*Weniger Fett. Voller Geschmack.*”] (*prima*, Heft 3, 1990).

<sup>748</sup> Ad for Maitre Coq & Chaillotine turkey (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1989): „*Zugegeben, bei frischem französischen Putenfleisch bekommen Sie extrem wenig Kalorien für Ihr Geld.*“

like it. Second, the actual fat content is always lower than that stated on the packaging “% FD”. So what you actually see here is the best “fitness-class”, quality-taste: Bayernland!<sup>749</sup>

The distinction is an important one since e.g. 20% fat in the dry extract usually corresponds to approx. 4 g. fat per hundred grams since most “moist” cheeses have a high water percentage, such as cottage cheese. But the ad does stand in sharp contrast with another *Bayernland* ad promoting *Gold Butter*, with the help of a smiling, plump and presumably Bavarian milkmaid –wearing an apron and carrying a huge milk churn– who looks as if she has never set eyes on a rowing-machine in her life.<sup>750</sup> Within the cult of creaminess, one unusual speciality is worth mentioning that I did not detect before, i.e. “*crème fraîche*” from France, a speciality that will become increasingly popular from the late 1990s onwards.<sup>751</sup>

The fats realm is dominated by generic oils such as Livio, presented as “*vitamin+*” since it is rich in vitamin E and essential fatty acids and thus make salads smile (veggies are arranged around the Livio nose to form a clown face)<sup>752</sup> or soy oil, praised because it is easy to digest, neutral in taste and extremely healthy since it is also rich in poly-unsaturated fatty acids.<sup>753</sup> An ad for Mazola germ oil argues that briefly frying vegetables with germ oil is much healthier than cooking them for too long in water where they lose vitamins. It provides a quick vegetable casserole recipe to prove the point and –if needs be– once more illustrate how popular this form of cooking has become.<sup>754</sup> A novelty is the assortment of special “diet” oils (including safflower, soy, grapeseed, sunflower, peanut and pure germ oil) as well as oils flavoured with garlic, dill, tarragon, lemon, 7 herbs, pure walnut oil, vegetable oil with a touch of hazelnut oil, and cold-pressed olive oil.<sup>755</sup> This variety is gradually reflected in various salad recipes but still tentatively. Indeed, even today’s staple olive oil is the object of a text-rich ad by the “*Olive Oil Information Society*” explaining all its health advantages and the varieties it comes in (emphasising their various tastes –in contrast with soy oil) as well as how it should be used under the title “*Olive oil has a lot going for it*”. Apart from a particularly high percentage of vitamins (especially E) and trace elements, what distinguishes olive oil from its competitors –according to the ad– is the following:

Its combination of linoleic and oleic acids make it almost ideal for the human body. Olive oil contains a large amount of unsaturated fatty acids and thus controls the level of cholesterol. It is the only oil that reduces the LDL-level, i.e. the harmful cholesterol, while maintaining the positive HDL-cholesterol. There are no additives in olive oil.<sup>756</sup>

<sup>749</sup> Ad for Bayernland Kerniger Frischkäse, Farmi, Farmi soft mit französischen Kräuter, Farmi soft mit Meerrettich (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1989): „Die Sache ist die: ...Viel Eiweiß und wenig Fett schließt Bayernland-Genuss nicht aus. Erstens gibt es Bayernland-Frischkäse mit würzigen Zutaten oder pur zum Selbermischen. Zweitens ist der tatsächliche Fettgehalt immer niedriger als der auf der Packung angegebene Wert ,% i.Tr.’ Was sie hier sehen, ist also beste ‚Fitness-Klasse‘, Geschmacks-Qualität: Bayernland!“

<sup>750</sup> Ad for Bayernland Gold-Butter (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>751</sup> Ad for Claudel Crème Fraîche (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>752</sup> Ads for Livio Delikatess-Pflanzenöl (*Für Sie*, Heft 18, 1989 or *Bunte*, Heft 39, 1990).

<sup>753</sup> Ad for Soya Reines Soja-Öl [Von Natur aus reich bedacht/ including a recipe for a „Rohkost-Salat“] (*Bunte*, Heft 41, 1990).

<sup>754</sup> Ad for Mazola Reines Keimöl (*prima*, Heft 2, 1990).

<sup>755</sup> Ad for Homann Homa Premium-Öle (*prima*, Heft 5, 1990).

<sup>756</sup> Ad for olive oil (*Brigitte*, Heft 12, 1989): „Alles spricht für Oliven Öl“; „Es weist eine Kombination von Linolsäure und Ölsäure auf, die einer idealen Fettzusammensetzung für den menschlichen Körper sehr nahe kommt. Olivenöl enthält eine große Menge einfach ungesättigter Fettsäuren und kontrolliert somit den Cholesterinspiegel. Es ist das einzige Öl, das den LDL-Spiegel, d.h. das schädliche Cholesterin, senkt und

Although there is a reference to the fact that it is an acquired holiday taste, there is as yet no mention about the general healthfulness of the so-called Mediterranean diet. Nevertheless, olive oil is the first serious competitor of *becel* diet oil, whose ads use a similar rhetoric but with a much more curative than preventive approach, since the ad is introduced by the following dialogue snippet: “‘*Just Asparagus*’, he sulked, ‘because of cholesterol’. ‘*Cheer up*’, she comforted him, ‘I have a solution’.”<sup>757</sup> Otherwise, a new diet margarine has appeared on the market. In 1988, the campaign for *Lätta* surprisingly targets both genders, one of the first instances of a “unisex” slimming product.<sup>758</sup> The text runs thus:

Have you decided to never get fat? Then you know that you have to do something about it. To live consciously. To be active. To eat right. *Lätta* would like to help you a little in the process. *Lätta* boasts only half the fat of margarine and butter.

One of the illustrations of the campaign boasts a confident and smiling male model: he is dressed in yellow shorts and a sleeveless T-shirt and sits legs spread apart. To further enhance his virile posture, he holds a towel –which rests on the back of his neck– with both hands, thus enabling his muscular arms to bulge slightly. The damp effect on his skin is a proof that he is indeed a dynamic, responsible person who consciously designs his body through both intensive sports and adequate nutrition.<sup>759</sup>

As to convenience food, the by now usual frozen veggies, frozen dishes as well as sauces and mayonnaises form the backbone of the offer, but even the latter often vaunt a particularly “healthy” characteristic, e.g. *Appel*’s so-called *Salat-freshing*,<sup>760</sup> a yogurt and dill salad dressing, does not contain preservatives and *Thomy*’s yogurt salad cream contains 71% less oil than conventional mayonnaise (replaced by yogurt).<sup>761</sup> Other novelties advertised are frozen vegetables, this time in a cream sauce,<sup>762</sup> pre-baked baguettes,<sup>763</sup> frozen herbs, dip spice mixes such as *Fuchs*’s “*Let’s dip*”, described as “4 exciting evening-filling spice blends, tzatziki, spring herbs, Tuscany, onion. To be mixed with *crème fraîche*, curd, yogurt. To be savoured with carrots, cucumber, crackers, celery...”<sup>764</sup> thus heralding the so-called “finger food” era. *Maggi* also launches its *Bami Goreng Fix* spice mix –highlighting the blend of

*gleichzeitig seinen wohltuenden Bestandteil das HDL-Cholesterin, beibehält. In Olivenöl gibt es keine Zusatzstoffe.“*

<sup>757</sup> Ad for *becel* Diät Speiseöl (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1989): „‘*Spargel natur*’, *schmollte er*, ‚wegen des Cholesterins.‘ ‚*Kopf hoch*‘, tröstete sie ihn, ‚ich weiß da eine Lösung.‘“

<sup>758</sup> However, just as in the case of cosmetics, it is difficult to tell whether this type of ad is really directly targeted at a male audience, especially at the time. Indeed, even if men also read women’s magazines, women are still often the purveyors/choosers of food, cosmetics and sometimes even clothes in family-type households. Thus the embedding of ads seemingly directed at men in a woman’s magazine may simply suggest that women are trusted lifestyle mediators for their men.

<sup>759</sup> Ad for *Lätta* (*freundin*, Heft 9, 1988): „*Haben sie sich entschieden, niemals dick zu werden? Dann wissen Sie, Sie müssen etwas dafür tun. Bewusst leben. Aktiv sein. Richtig essen. Dabei möchte Lätta Ihnen ein wenig helfen. Lätta hat nur halb soviel Fett wie Butter und Margarine.“*

<sup>760</sup> Ad for *Appel* Salat-freshing (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1989).

<sup>761</sup> Ad for *Thomy* Joghurt- Salat-Creme (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>762</sup> E.g. ad for *Iglo* Rahm-Blumenkohl, Rahm-Rosenkohl, Rahm-Porree (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>763</sup> E.g. ad for *Golden Toast* Baguettes (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 1989).

<sup>764</sup> Ad for *Fuchs* Let’s Dip (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1989): „4 aufregend-abendfüllende Würz-Mischungen. Tzatziki, Frühlingskräuter, Toskana, Zwiebel. Zum Einrühren in *Crème fraîche*, Quark, Joghurt. Zum Dippen mit Möhren, Gurken Crackern, Sellerie...“

convenience and exotic food trends.<sup>765</sup> And if conventional ready-made salads such as meat, fish or poultry salads remain popular, a new type of “healthy/light” salad and other ready-made dishes and light products are being advertised by *Pro-Vital* (“*Today’s food*”) for today’s mothers (showing a mother with her little boy sitting on her shoulders; “*with natural ingredients!*”)<sup>766</sup> and today’s youth (featuring a spirited young teenager in polka-dotted blouse, loud make-up and clunky jewellery; “*Simply delicious!*”).<sup>767</sup> The assortment includes ready-made meals (“*To live off the fat of the land in France, Italy, in the whole world. But with less than 5% fat!*”, Milano salad (“*with yogurt and whole wheat or vegetarian: refined and delicious salads*”), gouda (“*this delicious type of cheese lacks nothing except fat*”), salami (“*juicy and powerful as well as 40% less fat: sausages and meats*”). And the caption above the products reads like a modern creed for eating right: “*ProVital is really delicious and provides many variations on modern pleasure: healthy, wholesome, with very little fat and quality ingredients. Enjoy your meal*”. This discourse thus differs from contemporary slimming assortments such as *Du darfst*, the main emphasis of which is on calorie-counting.

When it comes to desserts, two main orientations can be detected. First there are the seductive, creamy, almost forbidden sweets such as chocolate or ice-cream with motifs emphasising sensuality and potentially explicit “sexual” sin such as e.g. in an ad for *Sprengel Edel Vollmilch* chocolate, showing a woman in a suit grabbing a man passing by with the statement “*I want Sprengel!*”<sup>768</sup> or an ad for *Carte d’Or* ice-cream under the caption “*A good reason to be unfaithful*” (not to mention the added “*Reserved for climaxes*” at the bottom of the ad).<sup>769</sup> Both seem to hint to the fact that eating sweet & fatty foods has become a secretive, quasi-forbidden pleasure. This contrasts with lighter desserts that can be eaten with less of a bad conscience such as *Dr Oetker’s Rote* and *Grüne Grütze* –i.e. stewed red or green berries– or the new *Langnese* blood orange flavoured yogurt ice cream (in tubs and cones), which benefit from the positive aura of fruit and yogurt.<sup>770</sup>

As to hot drinks, under the guiding stars of French and Italian tastes, the demand for light coffee that dominated the 1980s seems to be declining in favour of avowedly more robust aromas, as in ads for *Eduscho’s Bonjour* –“*irresistibly spirited beans*”– or for the *Mini Cappuccino Luxe* coffee machine manufactured by *Krups*.<sup>771</sup> Tea is the object of a “fitness” campaign by the *German Tea Bureau*. One of the ads shows a tennisman lightly springing over the net and the other shows two women jogging in tracksuits, t-shirts, headbands, legwarmers und trainers. The following text is highlighted in both ads: “*Tea is it ... Real tea fosters everything: enjoyment, the ability to concentrate, relaxation, freshness and fitness. And all that without calories! Well-known brands provide variety and taste. Real tea. That is*

<sup>765</sup> Ad for Maggi Fix „Bami Goreng“ [Original Rezept] (*Für Sie*, Heft 17, 1989).

<sup>766</sup> Ad for ProVital assortment (*prima*, Heft 6, 1990): „*Das Essen von heute*“; „*Mit natürlichen Zutaten!*“

<sup>767</sup> Ad for Pro Vital assortment (*prima*, Heft 5, 1990): „*Einfach köstlich!*“; „*Genießen wie Gott in Frankreich, in Italien, in aller Welt. Aber unter 5 % Fett!*“; „*Mit Joghurt und Vollkorn oder pflanzlich-vegetarisch: feine, köstliche Salate*“; „*Auch den leckeren Käse-sorten fehlt es an nichts, außer am Fett.*“; „*Saft und Kraft und 40% weniger Fett: die Wurst- und Fleischwaren*“; „*ProVital ist so richtig lecker und bietet in vielfältiger Auswahl den Genuß von heute: gesund, vollwertig, mit ganz wenig Fett und hochwertigen Zutaten. Guten Appetit.*“

<sup>768</sup> Ad for Sprenger Edel Vollmilch Schokolade (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989): „*Ich will Sprengel*“.

<sup>769</sup> Ad for Carte d’Or Premium Cassis Cremiges Fruchteis mit schwarzen Johannisbeeren (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 1989): „*Ein guter Grund fremdzugehen*“; „*Reserviert für Höhepunkte*“.

<sup>770</sup> Ads for Dr Oetker Rote und Grüne Grütze (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989) and Langnese fresh Blutorange Joghurt Eis (*prima*, Heft 7, 1990).

<sup>771</sup> Ads for Eduscho Bonjour Kaffee (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1989): „*unwiderstehlich temperamentvolle Bohnen*“; and for Krups Mini Cappuccino Luxe (*Zeit Magazin*, Heft 50, 07.12.1990).

*a trendy contemporary pleasure.*<sup>772</sup> Nevertheless, it should be stressed that ads for tea are still few and far between and the only ubiquitous ads are for *Teekanne's* herbal teas. However, even ads for alcohol (which I have wilfully avoided until now since it is not usually considered as food, let alone healthy nutrition) also begin to emphasise lightness, such as in ads for German wines, showing a woman jumping into a man's arms whilst holding a bottle and two glasses alongside the slogan *"So surprisingly light"*<sup>773</sup> or the ad for Merlin yogurt liqueurs (available in strawberry, pineapple, and Marc de Champagne varieties) advertised as *"light and fresh like nature"*.<sup>774</sup>

In the mineral water domain, the offer has literally exploded and become much more nuanced: traditional ads emphasising specific properties of the water or health indications are decreasing. Moreover, foreign mineral waters are penetrating the market, e.g. *Volvic*, *Contrex* and *San Pellegrino*. Most ads move from an impersonal rhetoric to a personal or body-/fitness-oriented discourse: from *Überkingler* showing a woman who has fallen while roller-skating and who is trying to rather lamely but laughingly hoist herself up again using a lectern to support herself (*"Überkingler helps you get back on your feet"*),<sup>775</sup> to *Contrex* displaying a muscular (but not overslim!) woman in a dance posture near the prow of a boat (*"Active individuals feel good. No wonder, since they live more consciously and enjoy healthy eating"*).<sup>776</sup>

A particularly interesting series of ads for *Heppinger* water elaborates on the lifestyle function of water consumption. One of them displays a man in his late thirties, attired in a tracksuit and lounging on a couch. He sports a broad toothy smile, his right hand propping up his cheek. The other hand clasps the glass of water perched on his left knee. A bottle of *Heppinger* is nestled against his belly. The heading reads: *"I am a Heppinger. Because it suits me. Fit, active, naturally Heppinger: lots of minerals, particularly magnesium. That makes one physically and mentally fit. It feels good and provides the right momentum. 'Source of the active', that sounds just right... Heppinger. And I feel heppi."*<sup>777</sup> The setting here is truly leisurely: the man is wearing sports gear but the folds of the track suit top fall loosely on his reclined figure. Even if he has presumably been exercising before taking a break, his body shows no signs of strain or exhaustion. Just as in the *Hirschquelle* example quoted higher, this mineral water also seems to have a holistic effect: on the performance of both body and mind (hence also work performance) but also on general well-being and mood. Moreover, *"Source of the active"* may seem to contradict the generally lazy atmosphere of the picture but it thereby hints to the fact that activity is taken for granted: the man no longer has to prove anything; he can just dwell in the moment – in "pure and natural" wellness style.

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<sup>772</sup> Ads for tea (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1989 and *Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989 respectively): *„Tee bringt's ... Echter Tee hat alles für Genuß, Konzentrationsfähigkeit, Entspannung, Frische und Fitness. Und alles ohne Kalorien! Bekannte Marken sorgen für viel Abwechslung und Geschmack. Echter Tee. Das ist Genuß im Trend der Zeit“*.

<sup>773</sup> Ad for Deutsche Weine (*prima*, Heft 11, 1990): *„So überraschend leicht“*

<sup>774</sup> Ad for Merlin Joghurt Liqueur (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1989): *„leicht und frisch wie die Natur“*.

<sup>775</sup> Ad for Überkingler Mineralwasser (*stern*, Heft 7, 1989): *„Überkingler hilft wieder auf die Beine“*.

<sup>776</sup> Ad for Contrex Mineralwasser (*Für Sie*, Heft 15, 1989): *„Aktive Menschen fühlen sich wohl. Kein Wunder, schließlich leben sie bewusster und genießen eine gesunde Ernährung“*.

<sup>777</sup> Ad for Heppinger Heilwasser (*stern*, Heft 10, 1989): *„Ich bin ein Heppinger. Weil es zu mir paßt. Fit, aktiv, natürlich Heppinger: Viele Mineralien, besonders viel Magnesium. Das macht körperlich und geistig fit. Das tut gut und gibt den richtigen Schwung. „Quelle der Aktiven“, das stimmt genau... Heppinger. Und ich fühl' mich heppi.“*

This attitude contrasts with that found in a twin ad displaying a woman in jeans, T-shirt and trainers, taking a break on a stone in a natural, mountain-like setting. Her posture seems to have more dynamic potential despite her coy, reflexive expression. And the text reflects this readiness (or is it just the reflection of a societal imperative that pushes women to work more than men for their beauty?): *“Why am I in such good shape? Because I am very active: a lot of movement, a conscious diet and, naturally, Heppinger as a drink. It contains a lot of magnesium, enhances performance and makes one fit. Hence I feel wide awake –both bodily and mentally. Clearly, my source of the active is Heppinger. And I feel heppi”*.<sup>778</sup> A year later despite a similar format –same slogan, full body portrait and text in the first person– the mood has shifted. A smiling woman lounges in a deck-chair in such a way as to show off her long, slim and bronzed legs and holds a glass of water close to the bottle nestling near her knees. The text has become more direct, aggressive and self-confident: *“Of course I’m active. And I can show off at the beach, can’t I?”* and the text goes on to extol *Heppinger* and its contribution to well-being and a body *“in good shape”*.<sup>779</sup>

An ad for *Hirschquelle* from the same year shows that the holistic impact of the water has been integrated and need not rely on a surfeit of explanations since the ad simply states *“For body and mind”* above a table with a bottle of *Hirschquelle* and a glass against a background displaying the shadow of a slim and pretty woman, one hand resting on the top of her head in a sort of “thinker posture” and the other arm gracefully arched above her head like a dancer. The caption beneath the picture says *“Hirschquelle tastes good and does one good”*.<sup>780</sup> Otherwise, novelty in the mineral water field is flavoured water, usually with citrus fruit. The ad for e.g. *Apollinaris Lemon* states the following: *“Apollinaris Lemon. Made with natural mineral water and a touch of lemon. Nothing else. No colourings or artificial flavourings. No sugar. Taste without calories. Excitingly fresh.”*<sup>781</sup> It is the first example I have found of an ad explicitly emphasising the absence of both colourings and artificial aromas, not to mention sugar –and this without an artificial sweetener to compensate.

This mineral water craze can be partially explained by the suspicions surrounding tap water, especially its high pesticide and nitrate content, caused by groundwater contamination with fertilisers -not to mention high levels of chlorinated hydrocarbons as a by-product of the disinfection of 35% of the water supply. An article in *prima* warns against these conditions pointing to discrepancies between the lax national tolerance of 50 mg pro litre vs. European recommendations of max. 25 mg pro litre:

And here this value is exceeded in many places. [the article provides a table listing the most nitrate-rich locations]. Of course, one can pointedly argue about prescriptive limits and, as often, the question “dangerous or not?” can only be conditionally answered. The only sure

<sup>778</sup> Ad for Heppinger Heilwasser (*Brigitte*, Heft 24, 1989): *„Warum ich so gut in Form bin? Ich tu’ was dafür: Viel Bewegung, bewußtes essen und zum Trinken – natürlich Heppinger. Das enthält viel Magnesium, macht leistungsfähig und sorgt für Fitness. Da fühle ich mich körperlich und geistig hellwach. Ganz klar: meine Quelle der Aktiven ist Heppinger. Und ich fühl’ mich heppi.”*

<sup>779</sup> Ad for Heppinger Heilwasser (*Bunte*, Heft 38, 1990): *„Klar bin ich aktiv. Und am Strand kann ich mich zeigen, oder?“; „in bester Verfassung“.*

<sup>780</sup> Ad for Hirschquelle Heilwasser (*FAZ Magazin*, Heft 565, 28.12. 1990): *„Für Körper und Geist“; „Hirschquelle. Schmeckt gut und tut gut“.*

<sup>781</sup> Ad for Apollinaris Lemon (*Zeit Magazin*, Heft 39, 21.09.1990): *„Apollinaris Lemon. Aus natürlichem Mineralwasser. Mit einem Hauch Zitrone. Sonst gar nichts. Keine Farb- und künstlichen Aromastoffe. Kein Zucker. Geschmack ohne Kalorien. Aufregend frisch.“*

thing is that the less nitrate, the better. Nobody is as “tolerant” as we are when it comes to nitrates in Europe. Hence: when nitrate level exceeds 25 mg per litre, one should go easy on tap water.<sup>782</sup>

The article then preaches caution with small children, especially when fed vegetables containing high nitrate concentration and recommends the use of bottled mineral water that is explicitly labelled as suitable for children. Another article, this time in *Bunte* and with a lifestyle orientation, praises still mineral water as the hot new trend in the summer of 1990. The article starts by saying that in the past, people would be ashamed to order water in a restaurant because of the reaction of the waiters and other guests, whereas nowadays one is embarrassed if one does not order a specific water brand and one is entitled to berate the waiter if the restaurant does not offer a particularly fashionable brand. The mineral water boom is then illustrated by quoting figures: West Germans consume 80 litres per person per year (a world record) compared to just 14 litres in 1970. The article goes on to report that:

According to Munich’s famous party caterer Käfer, since fitness and health have become a philosophy, the turnover for mineral water knows “almost no limits”. Arnold Wolters, the marketing director at Apollinaris [*a mineral water company*], confirms this trend: “especially the so-called still varieties with little carbonic acid are booming”.<sup>783</sup>

Strikingly, this is the first reference to fitness and health having become trends on a societal scale. The article ends with a list of mineral water benefits –the first being zero calories!– and provides tips on water etiquette, label deciphering and taste linked to mineral content. Other features include a blurb on how two glasses of “strong” mineral water can help combat hangovers, an eating-out tip advertising a restaurant where one can order four different types of mineral water (and 800 types of wine!), a guidebook on mineral water and a satirical drink column where the author praises water but admits to a preference for another type of bubbly... The tenor of this article is particularly emblematic of the new trend: mineral water is no longer treated as either taken for granted or as a marginal phenomenon for “elderly” and/or “boring” health-conscious consumers, instead it is treated with the same passion and respect as wine or beer.

### **Early 1990s: Glocal, slowfast and techno-natural – dualities reconciled**

The first half of the 1990s is characterised by extremely varied recipes that can be truly defined as creolised since they play on traditional ingredients or dishes with a contemporary twist (i.e. often prepared with less fat and with lighter or no sauces) while integrating unusual or formerly luxury ingredients (such as expensive fish, seafood, saffron or high quality lean meats). Moreover, they often rely on foreign foods (e.g. spices galore), relatively novel or rediscovered cooking methods (such as gratin,<sup>784</sup> stir-frying,<sup>785</sup> cooking in

<sup>782</sup> „Was ist drin im Trinkwasser? Bei Kleinkindern vorsichtshalber auf die Höhe des Nitratgehalts achten.“ [prima Ratger] (*prima*, Heft 3, 1990): „Und dieser Wert wird hierzulande vielerorts überschritten. [...] Nun läßt sich über trefflich streiten, und, wie so häufig, ist die Frage “Schädlich oder nicht schädlich?” nur bedingt zu beantworten. Je weniger Nitrat, soviel ist gewiss, desto besser. So “tolerant” wie bei uns, ist man beim Nitrat nirgendwo sonst in Europa. Darum: Bei Werten über 25 Milligramm pro Liter lieber sparsam mit dem Wasser aus dem Hahn umgehen.“ [emphasis in source]

<sup>783</sup> Der Trend im Sommer '90: Die Wasser-Welle“ (*Bunte*, Heft 30, 19.07.90, pp. 66-67): „Seit Fitneß und Gesundheit Philosophie ist, steigen auch die Umsätze von Mineralwässern laut Münchens Party-König Käfer ,schier ins Grenzenlose’. Arnold Wolters, Marketing Leiter bei Apollinaris, bestätigt: ,Gerade die sogennanten stillen Wässer mit wenig Kohlensäure erleben einen Boom.“

<sup>784</sup> E.g. „Auflauf – die besten Variationen“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1995, pp. 226 ss.).

earthenware pots,<sup>786</sup> steaming, etc.) and experiment with formerly high gastronomy or exotic techniques and decoration to make up for less heavy fare under the motto “*you eat with your eyes*”.<sup>787</sup> Generally, there are more vegetables, fruit, poultry, fish, seafood, pasta and rice than ever before. Furthermore, whole foods, vegetarian<sup>788</sup> and (near-)foreign food (especially Italian) or exotic touches are often normalised in recipes. Cooking methods range from the extremely simple and relatively fast all-in-one methods to very elaborate time-intensive processes (perhaps heralding the subsequent slow food trend?). It is difficult to assign a particular style to a particular occasion. Often, a relaxed experience with guests or the ability to react spontaneously and prepare something fast is valued more than elaborate, stressful menus. But sometimes the latter are also recommended for special occasions and intimate get-togethers. Recipes thus range from “*salmon fillet baked with a horseradish crust*” to “*lamb’s lettuce with deep-fried noodles and scallops*”, “*wholemeal pasta tubes with a cheese filling*”, “*radicchio pasta*”, “*tea foam with exotic fruits*”, “*braised rabbit Italian-style*”, “*artichokes with a caper and pepper sauce*”, etc.<sup>789</sup>

Interestingly, rice is again the object of a significant push. *stern*, for example, features it in a special “*Essen & Trinken*” [Eating & Drinking] article with the following statement: “*In the past, there were two types of rice to choose from at the grocer’s: ‘soup rice’ on one side of the shelf and ‘pudding rice’ on the other. Sad times. Today, we have the choice between green or red rice, between brown rice and parboiled rice, Italian risotto rice or Japanese sticky rice*”.<sup>790</sup> In *prima*, I also found an article entitled “*Rice tastes international*” with the following caption: “*It is especially healthy and is offered in many varieties. And: it is found in all the world’s cuisines*” Recipes range from seafood risotto, to Turkish stuffed peppers and tomatoes as well as lamb biryani [“*Lammfleisch mit Reis*”].<sup>791</sup>

Otherwise seasonal ingredients continue to be featured. If they are sometimes the object of a traditional revival, such as meat specialties with pears or plums, even staples such as potatoes are subjected to daring modernist touches, such as mashed potatoes mixed with poppy seeds or with yogurt and curcuma.<sup>792</sup> But the truly creolised nature of contemporary German cooking is probably best symbolised by a regular “*menschen + genuß*” [people + pleasure] feature in the *Bunte* magazine. There, the journalist Wolfgang Ritter (*Bunte-*

<sup>785</sup> E.g. „Heiße Pfannen“ [„*Raffiniert einfach: Alles kommt vom Herd direkt auf den Tisch – und ist durch kurze Garzeiten sehr aromatisch*“] (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 04.11.92, pp. 206 ss.).

<sup>786</sup> „Garen im Tontopf: spart Kalorien, schont Vitamine“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1992).

<sup>787</sup> “*Das Auge ißt mit*”. In 1992, *prima* actually runs a series thus entitled with recipes like “*Roulade für Feinschmecker*”, “*Feine Sülze mit Gemüse und Hähnchenbrust*”, “*Chinesische Häppchen*” or “*Zucotto Toscana*”, thus displaying the variety of influences.

<sup>788</sup> E.g. „Hauptsache: Gemüse“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 13, 1995) or „Gemüseküche: Zuchtpilze gibt’s immer“ (*prima*, Heft 1, 1992, pp. 112-113).

<sup>789</sup> All recipes to be found in the *Brigitte* Sammelrezepte features in 1992 and 1995: „*Lachsfilet mit Meerretichkruste*“; „*Feldsalat mit frittierten Nudeln und Jakobsmuscheln*“; „*Vollkorn-Rohrnudeln mit Käsefüllung*“; „*Radichio-Nudeln*“; „*Teeschaum mit exotischen Früchten*“; „*Geschmortes Kaninchen auf italienische Art*“; „*Artischocken mit Kapern-Pfeffer-Soße*“.

<sup>790</sup> „*Journal: Essen & Trinken. Reis*“ (*stern*, Heft 50, 1992, pp. 185 ss.): “*Früher standen in den Regalen der Lebensmittelhändler gerade mal zwei Sorten Reis: Hier der Brühreis, dort der Milchreis. Eine traurige Zeit. Heute haben wir die Auswahl zwischen grünem oder rotem Reis, zwischen ungeschältem oder parboiled Reis, italienischem Risotto-Reis oder Japanischem Klebereis.*”

<sup>791</sup> „*Reis Schmeckt International*“ (*prima*, Heft 8, 1992, pp. 122 ss.): „*Er ist besonders gesund und wird in vielen Sorten angeboten. Und: Es gibt ihn in allen Küchen der Welt.*”

<sup>792</sup> e.g. „Heiße Kartoffeln“ [„*Von der sättigenden Beilage zur Spezialität*“] (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1992, pp. 244 ss.).

Gourmet and wine connoisseur) broaches themes as varied as preserving & pickling, party finger-food and the health benefits of Cretan (or more generally Greek) salad. All these trends will become very representative of contemporary German cooking and eating habits. Indeed, by stating that *“Preserving is modern again. 1. It tastes so personal 2. working in the kitchen is the in thing”*, the first article revives a discourse on the delights of traditional home-cooking made with love, hard work and patience, thus also heralding the slow-food fashion.<sup>793</sup> Nevertheless, the article’s paradoxical title, i.e. *“Mama, the preserves factory”*, should be noted since it highlights the apparent contradiction of a return to pre-industrial food-preparation in the modern domestic realm, while still hinting at a rather conservatively gendered labour division –beyond a potentially humorous intent. At any rate, this “home/mama-made” ethic stands in stark contrast with the “modern primitive” or “childish” fun of eating with one’s fingers and mix-n-matching what one likes as described in the second article.<sup>794</sup> On a mitigating note, however, it should be stated that *“stuffed zucchini flowers”* or *“poussin legs”* dipped in *“divine sauces”* –the ingredients highlighted in the subtitle–<sup>795</sup> hint to a great deal of sophistication in terms of both product choice and preparation, thus contrasting with the hands-on approach to ingesting ... Finally, the last article broaches the topic of the heart-healthy “Mediterranean diet”:

The recipe comes from Crete and, even in winter, you can obtain all the ingredients in Germany from the farmers’ markets. It is this easy, healthy diet based on olive oil, vegetables, dark bread and dried fruits that gives the inhabitants of Crete a long life expectancy. In Crete, there are almost no cases of heart attack. It is thanks to Cretan cooking – with a lot of garlic, onions, fresh herbs, ewe’s milk cheese, yogurt and honey, grilled fish, poultry and – a lot of salad.<sup>796</sup>

This description reunites all the elements of our late modern food creed: from the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, enzymes and fibre from non-refined cereals, fruit, vegetables and “exotic” seasonings, to the lean protein of fish or poultry, the calcium inherent in yogurt and ewe’s milk cheese (two “easy-to-digest” dairy options), to the appropriate fats provided by olive oil and fish.

As far as other ethnic cuisines are concerned, it has become increasingly difficult to draw the line between pure German tradition and unusual exotic delicacies. Parallel streams and crossover experimenting seem to rule the day. Foreign cuisines no longer seem to be just appreciated for their “otherness” but because they are e.g. like Chinese food *“easy to digest, low-calorie and healthy. And the dishes are easy and quick to prepare”*,<sup>797</sup> or because, despite the simplicity of the staple used –such as pasta in Italian food, the knack of a special

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<sup>793</sup> Ritter, Wolfgang, „Konservenfabrik Mama“ (*Bunte*, Heft 41, 05.10.1995, pp. 78 ss.): *„Einmachen ist wieder modern. 1. Es schmeckt so persönlich 2. Arbeiten in der Küche hat Kultcharakter“*.

<sup>794</sup> Ritter, Wolfgang, „Mit den Fingern essen. Handy –Food“ (*Bunte*, Heft, 44, 26.10.1995, pp. 82 ss.).

<sup>795</sup> „Man nimmt z.B. gefüllte Zucchini-Blüte oder ein Stubenküken-Keulchen und dippt sie in herrliche Soßen“.

<sup>796</sup> Ritter, Wolfgang, „Der Salat, der das Leben verlängert“ (*Bunte*, Heft 50, 07.12.1995, pp. 92 ss.): *„Das Rezept kommt aus Kreta, und alle Zutaten können Sie auch jetzt, im Winter, in Deutschland auf Wochenmärkten kaufen. Es ist die einfache, gesunde Ernährung auf der Basis von Olivenöl, Gemüse, Schwarzbrot und getrockneten Früchten, die den Bewohnern von Kreta eine hohe Lebenserwartung beschert. Auf Kreta gibt es praktisch keine Fälle von Herzinfarkt. Es ist das Kochen à la Kreta – mit viel Knoblauch, Zwiebeln, frischen Kräutern, Schafskäse, Joghurt und Honig, gegrilltem Fisch. Geflügel und – viel Salat.“*

<sup>797</sup> „Leichte China-Küche“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1995, pp. 230 ss.): *„bekömmlich, kalorienarm und gesund. Und die Gerichte lassen sich einfach und schnell zubereiten“*.

sauce or ingredient makes a world of difference.<sup>798</sup> There is also the political-cultural imperative of extending one's horizons by incorporating European food as in a *prima* series entitled "*Euro-Küche*" [Euro-cuisine] featuring a different country every month, with recipes that are more authentic and less well-known than the few clichés already available as convenience foods.<sup>799</sup> Another trend is to go even more regional such as in e.g. a *stern* article on the cooking of the Abruzzi, Campania and Calabria regions in Italy.<sup>800</sup>

Even if local German cooking is also enjoying a revival as emphasised in an article on multi-cultural cuisine<sup>801</sup> and confirmed by a poll<sup>802</sup> asking Germans what cuisine they prefer (55% prefer German food, followed by 15% for Italian food, 13% for Chinese, 9% for Greek, 4% for both French and Yugoslav, 3% for Turkish and 1% for other cuisines), a comment under the table states: "*A growing fondness for foreign cuisines can be detected in the younger well-educated generation*".<sup>803</sup> Furthermore, the article on multi-cultural cuisine –reviewing a study carried out by *Nestlé Deutschland* and entitled "*Ethnic Food*"– emphasises that many ethnic foods and beverages have become so normalised as to no longer be considered "ethnic". The article pointedly sums up developments for the 1980s and the incipient 1990s:

In the 1980s, the techniques of the French-inspired "nouvelle cuisine" became widespread: nearly every high-end restaurant began to serve dishes on enormous plates decorated with sauces and side-dishes. Germans' nutritional consciousness also evolved. The often meatless dishes from the Mediterranean area became de rigueur, just as the light Asian cuisine – preferably cooked in a wok to preserve vitamins. In the 1990s, the food palette in supermarkets continued to grow. Pots of tiramisu and mousse au chocolat could be found in the refrigerated section. Asian convenience dishes such as bami- or nasi-goreng were already available in the frozen section. And where previously Erbswurst [*convenience dried ground peas with added ingredients compressed into a sausage shape and used to prepare pea soup*] and packet soups ruled the shelves, various powders and flavour enhancers promising the successful preparation of "original" Greek or Asian dishes have mushroomed. Currently, the industry is bent upon expanding the young megatrend, namely Mexican cuisine.<sup>804</sup>

<sup>798</sup> „Pasta wie vom Italiener“ (*prima*, Heft 5, 1992, pp. 129 ss.).

<sup>799</sup> Regularly recurring feature in the course of 1992 (*prima*, 1992).

<sup>800</sup> „Immer ein Fest“ (*stern*, Heft 46, 05.11.1992, pp. 246 ss.).

<sup>801</sup> Bettermann, Stella, „Multi-Kulti-Küche. Eine Studie über Eßgewohnheiten zeigt: Am Kochtopf sind die Deutschen besonders ausländerfreundlich“ (*Focus*, Heft 41, 11.10.1993, pp. 176-180).

<sup>802</sup> „Focus-Frage: Welche ist ihre Lieblingsküche? Jeder zweite bevorzugt Deutsches Essen“ (*Focus*, Heft 4, 23.01.95, p. 11).

<sup>803</sup> Cf. Bettermann, Stella, op. cit. p. 177: „Die Vorliebe für ausländische Küchen nimmt zu je jünger und gebildeter die Menschen sind.“ The age factor is confirmed in a table reproduced from a Nestlé Ethnic Food study: there are stark differences in the readiness to occasionally eat ethnic food at home depending on whether one is under 35 (38%) or over 35 (19%). Similarly, an ethnic food experience in a restaurant is more readily embraced (on an occasional basis) by 51% of the younger population as opposed to 24% in the older one.

<sup>804</sup> Ibid., p. 180: „In den 80ern machten sich die Gepflogenheiten der französisch inspirierte „Nouvelle Cuisine“ breit: Nahezu in jedem besseren Restaurant wurden Speisen auf riesigen Tellern ästhetisch „an“ Saucen und Beilagen dekoriert. Auch das Ernährungsbewußtsein der Deutschen veränderte sich. Die- oft fleischlosen – Gerichte aus dem Mittelmeerraum waren kaum noch wegzudenken, ebenso wie die leichte asiatische Küche – am besten vitaminreich Wok-gegart. In den 90ern erweiterte sich dann auch die Angebotspalette in den Supermärkten. Tiramisu und Mousse au chocolat bot der Handel nun in Bechern verpackt und im Kühlregal plaziert. In der Tiefkühltruhe lagerten bereits asiatische Fertiggerichte wie Bami- und Nasi Goreng. Dort, wo sich bislang Erbswurst und Tütensuppen stapelten, machten sich Pülverchen und Geschmackverstärker breit, die das Gelingen „original“ griechischer oder asiatischer Gerichte versprechen. Derzeit setzt die Industrie auf die Ausweitung des jungen Megatrends, der mexikanischen Küche.“

Another interesting piece of information contained in the article is a list showing the likely percentile turnover increase for various food groups: pasta (79%), coffee (63%), vegetable oil (48%), frozen convenience meals (46%), dry convenience meals (39%), delicatessen (37%), fruit & vegetable (28%), non-dry convenience meals (26%), sauces (24%), stew/vegetables (22%).<sup>805</sup> The triumph of pasta as an inescapable favourite starchy side- or main dish is particularly noteworthy, not to mention the perhaps more predictable success of convenience foods in general (including delicatessen) as well as vegetable oils (olive etc. as opposed to animal fats) or coffee (with the incipient vogue of Italian coffee specialties).<sup>806</sup>

As to products, tradition has not died out but tries to speak to the late modern consumer. Emblematic of this trend are the rather ambivalent CMA ads. One ad shows a lump of butter dissolving in a sauce whilst vaunting the pleasurable merits of regional German food as well as a cookbook with the significant title of *"Savouring in plain German"* [Geniessen auf gut deutsch].<sup>807</sup> But in the same year another ad entitled *"Fitness in three gears"* [Fitness in drei Gängen] counterbalances the pleasure discourse with health rhetoric. It shows a family on bikes touring the German countryside in the top half of the ad, while the bottom half displays protein-rich (but lean) roast beef, carbohydrate-rich milk (thanks to lactose), a dish with butter shells that promise easy digestion and added energy thanks to milk fat and, finally, a piece of blue cheese providing both protein and easy to digest milk fat. The magic recipe according to the ad is *"Movement and a healthy balanced diet with foods from Germany. They contain protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins and mineral, plus they are the ideal combination to make you fit."*<sup>808</sup>

This health/pleasure dichotomy is emblematic of many assortments or products. For example an ad for *Champignon* brie-type cheese shows almost identical photographs featuring a slice of cheese on a knife with a piece of broken baguette under the same caption *"Gourmets relish it pure"*. But one of the ads is for the *"Extra creamy deluxe"* while the other is for the *"Creamy taste the light way"*.<sup>809</sup> The same is valid for another traditional product like *Rama* margarine, offered in both the usual "breakfast-quality" and the "balance" variety with 25 % less fat.<sup>810</sup> Another type of compromise is that emblematised by traditional products boasting an exotic note such as *Milram's* Quark [curd cheese] *Classico* that comes in three additional varieties: *Malaga*, *Zabaione* or *Messina*.<sup>811</sup>

In the convenience realm, one also observes a mind split. Because convenience food has become so mainstream, it now no longer requires complicated "justification" rationales but can play on a lighter note, as displayed by ads for *McCain's* potato specialties [1-2-3 *Kroketten*, *Fritatoes* & *Barbecues*] showing a cowboy enjoying a large portion of *"Fritatoes"* whilst his more unfortunate, tied up companion pleads to be released or a Woody Allen type

<sup>805</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>806</sup> E.g. ad for Lavazza (*Bunte*, Heft 42, 1995).

<sup>807</sup> CMA ad for German agricultural products (*Bunte*, Heft 41, 1995).

<sup>808</sup> CMA ad for German agricultural products (*stern*, Heft 41, 1995): „*Bewegung und eine gesunde, ausgewogene Ernährung mit Nahrungsmitteln aus Deutschland. Sie enthalten Eiweiß, Kohlenhydrate, Fett, Vitamine und Mineralstoffe und sind die idealen Fitmacher*“.

<sup>809</sup> Ads for *Champignon* Extrasahniger Weichkäse & Der Leichte Weichkäse (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992 & *Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1992): „*Gourmets geniessen pur*“; „*Extrasahniger de Luxe*“; „*Sahniger Geschmack auf die leichte Art*“.

<sup>810</sup> Ad for *Rama* margarines (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1992): „*Frühstücks-qualität*“ & „*balance*“.

<sup>811</sup> Ad for *Milram* Quark *Classico* (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992).

character chatting up his “Kroketten” while his wife entreats him to eat them like everyone else.<sup>812</sup> Significantly, both heroes are men without any women directly pictured and in both cases the convenience food is portrayed as a form of subversive/guilty pleasure or fun reserved mainly for male singles.

However, most convenience foods pride themselves on a healthy or light touch. Good examples include *Heidemark’s* so-called *Fitlets*, i.e. turkey breasts blended with peas and carrots and “breaded” in corn flakes, promoted with the caption “light & ready to eat”,<sup>813</sup> a new *iglo “Green Cuisine”* frozen veggie line, including items such as “mixed vegetables in a cream sauce, Italian vegetable stew, vegetable gratin, vegetable stew” but also more elaborate concoctions under the label “Vegetables Plus”: e.g. vegetables with rye and sunflower seeds or vegetable with both patna and wild rice, reflecting the trend towards whole foods cooking but without the hassle.<sup>814</sup> Even vitamins are thematised as in the new *Livio Plus* salad dressings with added vitamins E, B1 and B6 in five varieties.<sup>815</sup> But, in this context, an even more surprising ad should be mentioned: an ad for tins as containers and vitamin preservers. On the left, it displays a pill with the caption “Vitamins in small cans” [or “doses” since there is a play on words in German] and a tin in which peaches are reflected with the caption “Vitamins in large cans” [id.]. The accompanying text reads: “Vitamins evaporate when in contact with air, which is why they should be enclosed in an air- and light-tight can. That’s how you can get your vitamin dose e.g. with a juicy peach rather than a bitter pill. Tinplate. Good when full. Good when empty.” Besides the implicit paradox inherent in the criticism of industrial vitamins while extolling industrial preservation, it is the still unusual environmental dimension that is noteworthy, since the tinplate [Weißblech] recycling logo also stars at the bottom of the ad.<sup>816</sup> Ecological responsibility also surfaces briefly in an ad for *Saupiquet’s* tuna fish salads that guarantees a catch without driftnet and promises that the southeast Pacific area has been avoided. Since *Saupiquet* is a French brand,<sup>817</sup> the latter ad plausibly seems to hint at the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls (French Polynesia), a French nuclear testing ground for three decades.<sup>818</sup>

<sup>812</sup> Ads for McCain Fritatoes, Barbecues & Kroketten (*Bunte*, Heft 42, 1995 & *Bunte*, Heft 46, 1995).

<sup>813</sup> Ad for Heidemark Truthahn Fitlet (*Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1992): „leicht & fertig“

<sup>814</sup> Ad for Iglo Grüne Küche (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1995) (*prima*, Heft 11, 1992) (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992): „Buntes Rahmgemüse, Italienisches Pfannengemüse, Gemüseauflauf, Gemüseintopf“; „Gemüse Plus“.

<sup>815</sup> Ad for Livio plus (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1995).

<sup>816</sup> Ad for Weißblech Recycling from the Informations-Zentrum Weißblech e.V.: „Vitamine in kleinen Dosen“; „Vitamine in großen Dosen“; „An der frischen Luft hauen Vitamine ab. Darum gehören sie eingesperrt. Luft- und lichtdicht in einer Dose. So kriegen Sie Ihre Dosis Vitamine z.B. mit einem saftigen Pflirsich anstatt mit einer bitteren Pille. Weißblech. Voll gut. Leer gut.“

<sup>817</sup> Cf. <http://www.saupiquet.com/saupiquet-et-la-mer/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>818</sup> Ad for Saupiquet Mexico-Salat (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1992): „Fischfang ohne Treibnetze · kein Fischfang im Südost-Pazifik“. The French government conducted nuclear testing in French Polynesia between 1966 and 1996, cf. e.g. <http://www.point-zero-canopus.org/reperes/chronologie-essais-nucleaires-polynesie-francaise> or <http://www.moruroa.org/>. The controversy surrounding the testing escalated in 1985 when Greenpeace’s Rainbow Warrior ship was sunk at the instigation of the French government and secret services in murky circumstances, cf. e.g. Du Prel, Alex W., “20 ans après: La vraie histoire de l’attentat contre le Rainbow Warrior”, *Tahiti-Pacifique Magazine*, No 171, Juillet 2005: <http://tahiti-pacifique.com/Articles.divers/171%20RAINBOW%20WARRIOR.pdf>. For more on radioactive contamination, cf. e.g. <http://www.moruroa.org/Texte.aspx?t=258>; Danielsson, Bengt, “Poisoned Pacific: The Legacy of French Nuclear Testing”, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 46, No 2, March 1990, pp. 22-31; Ruff, Tilman, “Bomb Tests Attack the Food Chain”, *ibid.*, pp. 32-34; Kleiner, Wolfgang B., “A Mururoa la bombe était à retardement”, *Courrier International*, 04.12.2003, online: <http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2003/12/04/a-mururoa-la-bombe-etait-a-retardement>; Sené,

Another issue that crops up is an incipient crusade against flavour enhancers and preservatives. A first example is the ad for *Iglo's Delite "Chicken fillet in a Hollandaise sauce with rice and gourmet vegetables"* that comes with the caption "*Natural taste requires no flavour enhancer*" –both "natural" and "no" are in a bigger font.<sup>819</sup> Another good example is an ad for *Flora* spreads that states "The only thing that we try to preserve is your health" and the text goes on as follows:

A balanced diet is important for your health. We would like to make it really tasty for you: with *Flora's* pure vegetable-based spreads. Only select vegetables are used to produce these spreads with great care. That is why *Flora* boasts only the best ingredients. Nothing else. What remains is the full natural taste. [...] Experiment with healthy pleasure.<sup>820</sup>

Otherwise, "healthy" snacks in the shape of bars containing crunchy cereal flakes, dried fruit and/or chocolate seem to be really ubiquitous.<sup>821</sup>

But functional food is really driven by the aggressive *becel* campaigns mostly displaying close-ups of seemingly hefty and greasy sandwiches (with cheese and mayonnaise oozing out of every pore) or a more refined assortment of open sandwiches. Appropriately, the first ad states "*Whoever still claims that healthy eating means renouncing has missed something*" and then presents an assortment of mayonnaise as well as vegetable, cheeseish and meatish spreads made with linoleic acid. The second ad declares: "*As you can see, a cholesterol-conscious diet spells more and more pleasure. Eight small revolutions from becel.*" It then presents similar products including hard cheese and cream-cheese substitutes or coffee-whitener.<sup>822</sup>

During this period, food (including its origins, production, control, etc.) seems to star much more regularly in the media and these concerns are even reflected in some *CMA* ads. After concerns were raised about fertilizers and high nitrate contents in agricultural products (especially lettuce) and water, an ad vaunting the merits of so-called "integrated production" hardly comes as a surprise. Under the heading "*Tested and found good*", the ad –over a double page– shows two apple close-ups: one constellated with small labels/blurbs and the other with the logo "*from integrated production*". The small blurbs detail the characteristics of the label (e.g. "*priority use of biological and mechanical means for pest management, observation of pest epidemics and thus a significantly reduced use of chemicals. Hence: less*

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Monique, IV. Extrait du Dossier CFDT 19 octobre 1981, La Gazette Nucléaire, G@zette, No 67/68, pp. 28-31, online: <http://resosol.org/Gazette/1985/6768p28.html>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>819</sup> Ad for *Iglo Delite* menus (*Focus*, recurrent, 1994): „Hähnchenfilet in Sauce Hollandaise mit Reis und feinem Gemüse“; „Natürlicher Geschmack hat keine Geschmacksverstärker“.

<sup>820</sup> Ad for *Flora Pflanzliche Brotaufstriche* (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1995): „Das einzige, was wir versuchen zu konservieren ist Ihre Gesundheit“; „Für Ihre Gesundheit ist eine ausgewogene Ernährung wichtig. Die wollen wir Ihnen jetzt besonders schmackhaft machen: mit den rein pflanzlichen Brotaufstrichen von Flora. Hierfür werden nur ausgewählte Gemüse schonend verarbeitet. Deshalb sind bei Flora nur beste Zutaten drin. Sonst nichts. Was bleibt, ist der volle, natürliche Geschmack [...]. Probieren Sie doch auch mal, gesund zu genießen.“

<sup>821</sup> E.g. ad for *Ritter Sport Crisp-Riegel* [Joghurt, Nugat, Nuss, Knusper Flakes] (*stern*, Heft 48, 1992).

<sup>822</sup> Ads for *becel* diet products (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992) & (*Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1992): "Wer jetzt noch behauptet, daß gesunde Ernährung Verzicht bedeutet, hat hier etwas übersehen"; „Wie sie sehen, wird die cholesterinbewußte Ernährung immer mehr zum Genuß. Acht kleine Revolutionen von becel.“

*environmental burden and excellent quality fruit*") as well the various controls in laboratories, etc.<sup>823</sup>

Another double-page ad features piglets with a beautiful golden-pink sheen assembled close to the feeding trough. The accompanying explanatory text entitled "*a meal made of genuine groats and corn*" details the components of the pig feed ("*freshly kibbled wheat, barley and oats, rapeseed or soy groats, whey fresh from the dairy as well as vitamins and an extra portion of minerals*"), whereby most of the wheat comes from the farmer's own integrated production in the example provided here. Interestingly, the feed description reads like a striking parallel of a whole foods muesli recipe. But just as for the whole foods bought in supermarkets, the article shows that the farmer uses a computer [picture provided] to determine the quantities required by each pig as well as the cost of ingredients. A computerised process also blends the ingredients from the various silos and ensures timely distribution. Nevertheless, as if to reassure the consumer faced with such technological intrusion into "natural" production, the text emphasises that nothing can replace the farmer's gaze when it comes to assessing the health of his protégés...<sup>824</sup>

Otherwise, three articles in *Brigitte* tackle the organic question. The first one examines how organic produce is set to conquer supermarkets: "*Bread made with genuine wholemeal? Spinach with less nitrates? Organic produce is rarely found in supermarkets. But this is changing. Organic products are the next big thing. And prices will fall. A new EC regulation is facilitating this development.*" The article goes on to state that "*Gerd Härig from the Federal Association of Food Trade also agrees that: 'Since the fitness and health wave has embraced the German consumer, organic products are increasingly in demand'*". This represents yet another public acknowledgement that German consumers are becoming more health-conscious. Thanks to a new European law –the enforcement of which is planned for January 1<sup>st</sup> 1993 (with planned rules for the subsequent year)– that protects and defines organic production for cereals, fruit and vegetables, a unified control system is being put into place, even though there is still no unified eco-labelling system. This system replaces an affiliation with extant organic associations or more doubtful organisations and opens up the market for many more organic farmers –foretelling a significant drop in the price of organic produce. The article emphasises that the future of organic produce lies in its being integrated into the offer of supermarkets:

As is the case at Tengelmann's for example. For the past few months, the supermarket chain has been offering almost exclusively organic products from growers' associations under their own "Naturkind" [*Nature's child*] brand. With a lot of success [...] Until recently the crux had always been that, compared to other types of food, organic products were too expensive. But now they are getting cheaper since competition is invigorating the trade. [...] Tengelmann offers the first proof. Organic butter can already be obtained there for 2.98 German Marks. In any other health food shop, one pays between four and five Marks, sometimes even more.

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<sup>823</sup> CMA ad for integrated production (*stern*, Heft 48, 1992): „Gepprüft: und für gut befunden“; „Aus Integriertem Anbau“; „vorrangige Anwendung biologischer und mechanischer Verfahren beim Pflanzenschutz, Beachtung von Schadswellen und damit ein deutlich geringer Einsatz chemischer mittel. Also: weniger Umweltbelastung bei hervorragender Fruchtqualität.“

<sup>824</sup> CMA ad for animal husbandry (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1992): „Mahlzeit aus echtem Schrot & Korn“; „Frisch geschroteter Weizen, Gerste und Hafer, Raps oder Sojaschrot, Molke direkt aus der Molkerei, dazu Vitamine und eine extra Portion Mineralstoffe“.

The article closes with a reminder why organic produce will always remain a bit more expensive because it reflects the real environmental and social costs of agriculture.<sup>825</sup> "Healthy food from the canteen", a small appended article reports about an experiment to offer organic food in various canteens –amongst them AEG– apparently with some success since: "The organic meal is popular at AEG: according to the workers' council, the number of canteen guests has doubled among the 800 employees. On average, between 20 and 30 percent of guests choose the organic meal, even though they have to pay between 20 and 80 percent more, depending on the quantity of meat."<sup>826</sup> The third Brigitte article describes a similar if more tentative development in the field of organic wine, which is attracting growing numbers of consumers and is poised to be experimentally introduced in supermarkets in the course of that year.<sup>827</sup>

Nevertheless, ambivalence about food seems to endure: an article in *stern* denounces the excess fat to be found in hospital fare, on the basis of a study conducted by a certain Prof. Peter Schauder. It reminds the reader that excess fat is a trigger of many civilization diseases and that almost all physicians agree that an appropriate diet is the most effective and cheapest type of prevention. However, since nutritional medicine is not a compulsive subject in the medical curriculum, many physicians lack the necessary knowledge. Furthermore, considerations of cost drive many hospital administrations to stick to a traditional fatty offer, despite the wishes of many patients for fresh fruit, salads and vegetables. Nevertheless, the article concludes that the medical association of Niedersachsen, alerted by the results of Prof. Schauder, will test the food of all the hospitals in the state.<sup>828</sup> In stark contrast, another food specialist, Prof. Volker Pudel, the president of the German Nutrition Society, takes a stand for fast food:

The nutrition specialist wrote the following in the corporate brochure of a well-known fast food restaurant: "Fast-food restaurants ... offer appetizing fare and when one combines the menu items correctly they also provide sufficient nutrients." So should one order salad with

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<sup>825</sup> Baumgarten, Silke, „Echt Biologisches erobert den Supermarkt“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 25, 1992, pp.110-114): „Brot aus richtigem Schrot? Spinat mit wenig Nitrat? In Kaufhäusern gibt's Öko-Lebensmittel nur selten. Aber das ändert sich. Bio-Produkte sind stark im Kommen. Und die Preise werden purzeln. Eine neue EG-Verordnung macht's möglich“; „Seit die Fitneß- und Gesundheitwelle den deutschen Verbraucher erfaßt hat, sind Öko-Produkte mehr und mehr gefragt“, meint auch Gerd Härig vom Bundesverband des Lebensmittel-Handels.“; „Wie zum Beispiel bei Tengelmann. Unter Eigenmarke ‚Naturkind‘ bietet diese Kette bereits seit einigen Monaten fast ausschließlich Öko-Produkte der Anbauverbände an. Mit großem Erfolg. [...] Die Crux war bisher immer: Im Vergleich zu anderen Lebensmitteln waren Bio-Produkte zu teuer. Nun werden sie billiger – Konkurrenz belebt das Geschäft. [...] Erste Beweise liefert Tengelmann. Dort ist schon heute die Bio-Butter für 2,98 Mark zu haben. In jedem Naturkostladen zahlt man dafür zwischen vier und fünf Mark, manchmal sogar noch drüber.“

<sup>826</sup> Haas, Gabi, „Gesundes Essen aus der Kantine: Auch in Großküchen setzt sich immer mehr das Öko-Essen durch (*Brigitte*, Heft 25, 1992, p. 112): „Das Öko-Essen bei AEG kommt an: In den letzten Jahren verdoppelte sich nach Auskunft des Betriebsrats die Zahl der Kantinenbesucher unter den 800 Beschäftigten. Durchschnittlich 20 bis 30 Prozent der Restaurantbesucher entscheiden sich für den biologischen Mittagstich, obwohl sie dafür – je nach Fleischmenge –zwischen 20 und 80 Prozent mehr bezahlen müssen.“

<sup>827</sup> „Reiner Wein“ [Die Nachfrage nach Bio-Wein steigt. Grüne Winzer, wie Lotte Pfeffer auf ihrem Weingut in Rheinhessen, verzichten fast ganz auf Chemie und Kunstdünger – und ernten trotzdem erstklassigen Wein.] (*Brigitte*, Heft 1, 1992, pp. 72-74).

<sup>828</sup> Simon, Claus Peter, „Zuviel Fett im Spital: ein Arzt aus Göttingen testete das Essen in Krankenhäusern – mit katastrophalem Ergebnis“ (*stern*, Heft 49, 16.11.1992, p. 123).

mineral water? Not at all. According to Pudel: the fat content of a hamburger corresponds to only 30 percent of the DGE's [German society for nutrition] daily recommended intake.

The article nevertheless concludes that *"a fast-food diet is not at all recommended"*.<sup>829</sup>

In the wake of the BSE crisis, many food controversies seem to surface in 1995. Food safety has become a major theme that covers aspects as different as British beef imports in Germany,<sup>830</sup> chicken of doubtful provenance and breeding,<sup>831</sup> the success of organic fast-food,<sup>832</sup> German reluctance towards radiation for food preservation,<sup>833</sup> or gene food labelling.<sup>834</sup> Two other interesting features show the evolution of health consciousness in Germany: on the one hand, according to the German Butchers Association, the consumption of meat in Germany has almost continuously dropped from 1988 onwards (from 69.4 kilos per capita in 1988 to 62.6 kilos in 1994) but on the other hand, together with Denmark and Norway, Germany is in the champions' league of sweets consumption.<sup>835</sup>

### Late 1990s: Healthy pleasures for wellness

Cooking during the last years of the second millennium seems to have come of age in terms of the balance between local and global, seasonal and luxurious, health and pleasure, fast and slow food. Everyday recipes epitomise this blend by suggesting dishes such as *"ribbon noodles with fried oyster mushrooms"*, *"stuffed radicchio leaves"*, *"braised rabbit legs"*, *"bread pudding with apricots"* or *turkey schnitzel with rhubarb stew*, *"vegetables au gratin"* and *"spaghetti with cheese sauce"*.<sup>836</sup> Cooking with seasonal produce –such as apples or tomatoes– draws on a wide range of recipes from traditional to Italian (e.g. *"red risotto"*),<sup>837</sup> French inspired *"Nouvelle Cuisine"* or more frankly exotic. Pasta is ubiquitous, fish very popular and breakfast or brunch back into the spotlight of either good nutrition or

<sup>829</sup> „Gesund ernähren mit Fast food“ (*Focus*, Heft 29, 1993, p. 54): „In der Image-Broschüre einer bekannten Imbiß-Kette schreibt der Ernährungswissenschaftler: „Fast-food-Restaurants ... bieten Eßlust und, bei richtiger Kombination der Menüauswahl auch ausreichend Nährstoffe.“ Also Salat mit Mineralwasser bestellen? Keineswegs. Pudel: „Der Fettgehalt eines Hamburgers entspricht mit nur 30 Kalorienprozent den Empfehlungen der DGE.“; „Von einer Fast-food Diät wird jedoch dringend abgeraten.“

<sup>830</sup> „Ernährung: Wahnsinniges Hickhack“, [„Die Politiker streiten darüber, ob britisches Rindfleisch auf dem deutschen Markt verkauft werden soll. Tatsächlich ißt kaum jemand freiwillig british beef.“] (*Focus*, Heft 7, 13.02.1995, pp. 18-20).

<sup>831</sup> „Gefälschte Hähnchen: Mit deutschen Namen täuschen ausländische Geflügelschlachter hiesige Herkunft vor“ (*Focus*, Heft 20, 15.05.1995, p. 242).

<sup>832</sup> „Öko-Quickies: Ein schlauer Unternehmer aus Hamm verdient seine Brötchen mit einer Naturkostkette“, [„Wir versuchen, den Brückenschlag zwischen Ökologie, Emotion und Profit zu schaffen.“] (*Focus*, Heft 48, 27.11.1995, p. 236).

<sup>833</sup> „Strahlen-Atlas für Fleisch und Gemüse“ (*Focus*, Heft 39, 25.09.95, p. 12) & „Strahlende Frische: Eine Broschüre informiert über behandelte Lebensmittel, ihre Herkunftsländer und Risiken“ (*Focus*, Heft 40, 30.09.1995, p.35).

<sup>834</sup> „Focus-Frage: Wie sollen gentechnisch behandelte Lebensmittel verkauft werden?“ (*Focus*, Heft 44, 30.10.1995, p.11). 69% of respondents argue for special labelling, 28% say that gene-food should not even be distributed, whereas 3% feel it should be sold without restriction and 1% do not know or have not responded.

<sup>835</sup> As reproduced in „Focussiert: Weniger Lust auf Fleisch“ (*Focus*, Heft 41, 09.10.1995, p. 15) & „Dänen naschen gern“ [Die zehn Länder mit den höchsten Pro-Kopf-Ausgaben für Süßwaren (in Mark pro Jahr)] (*Focus*, Heft 20, 15.05.1995, p. 14) respectively.

<sup>836</sup> E.g. Brigitte Sammelrezepte (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1998) or „Was koche ich morgen? Die schnelle Küche für jeden Tag: leicht, lecker, preiswert“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1999, p. 129): „Bandnudeln mit gebratenen Austernpilzen, Gefüllte Radicchioblätter, Geschmorte Kaninchenkeulen, Brotauflauf mit Aprikosen or Putenschnitzel mit Rhabarberkompott, Gemüseauflauf and Spaghetti mit Käsesoße“.

<sup>837</sup> „Risotto Rosso“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 1999).

convivial, lazy weekend pleasures. Recipes for the latter span a broad range, from healthy classics to exotic, often crossover temptations (e.g. fibre-rich muesli, muffins, milk shakes and smoothies, Parma ham, goat cheese, mango cottage cheese, etc.).

Far-Eastern cooking is increasingly taken for granted as demonstrated by a *Focus* article on the extraordinary sushi-boom in Germany: *“In the last five years the number of Japanese eateries in Germany has tripled. Today around 200 Japanese restaurants can be found between the Elbe and the Isar.”* But the trend is also consolidating in consumers’ homes:

While five years ago Gruber just about sold 10 kg to mavericks or trendsetters, now about 60 to 80 kgs per week are sold over the counter. Sushi recipes books and cookery classes are extremely popular amongst a young, diet-conscious generation. Connoisseurs find related ingredients such as sake, Sapporo beer and rice vinegar in a large number of Asian supermarkets all over Germany.<sup>838</sup>

The same can be said of the Chinese, Indonesian, Thai and Indian trends. However, more local or European cuisines and trends are being rediscovered or highlighted in articles such as *“Viennese cooking: wonderful!”* or *“Mallorca’s delicious cooking”*, reflecting the mobility trends of the new generation that not only longs for the occasional long distance trip to faraway lands but also requires cheap weekends in Vienna or a last-minute week in the sun on a Mediterranean island.<sup>839</sup>

Besides the pleasure orientation, the health theme is also very present –sometimes discreetly, at other times much more forcefully. For instance, many recipes not only display calorie counts and nutrient tables but also star low(er)-fat ingredients –especially in terms of dairy products or sugar alternatives. Fitness foods, such as salads or fruit juice cocktails, are the object of an elaborate health rhetoric. An article entitled *“Fitness salads: the power-meal”* lists what it takes to transform a salad into a healthy meal, stressing the need for lean meat, eggs or fish, as useful protein; rice, potatoes or noodles for the necessary carbohydrates and fibres; lettuce and vegetables for vitamins and minerals that strengthen immune reaction, protect from infections, smooth the skin and detoxify; and finally, high-quality oils for essential fatty acids as well as herbs and spices that stimulate the metabolism.<sup>840</sup> Another article, *“Fast beauty and fitness with juices”*, praises the virtues of juicing (*“It’s pure health, helps fight stress and performance lows, is good against colds and even prevents cancer, as the newest studies have shown.”*) while also reminding readers that

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<sup>838</sup> „Sushi – die Bratwurst Japans“ [„Vom Nobel-Food für Kosmopoliten zum Snack für jedermann – die Zahl der Sushi-Bars und –Lieferdienste in Deutschland steigt an.“], (*Focus*, Heft 22, 26.05.1997, pp. 180-182): *„In den letzten fünf Jahren hat sich die Zahl der japanischen Eßstätten in Deutschland verdreifacht. Heute zählt man an die 200 Japan-Restaurants zwischen Elbe und Isar.“*; *„Während Gruber vor fünf Jahren gerade mal zehn Kilo an Außenseiter oder Trendsetter verkaufte, gehen heute 60 bis 80 Kilo pro Woche über die Ladentheke. Sushi-Kochbücher und –Kochkurse sind die Renner einer jungen, ernährungsbewußten Generation. Das passende Beiwerk wie Sake, Sapporo-Bier und Reisessig findet der Kenner in einer Vielzahl asiatischer Supermärkte quer durch Deutschland.“*

<sup>839</sup> „Wiener Küche: wunderbar!“ [„Vom Tafelspitz bis zum Apfelstrudel – die österreichische Küche ist ein Hochgenuß. Wir haben die Original-Rezepte“] (*Focus*, Heft 8, 27.03.1996, p. 120 ss.); *„Die köstliche Mallorca-Küche“* [„Die duften nach Kräutern, Knoblauch und Zitrone: sieben typische Gerichte, wie sie überall auf der Insel serviert werden. Zum Beispiel Kaninchen mit Zwiebeln und Feigen oder Lamm mit schwarzen Oliven. Bon profit – guten Appetit!“] (*Für Sie*, Heft 17, 04.08.1999, p. 100 ss.).

<sup>840</sup> „Fitneß-Salate: Die Power-Mahlzeit“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 5, 14.02.1996, pp. 80 ss.).

American movie stars (as lead-consumers) have switched from cocktails and sodas to healthy fruit juice blends.<sup>841</sup>

In terms of products, traditional foods such as those pushed by CMA are increasingly described in health and fitness terms. A 1997 campaign shows groups of products according to nutrients (protein: cheeses and milk; carbohydrates: bread, fruit, milk; fats: cream, yogurt or butter) alongside pictures of sporty individuals (e.g. a woman sporting inline skates and playing hockey or a windsurfer).<sup>842</sup> A subsequent ad portrays a cheese assortment with the following text on the first page: *“A varied cheese assortment contains a lot of protein, calcium and B-vitamins. The dark mixed rye bread and delicious rolls provides carbohydrates and sufficient fibre. Butter and especially milk supply easy-to-digest milk fat, liposoluble vitamins, protein and that essential calcium.”* And on the second page, under a photograph of a couple cycling in the (presumably German) countryside, readers are reminded that a balanced diet with German produce provides all the necessary nutrients for fitness and health.<sup>843</sup> Besides more practical nutritional and cooking information, a dissemination campaign for olive oil mysteriously states that *“Olive oil has a soul”* before adding that *“One can believe the myths surrounding the olive-tree. Or one can just taste it.”*<sup>844</sup>

Even convenience food seems to bear the constraints of a healthy appearance. Thus, *iglo’s* fish fingers are apparently manufactured with only the finest filets: *“So that you get all the vitamins and minerals that fish can offer”*. Even more explicit is the firm’s ads for frozen vegetables emphasising a so-called *“vitamin-seal”*. A pack of e.g. frozen spinach is held by a pair of androgynous hands alongside the statement *“Here are the vitamins”* and the text goes on to explain that the spinach is frozen as soon as it is harvested to avoid vitamin loss.<sup>845</sup> More surprisingly perhaps, sausage becomes *“fit”* with the addition of e.g. full milk and even functional (*“with precious fibre”*), as in *Club Vital’s* full milk mortadella –thus involving less fat, hence also fewer calories.<sup>846</sup>

This means that more questionably healthy foods have to play along the lines of either humour (witness a campaign for sugar starring a frustrated-looking old dame with rollers alongside the following statement: *“After 3 weeks without dessert, her life felt somewhat tasteless. Only sugar is the real thing”*),<sup>847</sup> seduction (as in the ads for *Magnum* ice-cream starring a woman with painted lips biting into a *Magnum* with relish)<sup>848</sup> or nature (*“Nature*

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<sup>841</sup> „Schnell schön & fit: mit Säften“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 14, 23.06. 1999, pp. 88 ss): *„Sie sind Gesundheit pur, helfen gegen Streß und Leistungstiefs, wirken bei Erkältungen und beugen sogar Krebs vor, wie neueste Studien bewiesen haben.“*

<sup>842</sup> CMA ads for German products (*Focus*, 1997 or *stern*, Heft 36, 1997).

<sup>843</sup> CMA ad for German products (*Brigitte*, Heft 18, 1998): *„Eine buntgemischte Käseplatte enthält viel Eiweiß, Calcium und B-Vitamine. Das kräftige Roggenmischbrot und leckere Brötchen sorgen für Kohlenhydrate und ausreichend Ballaststoffe. Butter und ganz besonders Milch liefern leichtverdauliches Milchfett, fettlösliche Vitamine, Eiweiß und das so wichtige Calcium.“*

<sup>844</sup> Ad for olive oil from the Informations-Gemeinschaft Olivenöl (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 2000): *„Olivenöl hat Seele“; „Die Mythen um den Olivenbaum kann man glauben oder nicht. Oder man kann sie schmecken.“*

<sup>845</sup> Ads for *iglo* fish fingers (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1996): *„So bekommen Sie alle Vitamine und Mineralstoffe, die Fisch zu bieten hat.“* & *iglo* Blattspinat (*Für Sie*, Heft 5, 1996): *„Vitamin-Siegel“; „Da sind die Vitamine“.*

<sup>846</sup> Ad for Kemper Club Vital Vollmilch Mortadella (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1998): *„Mit wertvollen Ballaststoffen“.*

<sup>847</sup> Ad for sugar (*Focus*, recurrent, 1997): *„Nach 3 Wochen ohne Süßspeise fehlte ihrem Leben irgendwie das rechte Sahnehäubchen. Ohne Zucker iss nich“.*

<sup>848</sup> Ad for Langnese *Magnum* ice cream (*Focus*, recurrent, 1997).

*invented the pineapple and Weihenstephan cream yogurt*).<sup>849</sup> Some products are even the object of strange compromises such as *Butaris*, which is offered in two versions: the classical clarified butter or a so-called “Wellness blend” (one of the first instances of the “wellness” label!) apparently combining both taste and digestibility with 50% butter and 50% vegetable fats.<sup>850</sup> Even fast food gets a partial absolution with the help of a few accomplices (lobbyists?) such as a certain Prof. Helmut Erbesdobler or the aforementioned Prof. Volker Pudel. Both scientists advocate fast food –especially hamburgers– as snacks in-between meals (!) especially if they are combined with a salad, a glass of milk or juice. A subsequent article featuring a comparison between traditional fast-foods condemns “Curry-Wurst” [a popular sausage speciality served with curried ketchup] because it allegedly contains almost twice the fat of tacos or hamburgers.<sup>851</sup>

In the wake of cholesterol-conscious fats such as *becel*, functional food really begins to boom in 1996, especially in the realm of milk products (e.g. *Nestlé’s LC1*, *Südmilch’s Vifit* or *Danone’s Actimel*). Discourse on functional milk products that have been enhanced with various bacteria, repeatedly emphasises effects on intestinal flora, hence the metabolism and general immunity. But while both big producers emphasise the naturalness of their products, they use different strategies. *Danone* stresses only natural origins when describing the yogurt as a “Wellness-Drink” (another pioneering “wellness” label!) and the L.Casei bacteria it contains as a “culture that is particularly health-enhancing and that comes from nature” since “It is found in small quantities in e.g. fresh, unprocessed milk and kefir”.<sup>852</sup> And *Nestlé*, while still extolling a natural origin, is more pragmatic in its approach: “It was developed by nature and selected exclusively for *Nestlé’s LC1* by nutritionists at the *Nestlé Research Centre in Lausanne*.” And after vulgarising the effects of the bacteria in the body in three steps, the text states: “In order to obtain and prove this result, researchers and nutritionists in Switzerland and in France have researched for four years and conducted numerous experiments.” Thus, scientific expertise seems to hold the upper hand over nature here. Nevertheless, the ad reassures the reader that “Health can also taste good” since the yogurt is available in two “delicious” varieties.<sup>853</sup>

A major functional food theme is risk, hence the need for security and protection: *becel*, for example, shows a businessman holding on to the ropes of an open parachute above the caption “Think of your security: lead a cholesterol-conscious life with *becel*”.<sup>854</sup> A small article in *Focus* announces the U.S. launching of a line of products –pasta, crisps and biscuits– made with psyllium, a plant from the plantain family renowned for its mucilaginous properties, combined with a low-fat diet, is supposed to diminish the cholesterol level. The European

<sup>849</sup> Ad for Weihenstephan Rahmjoghurt (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1996): „Die Natur erfand die Ananas, Weihenstephan den Rahmjoghurt.“

<sup>850</sup> Ad for Butaris Klassisches Butterschmalz & Butaris Spezial (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999).

<sup>851</sup> „Fast food auf die leichte Tour“ [„Big Macs, Fritten, Pizzas – genießen Sie fast food ohne schlechtes Gewissen. Ernährungswissenschaftler geben jetzt grünes Licht für die schnellen Snacks“] (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 28.02.1996, p. 10) & „Bismarck-Hering schlägt Currywurst“ (*Focus*, Heft 3, 18.01.1999, p. 72).

<sup>852</sup> Ad for Danone Actimel (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1996): „Diese Kultur ist besonders gesundheitsfördernd und kommt aus der Natur. Man findet sie in geringen Mengen z.B. in frischer, naturbelassener Milch und in Kefir.“

<sup>853</sup> Ad for Nestlé LC1 (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1996): „Von der Natur wurde sie entwickelt [sic], von Ernährungsexperten am Nestlé-Forschungszentrum, Lausanne, exklusiv für Nestlé LC1 ausgewählt: die Joghurtkultur *Lactobacillus acidophilus*.“; „Um dieses Ergebnis zu erreichen und zu belegen, haben Forscher und Ernährungsexperten in der Schweiz und in Frankreich vier Jahre lang geforscht und zahlreiche Testreihen durchgeführt.“; „Gesundheit kann auch gut schmecken“.

<sup>854</sup> Ad for *becel* (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1999): „Denken Sie an Ihre Sicherheit: cholesterinbewußt leben mit *becel*“.

product launch is then said to be scheduled for 2000.<sup>855</sup> An article in *stern* entitled “*Healing revelation from the laboratory*” provides an overview of the types of functional food or nutraceuticals available to mainly American and Japanese consumers, from so-called “*Brain-Gum*” to Omega-3 eggs or margarine, enriched soy drinks, etc. The tone is rather sceptical, denouncing how easily the health claim can be made, e.g. for functional drinks:

Indeed vitamins are a mass product from chemical manufacturing and they are very effective as a marketing argument. A few centners of these plus salt and water transform excess fruit juice into an isotonic ACE-fitness drink. It is belief that is decisive here. Even traditional foods/drinks owe their popularity to the legends surrounding them. For instance, the one claiming that mineral water provides potassium. However, to obtain the recommended daily amount just with water, one would have to drink more than 2,200 litres.

The point –as the article sees it– is that producers are just as anxious to avoid their products being tested as drugs (a long, costly and uncertain process) as they are to make the consumer believe in the health effects of their products.<sup>856</sup> Similarly, an article in Brigitte denounces the inappropriate nutritional contents of many “energy-bars”, which are often much too fatty or are too expensive for average consumers who cannot justify a heightened intake of carbohydrates and protein by their sporting exploits alone. Were it not for preservation and practical considerations, a banana would do just as well and would be cheaper claims an expert from the *German Nutrition Society*.<sup>857</sup>

Nevertheless, ads for functional food continue to exploit consumers’ fascination for extreme sports and performance –interestingly also across the gender divide as illustrated by an ad for *Aquarius*, an isotonic sports drink produced by *Coca-Cola*. The visual layout is relatively unusual: a sweaty woman’s face in profile looking downwards occupies the upper third of the ad. Her hand reaches out from the lower half holding a bottle of *Aquarius* towards her mouth. A seemingly hand-written caption occupies the left hand side and states: “*After a kick-boxing round with the gentlemen from the management floor, it was time to freshen up a little*”. On the bottom part, in buzzword fashion, one can read: “*8 vitamins – 4 minerals – strong citrus taste – Aquarius. Because life is a tough game*”. Thus the surprising twist in this case, is that the practice of a martial art, involving discipline, endurance and even aggression is explicitly connected with the world of work and corporate performance, but from an unusual feminine perspective, since women’s inclusion in either realm is still far from being self-evident in Germany.<sup>858</sup>

<sup>855</sup> „Nudeln, Chips und Kekse auf Rezept“ (*Focus*, Heft 3, 18.01.1999).

<sup>856</sup> Heilsbotschaft aus dem Labor (*stern*, Heft 35, 26.08.1999): „Vitamine sind zwar Massenware aus chemischer Produktion. Als Marketing-Argument aber taugen sie ausgezeichnet. Mit ein Paar Zentnern davon, Salz und Wasser lässt sich der im Übermaß vorhandenen Fruchtsaft in isotonischen ACE-Fitnessdrink transformieren. Der Glaube macht’s. Auch traditionelle Nahrungsmittel verdanken ihr Ansehen den Legenden, die sie umranken. Mineralwasser etwa spendet Kalium. Doch um die Tagesdosis nur übers Wasser zu erreichen, müsste man bis zu 2200 Liter trinken.“

<sup>857</sup> „Fett statt fit“, [„Energie-Riegel sollen vor und nach dem Sport schnell Power liefern. Doch manche sind mindestens so schwer wie eine Portion Bratkartoffeln.“] (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 2000, pp. 146 ss.).

<sup>858</sup> Ad for *Aquarius* (*Stern*, Heft 41, 1995): „Nach einer Runde Kick-Boxen mit den Herren aus der Vorstandsetage wurde es Zeit, sich etwas frisch zu machen.“ However, it should be noted that this is not the first instance I have found of women’s need for performance in both the work and leisure realms. I have already quoted and analysed the 1985 ad for *taxofit* Vitamin E (*Bunte*, Heft 16, 1985) in the introduction to Chapter 4 (*History*). This ad also echoes the ad for Staatl. Fachingen Heilwasser (*prima*, Heft 6, 1986) that I have analysed earlier on in this chapter.

In terms of health foods, brands such as *Schneekoppe* still mostly play on the nurturing cliché, encouraging mothers or future mothers to think of their responsibility in providing adequate, healthy and natural nutrition for the next generation. For instance, an ad for *Schneekoppe* portrays a blissful young woman lying in tall grass with the following caption: *“Pregnant! Me! Unbelievable. Unbelievably wonderful. Suddenly, one sees the world in a completely different light. One thinks of things such as naturalness and origin. And whether the little one would actually prefer carrot or sea buckthorn juice.”*<sup>859</sup> Also, organic products are increasingly aggressively pushed in ads for e.g. *“Öko-Logisch [eco-logical] Füllhorn”*, a brand to be found in Rewe supermarkets until 2008.<sup>860</sup> The two-page campaigns of 1998 and 1999 all display bucolic scenes from an idealised German countryside with happy animals producing milk, yogurt, ice-cream or eggs or, alternately, the useful animals contributing to a healthy ecosystem for organic potatoes, onions, etc. All the ads display extremely detailed texts vulgarising the practices of organic agriculture. Before suggesting the advantages of organic breeding, one of the ads also typically plays on the security concerns of consumers in the aftermath of food scandals: *“The risks and side-effects entailed in mass-breeding and the use of meat and bone meal, not to mention so-called ‘performance-enhancers’ have long been known. Nevertheless, there are repeated scandals linked to e.g. BSE or dioxin-laced foods.”*<sup>861</sup> In contrast, a long article in *Focus* details the controversy reigning in Brussels about gene-food labelling and its echoes in Germany, emphasising that the complexity of stakes means that most decisions for or against gene food are instinctive rather than scientifically-based. However, it stresses that choice, hence labelling, is crucial for well over half of German consumers.<sup>862</sup>

In the drinks sphere, *“Schonkaffee”* [mild coffee] or light coffee is being revived with pictures of a sexy young woman either lounging in comfy clothes at home (*“Another one of these typical coffee-drinking biddies”*) or sitting at a restaurant table and groomed like a city-smart beauty in a short dress and sandals (*“Your typical coffee-drinking bidy: it’s always time for Krönung light”*). Both ads are for *Jacobs’* blend –with half the caffeine but the full aroma. Interestingly, the expression *“coffee-drinking bidy”* [Kaffeetante], is ironically-positively invested here. A later ad shows a close-up of a cup of coffee with a yin-yang sign made out of the foam on the surface. The caption reads *“Discover the balance between mildness and a pampering aroma!”* and an announcement at the bottom of the ad mentions 10 wellness weekends in a spa town to be won by asking for a sample of the coffee.<sup>863</sup> An ad for *Tchibo Sana* plays more on the sensitive note by portraying the face of a young freckled beauty and, presumably, the same young woman dancing in a field against a wooded background,

<sup>859</sup> E.g. ad for *Schneekoppe* products (*Für Sie*, Heft 17, 1999): *„Schwanger! Ich! Unglaublich. Unglaublich schön. Man sieht die Welt plötzlich mit ganz anderen Augen. Man denkt an große Dinge wie Natürlichkeit und Ursprünglichkeit. Und daran, ob das kleine Wesen wohl lieber Sanddorn- oder Möhrensaft möchte.“*

<sup>860</sup> When it was replaced by the *“Rewe bio”* brand, cf. <http://www.rewe.de/index.php?id=1629>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>861</sup> Ads for *Rewe Öko-Logisch Füllhorn* products (*Brigitte*, Heft 17, 1998, *Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1999 & *Focus*, 1999): *„Die Risiken und Nebenwirkungen der Massentierhaltung und der Einsatz von Futtermitteln mit Tierkörpermehl und sogenannten ‘Leistungsförderern’ sind längst bekannt. Trotzdem nehmen Skandale wie BSE und dioxinverseuchte Lebensmittel kein Ende.“*

<sup>862</sup> Miltner, Frank, *“Brüsseler Klopse: Genfood kommt in die Supermärkte, Eurokraten diskutieren. Was erwartet die Kunden?”* (*Focus*, Heft 45, 03.11.97, pp. 232 ss.).

<sup>863</sup> Ads for *Jacobs Krönung light* coffee (*stern*, Heft 28, 1997 & *Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1998 & *Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999): *„Schon wieder so eine typische Kaffeetante“; „Typisch Kaffeetante: Immer Zeit für Krönung light“; „Entdecken Sie den Gleichklang von Milde und Verwöhnaroma!“*

suggesting the coffee's harmonisation with nature, since it has been "gently" purged of caffeine, irritants and bitter components.<sup>864</sup> However, tea –especially green– is the real hit of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its bounties seem to know no limits thanks to vitamins and antioxidants that combat free radicals and various types of cancer.<sup>865</sup>

Nevertheless, echoing a 1990 development I have already discussed, the beverage whose career seems most promising is water. Indeed, an article in Focus entitled "*Mineral Water*" under the "*Focal Point*" [Brennpunkt] rubric describes mineral water as THE beverage of the nineties. Apart from a typology of waters, a hit-parade of German brands, explanations on the effects of minerals as well as the average consumption of mineral water in various European countries, a table showing the progression of water consumption in the old west German states and, from 1990, in the newly-formed German states shows a steady progression, but with an extremely steep rise in consumption between 1985 and 1990 (cf. 1970: 12.5, 1975: 24.8, 1980: 39.6, 1985: 57.0, 1990: 82.7, 1991: 89.3, 1992: 94.7, etc. in numbers of litres per capita). The rationale given for this development is the following: "*The water boom is not only fuelled by the increased body- and health-consciousness of the 'wellness' generation but also by the environmental consciousness of a society eager to avoid rubbish.*" The reference to a "*wellness generation*" is particularly significant, since it represents the first allusion to wellness as a very influential ideology in an article on food or drink. Here, it is clearly associated with an increased holistic consciousness. The text then goes on to describe how a vast system of returnable bottles has been built up over the last 25 years and emphasises another ecological argument, namely that most mineral waters have local distribution networks, implying that bottles rarely travel more than 100 kilometres away from the source.<sup>866</sup>

Naturalness is also stressed in a number of water ads.<sup>867</sup> However, concerns are also raised by tests performed on bottled mineral waters. According to a *stern* article, 50 out of 73 samples contained chemicals and germs. A blurb in the article, reproducing the words of Frank Daschner, a professor of hygiene, reminds the reader that: "*There is no proof that mineral water is healthier than tap water.*"<sup>868</sup> Indeed, a year before, the *German Waterworks* [Deutsche Wasserwerke] had already proudly advertised their tap water with the following slogan "*No calories – no flavour enhancer – no colourings*" before pursuing: "*We are proud of our tap water because it only contains what should really be in it: natural*

<sup>864</sup> Ad for Tchibo Sana coffee (*Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1998).

<sup>865</sup> Cf. e.g. „Der Tee für alle Fälle“ [„Grüner Tee wird immer beliebter – gut so, er ist gesund und senkt das Krebsrisiko“] (*Brigitte*, Heft 20, 1998, p. 13) or ad for Teekanne Golden Green (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 2000).

<sup>866</sup> „Mineralwasser“ [„Natürlich, gesund und ökologisch: Mineralwasser ist das Getränk der neunziger Jahre. Im Trend sind aromatisierte Sorten.“] (*Focus*, Heft 33, 14.08.95, pp. 146-147): „Der Wasserboom entspricht nicht nur dem gesteigerten Körper- und Gesundheitsbewußtsein der ‚Wellness‘-Generation, sondern auch dem Umweltbewusstsein der Müllvermeidungsgesellschaft.“ Cf. also under the heading „Focussiert“ (*Focus*, Heft 31, 01.08.94, p. 14), „Der Große Durst: Mineralwasserverbrauch pro Kopf in Litern 1993“. According to the latter, Germany is the third biggest consumer of mineral water in Europe after Italy and Belgium and before France, Austria and Switzerland.

<sup>867</sup> Cf. e.g. Ads for Gerolsteiner Sprudel, [„Natürlich im Geschmack“], (*Für Sie*, Heft 9, 1996) or Staatl. Fachingen [„Natürlich geht's uns gut“], (*Für Sie*, Heft 7, 1996).

<sup>868</sup> „Mineralwasser: Geblubber mit Nachgeschmack“ (*stern*, Heft 27, 26.06.1997, pp. 138 ss.): „Es ist nicht bewiesen, daß Mineralwasser gesünder ist als Leitungswasser“.

*taste, crystal-clear freshness and, last but not least, pure health. Indeed, our drinking water is the foodstuff that is most stringently controlled. Hence the final rating is: very good.*<sup>869</sup>

Finally, the most noteworthy food trend of the late 1990s is the duty to seek pleasure, as emblematised by a series of articles on food and enjoyable lifestyle. A very long feature in *Focus* entitled *"In for pleasure"* is summed up as *"Germans discover a relaxed food culture. Shopping at Aldi [a cheap discounter], bubbly in a gourmet-temple: everything is allowed, as long as it's fun"*. As often, the trend seems to have roots in the U.S.: *"Faith Popcorn, a US trend-researcher has labelled the switch between unpretentiousness and targeted luxury 'clicking', which allows for crisp rye-bread with curd cheese on Monday and a first-class dinner on Saturday. 'We're sick and tired of asceticism and abstemiousness in the name of health and good behaviour', comments Popcorn, 'Once again the rule is: let's go for enjoyment now'."* The article goes on to describe various pleasurable trends: from cooking for and with friends, to hunting for best value food in the assortments of discounters and delicatessens alike, to rediscovering the joys of local traditional foods or indulging in a "fun food" fad such as "enjoying" an experience involving dominatrixes who "encourage" their guests to eat up their desserts. Indeed, occasional indulgence is seen as the key to a healthy balance, both mental and physical: *"Doctors, such as the Munich-based psychotherapist Wolfgang Schneller are convinced that the new fun entailing occasional food indulgence is the healthiest development of these last years [...]. Nutritionists have noted that individuals who indulge in their small sins even during a diet have more chances of staying slim over the long term."*<sup>870</sup>

A small article in *Für Sie* entitled *"Do you know how... to eat happy"* seems to more specifically corroborate this view, since it reviews a book investigating the serenity potential of particular foods. Thanks to the vitamins, trace elements and hormones they contain, chocolate but also bananas, chillies, seafood, oat flakes and chick peas are viewed as real happiness boosters.<sup>871</sup> Finally, a seasonal article on chocolate seems to further confirm the positive reputation of the formerly disparaged chocolate by listing its various health-inducing substances: polyhydroxyphenols (good for the heart), caffeine and theobromine (good for alertness and concentration), B-complex vitamins (good for digestion and nerves) and phenethylamine (said to contribute to the release of dopamine for a sunny disposition). The article also debunks the myths whereby chocolate is fattening, blocks digestion, triggers

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<sup>869</sup> Ad for Die Deutschen Wasserwerke tap water (*Für Sie*, Heft 9, 1996): *"Null Kalorien – Null Geschmacksverstärker – Null Farbstoff"; „Auf unser Leitungswasser sind wir mächtig stolz. Denn darin ist nur das enthalten, was wirklich reingehört: natürlicher Geschmack, glasklare Frische und vor allem pure Gesundheit. Schließlich ist unser Trinkwasser das Lebensmittel, das den allerstrengsten Kontrollen unterliegt. Daher die Gesamtnote: Sehr gut“.*

<sup>870</sup> Metzger, Dagmar & Muschiol, Claudia, "Lust auf Genuß" (*Focus*, Heft 50, 08.12.97, pp. 195 ss.): *„Die Deutschen entdecken die lässige Esskultur. Einkaufen bei Aldi, Champus im Gourmet-Tempel: Alles ist erlaubt – wenn's Spass macht.“; „Clicking' nennt die US-Trendforscherin Faith Popcorn den Wechsel zwischen Bescheidenheit und gezieltem Genuß, zwischen Knäckebrötchen mit Quark am Montag und First-class-Dinner am Samstag. 'Wir haben die Nase voll von Askese und Zurückhaltung im Namen von Gesundheit und korrektem Verhalten', kommentiert Popcorn, 'es gilt wieder: Genießen? Jetzt erst recht.' “; „Mediziner wie der Münchner Psychotherapeut Wolfgang Schneller sind überzeugt, daß der neue Spaß am periodischen Schlemmen die gesündeste Entwicklung der letzten Jahre ist [...]. Ernährungsforscher haben gar festgestellt, daß Menschen, die selbst während einer Diät ihre kleinen Sünden beibehalten, größeren Chancen haben, auf Dauer schlank zu bleiben.“*

<sup>871</sup> „Gewusst wie... man sich glücklich isst“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 29.09.1999, p. 16).

migraine or fosters acne.<sup>872</sup> This pleasure trend seems to fittingly echo the prophecy made by an author in the *“Publicity Yearbook”* of 1990: *“The responsible consumer of the 80ies has now made way for the creative consumer of the early 90ies. S/he understands how to live healthily without forgoing pleasure. Good food and drink are increasingly a part of lifestyle. Pleasure belongs to life – and people are prepared to pay for it”*.<sup>873</sup>

### **Taking stock**

Summing up this sweeping overview of the German food realm over two decades is no easy task but there are a number of significant overall trends that should be highlighted. First of all, the offer (and seemingly also the consumption) of food and drinks in Germany becomes extremely cosmopolitan within those two decades. The rather local and traditional diet of the early 1980s gradually gives way to a few exotic touches (such as e.g. paprika, pineapple or olives), before being increasingly seduced by the food habits of neighbouring or close European countries (especially Italy and France) and finally swept off its feet by Middle Eastern, Indian or Japanese cooking. This geographical expansiveness is matched by the increasing variety of preparation and cooking methods: from the popularity of buffet-style meals to decrease hostess hassle, to the novelty (or rather revival?) of all-in-one dishes (from French gratin to Indonesian bami goreng or classical German “Eintopf”), to steaming fish or vegetables to save on fat or using a wok pan to preserve vitamins through stir frying, not to mention the presentation aesthetics of Asian culinary traditions or the French “Nouvelle Cuisine”.

Secondly, convenience foods seem to meet with a resounding success despite initially apologetic intrusions into everyday cooking. Indeed, whereas excuses still seemed to be required to use frozen fish, tinned soup or chocolate pudding powder in the early 1980s, in the 1990s convenience food is self-confidently associated with time-saving, fun and pleasure while spanning all courses, from the appetizer to the dessert. Moreover, it enrolls the use of new packaging technologies (such as supple mixed plastic, paper or metal packs), confirms the centrality of established domestic technologies such as the fridge and the freezer while tremendously contributing to the success of newer technologies such as the pressure cooker or the microwave.

In contrast, the third remarkable trend is the increasing popularity of whole foods, mainly from local integrated or organic production, as a reaction against pesticide-intensive farming, industrial manufacturing and various environmental disasters. This return to “nature” also triggers an incipient crusade against additives and industrial processes that adulterate natural taste or foster health risks: from artificial flavours, to flavour enhancers and preservatives, through irradiation and genetic modification, not to mention growth hormones and antibiotics in animal husbandry. Beginning with cereals, fruits and vegetables, the offer grows to include a number of foodstuffs. However, the tension between the desire for affordable but pristine natural products and the fear related to the modern necessity of large-scale and cheap production remains unresolved. This is reflected in the wish to essentialise nature by anchoring it to a bygone idyll, usually unmarred by the blue diesel smoke of tractors, the stench of contemporary poultry rearing or the cacophony involved in the industrial production of breakfast cereals.

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<sup>872</sup> Metzger, Dagmar, „Schokolade: Die verlockend gesunde Versuchung“ (*Focus*, Heft 49, 06.12.1999).

<sup>873</sup> Haas, Sibylle, *Jahrbuch der Werbung in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz*, Düsseldorf & Wien: ECON, 1990, p. 128.

This attitude is also reflected in an emerging cooking trend, that of the so-called “slow-food” movement –even if this trend is not yet named in the sources I have been able to access. Here the emphasis is on accessing “authentic” and usually seasonal products stemming from small-scale local producers or producers from nearby European countries renowned for their food traditions, such as Italy, France or Spain and cooking them slowly and traditionally. Convenience almost represents a bad word in this cooking philosophy since aficionados will spare no efforts in peeling, chopping, preserving, broiling, roasting, etc. in order to respect and enhance the quality of the produce.<sup>874</sup>

But when science or technology does legitimately intrude, it is to lend an aura of seriousness, credibility and security to products that are designed to limit the risks inherent in a disenchantedly technicised nature –rife with Chernobyls, Bhopals, mad cows, nitrates, cholesterol, fatigue, low immunity and difficult digestion. These preoccupations are reflected in the fourth trend, i.e. the increasing functional food offer.<sup>875</sup> Initially very timid in the early 1980s, it gradually embraces many domains: from juices to shakes, isotonic drinks, milk products, fats and a vast array of cereal-based sport snacks, heralding the ubiquitousness and sophistication of our contemporary functional offerings (such as e.g. omega-3 bread or aloe vera yogurt).

Last but not least, the so-called “light” or “diet” wave represents a central trend, the career of which seems unfalteringly popular throughout the two decades examined. It represents the main strategy to actively counter or passively contain weight gain and it rests on two, often co-dependent pillars, i.e. sugar and fat reduction or substitution.<sup>876</sup> The success of the first pillar is strikingly illustrated by artificial sweeteners, which were initially promoted to enhance hot drinks before finding their way into just about any non-savoury product: from jam, to sodas, vanilla pudding, yogurt, cereals, chocolate and chewing-gum. The second pillar is especially emblematised by low-fat milk products, lunch meats and margarine.

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<sup>874</sup> The slow food movement has no doubted been spurred on by a rediscovery and expansion of the French “food authenticity” concept, the so-called “*Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée*” [AOC] that translates into the English “*Controlled Designation of Origin*”, the Italian “*Denominazione di Origine Controllata*”, the Spanish “*Denominación de Origen*” or the Portuguese “*Denominação de Origem Controlada*”, etc. For more information on the history and philosophy behind these labels cf. e.g. the website of the French “Institut National de l’Origine et de la Qualité”: <http://www.inao.gouv.fr/> or a European website: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/index_en.htm). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>875</sup> Functional food can be defined as industrially manufactured products containing natural or artificial additives. The latter are meant to supplement or enhance the nutritional value of food with the aim of reinforcing or modifying bodily functions, such as the digestive, coronary or immune systems.

<sup>876</sup> However as Carolyn de la Peña soberly concludes in her analysis of the trajectory of sweeteners in the U.S.: “If we want to understand how we could, as a society, simultaneously support a massive increase in low-calorie food and beverage sales and a relentlessly rising ‘average’ American weight over the last sixty years, we need to look more closely at what low-calorie foods have actually been designed to do. History reveals that the answer is sell products not create thin people.” And further discussing the paradoxical link between artificial sweeteners, body ideals and American-style consumption: “[...] we can overstuff our couches and our houses and our cars but we are not permitted to overstuff ourselves. Artificial sweeteners allow us to try to have it both ways. We can hyperconsume while “working” to be thin. We put more into our bodies in order to end up with less body overall. And so one of the paradoxes central to contemporary capitalism is resolved: unfettered consumption can lead to fiscal – and physical – health. Or not.” Cf. De la Peña, Carolyn Th., *Empty Pleasures: the story of artificial sweeteners from Saccharin to Splenda*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

These seemingly contradictory trends are but a reflection of the liminal status of food between biological/physiological and cultural/social imperatives, as aptly summed up by Karin Zachmann when analysing the boom in food studies and its repercussions for the history of technology:

The challenge of the food theme lies in the borderline position of the field. Food reproduces the body as a biological organism and (re-)constitutes the individual as a social subject. In nutrition and food studies, modern thought patterns pertaining to the dichotomisation of nature and culture become obsolete. Furthermore, in this domain, strict categorisations between town and countryside, industry and agriculture, production and consumption or divisions between organic and mechanical as well as grown and made should not be understood as polarities but rather as complementary relationships.<sup>877</sup>

On a more general discursive level, the growing popularity of exotic, convenience, natural, functional and low-cal foods appeals to a wide range of desirable consumer behaviours which in turn are fleetingly alluded to, spelt out or emphasised again and again to the point of brainwashing. These attitudes are as varied as open-mindedness, a sense of adventure, a love of fun and pleasure as well as discipline, restraint, rationality, health- or more generally risk-consciousness. The latter qualities are especially extolled in the discourse around slimming that plays on some of the most “normative” fears in our society. Jakob Tanner perceives that the fear of overweight is grounded in a contemporary ethics of prevention that betrays *“a growing preoccupation with health and a fundamental postulate whereby both society and individual are perfectible”*. He ascribes this shift to a change in the meaning of food dating back to the interwar years: *“From a universal dietetics, food has become ‘a means to perfect the self’ in the process of its technologisation. Prevention thus increasingly becomes a duty of self-rationalisation, which is derived from an economic postulate and applied to the body.”*<sup>878</sup> The next case study will examine whether this ethics also applies to cosmetics.

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<sup>877</sup> Cf. Zachmann, Karin, op. cit., p. 178: *„Die Herausforderung des Themas Ernährung liegt dabei im Grenzcharakter des Gebietes. Essen reproduziert den Körper als biologischen Organismus und (re-)konstituiert das Individuum als soziales Subjekt. In Geschichten der Ernährung und des Essens werden moderne Denkmuster der Dichotomisierung von Natur und Kultur obsolet. Auch strikte Grenzziehungen zwischen Stadt und Land, Industrie und Landwirtschaft, Produktion und Konsum oder die Einteilungen in Organisches und Mechanisches sowie in Gewordenes und Gemachtes sind in diesem Forschungsfeld nicht als Polaritäten, sondern im Sinne von komplementären Verhältnissen zu untersuchen.“*

<sup>878</sup> Drawn from a conference report drafted by Ina Bömelburg and Christian Sammer from the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (cf. <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=2239>): *„Aus dem gegenwärtigen Blick auf Prävention, so Tanner, zeige sich in der Angst vor Übergewicht sowohl eine angewachsene Sorge um Gesundheit als auch die grundlegende Prämisse der Perfektionierbarkeit von Gesellschaft und Individuum. Dies, so Tanner weiter, gehe auf eine Bedeutungsverschiebung von Ernährung während der Zwischenkriegszeit zurück: Aus einer universalen Diätetik habe sich Ernährung im Zuge ihrer Technisierung zu einem „Medium der Selbstperfektionierung“ entwickelt. Prävention gerate dadurch zunehmend zu einem Zwang zur Selbstrationalisierung des auf den eigenen Körper bezogenen ökonomisch angeleiteten Verhaltens, so Tanners Fazit.“* The conference was organised by the aforementioned institution and entitled “Transformations of health between politics and culture. A comparison of European practices of prevention (20th century)” [Transformationen der Gesundheit zwischen Politik und Kultur. Praktiken der Prävention im europäischen Vergleich (20. Jahrhundert)] and took place in Berlin from 24.07.2008-25.07.2008. [website accessed March 2011]. Cf. also Tanner, Jakob, „Lebensmittel und neuzeitliche Technologien des Selbst: Die Inkorporation von Nahrung als Gesundheitsprävention“, *Das präventive Selbst: Eine Kulturgeschichte moderner Gesundheitspolitik*, op. cit., pp 31- 54.

## CHAPTER 6

### MENTAL COSMETICS: A CASE-STUDY<sup>879</sup>

*“Today’s women stay young longer, because they are more attentive to their own needs. Despite the stress of everyday life, today’s woman takes more time to relax, to do sport and to exercise in the fresh air. She knows how important a healthy diet and natural look are. Radiantly fresh and cared for skin is not a matter of chance or money for her, but a question of reason.[...] Cleaning, refreshing, nurturing with Placentubex – you cannot do and need not do a lot more to also look good tomorrow.”<sup>880</sup>*

*“What is happy skin? Happy skin is sufficiently provided with moisture, supple and soft. Your complexion is fresh and radiant. [Your skin] is relaxed and glowing; it looks good, just like during the holidays [...] It glows and bubbles with happiness and signs of tiredness and stress disappear [...] The euphorising fragrance revives the senses and ensures marvellous well-being”<sup>881</sup>*

#### Introduction

Just as in my introduction to the *Soul Food* case-study, the two above quotes could lead one to draw simplistic conclusions about the development of cosmetics between the early 1980s and the mid-2000s. Indeed, it seems that health rationality just makes way for a more spontaneous and emotional relationship with the skin. Besides an initial emphasis on youth, the first ad (for *Placentubex* face cream) emphasises the hectic rhythm of everyday life that modern women can master through a consciously organised but taken for granted holistic approach. In contrast, the second ad for *Happyderm* focuses not on strategy and rationality but on the positive emotion literally incorporated in healthy-looking skin.<sup>882</sup> The skin is personalised and the proactive agency of consumers is not even mentioned here. Implicitly, simply applying *Happyderm* will make the skin happy. However, just as in the food realm, when surveying the cosmetic discourse over two decades, it becomes obvious that rational (i.e. technoscientific or just “commonsensical”) cosmetic discourse co-exists with a more nature-oriented and emotional rhetoric. In fact, in the early 1980s, natural products and arguments already abound, so it is the rhetorical negotiation of nature, emotion, rationality and high tech that becomes really interesting in the course of the following decades.

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<sup>879</sup> From the outset, I should emphasise that I have mainly focused on what I would call “non-decorative”, mainly facial cosmetics, i.e. leaving out make-up, hair- and nailcare as well as depilation products. I have also left out men’s cosmetics to a large extent since face creams for men were blatantly underrepresented if not totally absent during the period under consideration.

<sup>880</sup> Ad for *Placentubex* Kosmetik (*Freundin*, Heft 5, 1980): *„Frauen von heute bleiben länger jung, weil sie mehr für sich tun. Die Frau von heute nimmt sich, trotz aller Alltagshetze, mehr Zeit zur Erholung, zum Sport und Bewegung in frischer Luft. Sie weiß, wie wichtig eine gesunde Ernährung, und eine natürliche Kosmetik für ihr gutes Aussehen ist. Strahlend frische und gepflegte Haut sind für sie kein Frage des Zufalls oder des Geldbeutels mehr, sondern eine Frage der Vernunft.[...] Reinigen, erfrischen, pflegen mit Placentubex – viel mehr können und brauchen Sie heute nicht zu tun, um auch morgen noch gut auszusehen.“*

<sup>881</sup> From the pack of *Happyderm* in 2006, a face cream still currently manufactured by L’Oréal: *„Was ist glückliche Haut? Glückliche Haut ist ausreichend mit Feuchtigkeit versorgt, geschmeidig und zart. Ihr Teint ist frisch und strahlend. Sie ist entspannt und voller Ausstrahlung, sieht gut aus, wie während des Urlaubs.[...] Sie strahlt, sprüht vor Glück und Anzeichen von Müdigkeit und Stress verschwinden [...] Der euphorisierende Duft belebt die Sinne und schenkt herrliches Wohlbefinden“.*

<sup>882</sup> As already analysed in the “Commodification” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*).

Just as for the food case-study, I would like to emphasise that my methodological thrust here is also based on a media discourse analysis. In the case of cosmetics, there has long been an abundance of (pseudo-)historical studies on grooming –especially as it pertains to hygienic and decorative practices. The mainstay of this production can be described as so-called “coffee-table” offerings spanning broad periods –i.e. often beginning with either Egyptian or Classical Antiquity, the Renaissance/Baroque or the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They generally boast glamorous illustrations, dubious cultural interpretations of particular beauty rituals and shocking revelations about the “appalling” personal habits typical of bygone eras or the health hazards inherent to various products and techniques. A few studies such as e.g. Kathy Peiss’s *Hope in a Jar* or Geoffrey Jones’s *Beauty Imagined* provide good market development analyses as well as short corporate histories of the most influential companies and individuals but rather little on late modern discursive strategies centred on appropriate skincare.<sup>883</sup> So, here again, my primary interest lies in analysing the historically cyclical focus on “natural” versus “artificial-technological” aspects of cosmetics as well as their growing interpenetration and interdependence.

### **Nature’s best?**

Generally, apart from a few exceptional all-in-one creams, skincare in those years already represents a complex venture. Most producers advertise entire lines of interdependent products. These correspond to “indispensable” steps in appropriate face-care: cleansing requires cleansing milk, toning a skin toner, moisturising a moisturising cream, rejuvenating an anti-wrinkle cream or serum used on a daily basis. Occasionally, it is deemed necessary to exfoliate with a face scrub or a peeling cream, and regenerate with a face mask. Should the skin appear in need of more in-depth repair, a temporary intensive treatment with ampoules is often recommended. The programmatic nature of late modern skin care not only serves the purpose of increasing the sales of indispensable products, it additionally reinforces the “technoscientific” rationality of body-care and backs a strict organisation of everyday life.

Nevertheless, from the onset of the 1980s, “nature” is writ large in many cosmetics advertisements. At this point, however, it should be stressed that, to this day, there is no state-regulated certification for natural cosmetics in Germany.<sup>884</sup> Concretely, this means that any producer can label its cosmetics as “natural”. However, in parallel with the increasing popularity of organic foods, conscious consumers’ interest in “genuinely natural” cosmetics has fostered the emergence of a number of more or less binding certification labels. Just as in organic food certification, *Demeter*, the biodynamic agriculture association closely affiliated with anthroposophy, was a pioneer in this field in the 1990s.<sup>885</sup> But due to its

<sup>883</sup> Cf. Peiss, Kathy, *Hope in a Jar: The making of America’s beauty culture*, New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1998 & Jones, Geoffrey, *Beauty Imagined: a history of the global beauty industry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Moreover, contrary to the the food sphere –as far as I am aware, there seems to be no recurring large-scale scientific (and publically-funded) studies on the actual consumption of cosmetics in Germany.

<sup>884</sup> Cf. <http://www.ikw.org/pdf/broschueren/06.pdf> from the website of the German Cosmetic, Toiletry, Perfumery and Detergent Association: [http://www.ikw.org/pages/main\\_about\\_us.php](http://www.ikw.org/pages/main_about_us.php). For a good and critical overview of current labelling, sourcing and manufacturing practices, cf. [no author], “Billig boomt”, *Greepeace Magazine*, March 2009, online: <http://www.greenpeacemagazin.de/index.php?id=5755> For a good if not so recent overview of the history and current situation of natural cosmetics labelling, cf. Suchanek, Norbert, “Bio-Rohstoffe für gesunde Haut: Zertifizierte Naturkosmetik aus biologischer Produktion”, *ECO-News - die grüne Presseagentur*, 05.05.2005, online: [http://www.eco-world.de/scripts/basics/econews/basics.prg?a\\_no=12217](http://www.eco-world.de/scripts/basics/econews/basics.prg?a_no=12217) [websites accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>885</sup> Cf. <http://www.demeter.de/index.php?id=2041&MP=9-1493> [website accessed March 2011; unfortunately the address is currently down].

rather stringent rules leading to higher retail prices,<sup>886</sup> these products remain a niche market, appealing to very demanding eco-consumers. A label with more popular appeal is the so-called *BDIH* certification, introduced in 2001 and developed together with a number of well-known natural cosmetics companies.<sup>887</sup> Competing labels include e.g. the originally French label *ECOCERT*<sup>888</sup> or the relatively new label *NaTrue* (founded in 2008),<sup>889</sup> as well as the much less demanding European *Ecolabel* for soaps, shampoos and conditioners,<sup>890</sup> the popularity of which still appears very limited.<sup>891</sup> With varying degrees of stringency, natural cosmetics certification labels usually endorse the use of natural (often organic) vegetable oils and fats, beeswax and milk derivatives, plant extracts or essential oils, etc. while usually limiting or banning mineral oils, silicon and its derivatives, a number of artificial additives and preservatives, animal testing, genetic engineering and irradiation.

Thus, the “naturalness” of cosmetics in the two decades under consideration should not be taken strictly at face value. Within the “natural” sphere, a differentiated range of products should be distinguished: those that just highlight one or two natural extracts or ingredients and those that are explicitly designed and designated as “*Naturkosmetik*” or “*kontrollierte Naturkosmetik*” and guarantee natural ingredients or processes, as well as renounce or limit the use of a number of main ingredients or additives (e.g. colourings, fragrances, artificial emulsifiers or other synthetic ingredients). It should also be kept in mind that there are a number of smaller producers who offer genuinely natural cosmetics but cannot afford the certification, be it financially or administratively.

### 1980: Flower power versus rational care

In the early 1980s, a particularly interesting series of ads designed by the *Aok* firm features a series of casually-dressed young women with “natural” hairstyles and make-up in bucolic

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<sup>886</sup> At least 90% of ingredients in the cosmetics must be certified by the association, which –until the emergence of the *NaTrue* certification with its 3 levels– boasted much stricter rules than any other organic certification agencies. Cf. *ibid.* Now, the 3rd level of *NaTrue* certification, the so-called “*Organic Cosmetics*” label, must guarantee “at least 95 % of natural ingredients from controlled organic cultivation and/or controlled wild collection”. Cf. <http://www.natrue.org/our-label/3-levels-of-certification/>. [website accessed March 2011]

<sup>887</sup> *BDIH* stands for “Bundesverband Deutscher Industrie- und Handelsunternehmen für Arzneimittel, Reformwaren, Nahrungsergänzungsmittel und Körperpflegemittel e.V.” [Federal Association of German Industrial and Commercial Companies for Drugs, Health Foods, Food Supplements and Body Care Products], an association originally founded in Mannheim in 1951. Since the introduction of the *BDIH* certification for cosmetics in 2001, about 5000 products have been controlled. Cf. <http://www.kontrollierte-naturkosmetik.de/bdih.htm>. Cf. also the *International Organic and Natural Cosmetics Corporation*: <http://www.ionc.info/> [websites accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>888</sup> The organisation emerged in 1991 and initially focused on agricultural certification, cf. <http://www.ecocert.de/en/history>. The certification of cosmetics was initiated in 2003, cf. <http://www.ecocert.de/en/natural-and-organic-cosmetics>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>889</sup> *NaTrue* was founded to provide more transparency and binding rules about the organic provenance of ingredients. Compared to the *BDIH*, that rules that 15 ingredients must be organically produced but does not fix organic percentages for other ingredients, the *NaTrue* label has a 3-level structure symbolised by 3 stars: for every star a fixed percentage of organically produced ingredients is mandatory. Cf. <http://www.natrue.org/> & <http://www.natrue.org/our-label/3-levels-of-certification/>. For an overview of the specificities of this label, cf.: <http://www.natrue.org/our-label/natrue-at-a-glance/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>890</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/ecolabelled\\_products/categories/soaps\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/ecolabelled_products/categories/soaps_en.htm). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>891</sup> In the course of my search for certified products available in Germany, I found only 24 products: Cf. <http://www.eco-label.com/german/> > interactive catalogue > select “Germany” > select “Soaps and shampoos” > click on “suchen”. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

settings –be it a field, a meadow, a forest, or a beach. Each ad starts with an admonition to rediscover nature:

Breathe in the spring wind more often. Start counting trees instead of kilometres. [...] Try and experience nature a bit more.<sup>892</sup>

Retain a sense for natural and simple things. Enjoy clear water and spicy air. Be an ally of nature.<sup>893</sup>

Try and live a bit more naturally. Breathe again more freely. Don't just look at the woods on television. Discover more nature for you and your skin.<sup>894</sup>

In each ad, the deadening convenience of modern life is implicitly denounced: “kilometres” no doubt stand for “transportation by car”; “*natural and simple things*” suggest “artificial and sophisticated products” as a counterpoint, and the “*woods on television*” imply a society estranged from its habitat through increasing media penetration. To counterbalance this alienation, each ad ends with the following admonition: “*Become an Aok-woman*”, before providing the three following reasons, respectively: “*Aok-women experience nature very naturally*”, “*Aok-women are women who treasure nature*” and “*Aok-women get more out of nature*”. There again, the rather tautological formulation of the first reason hints at an enjoyment of nature that is not exploitative. The second reason suggests that consuming this face cream is a way to affirm one's solidarity with nature while the third reason implies that a positive alliance with nature will unlock its hidden bounty.

Other cosmetic brands employ a similar rhetoric while more explicitly describing the contents and function of their products. The French brand *Clarins* for instance exhorts consumers to “*Take nature at its word*” and describes “*preparations that include all the active components of nature*” with “*oils that deeply penetrate into the skin and thus support the natural regeneration of the epidermis*”.<sup>895</sup> The *Heliotrop* brand also stresses the importance of in-depth effects while extolling *Hygrosorb*<sup>®</sup>, an active agent complex that resembles the so-called “*natural moisturising factor*”.<sup>896</sup> If both ads stress nature as an inspiration, they suggest that the natural components have been combined or reordered to ensure maximum efficacy. The perfume and cosmetics shop *Douglas*, while also somewhat

<sup>892</sup> Ad for Aok Kosmetik Feuchcreme (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1980): „Lassen Sie sich mal öfter den Frühlingswind um die Nase wehen. Zählen Sie mal Bäume statt Kilometer. Werden Sie Aokanerin. Erleben Sie mal wieder etwas mehr Natur. [...] Aokanerinnen erleben die Natur sehr natürlich.“

<sup>893</sup> Ad for Aok Kosmetik Mandelcreme (*Brigitte*, Heft 3, 1980): „Bewahren Sie sich den Sinn für die natürlichen, einfachen Dinge. Freuen Sie sich über klares Wasser und würzige Luft. Seien Sie mit der Natur im Bunde. Werden Sie Aokanerin. [...] Aokanerinnen sind Frauen die Natürlichkeit schätzen.“

<sup>894</sup> Ad for Aok Kosmetik Mandelcreme (*Für Sie*, Heft 3, 1980 or with a different picture and a few textual differences: *Für Sie*, Heft 7, 1980): „Leben Sie doch auch etwas natürlicher. Atmen Sie mal wieder freier. Schauen Sie sich den Wald nicht nur im Fernsehen an. Entdecken Sie mehr Natur für sich und ihre Haut. Werden Sie Aokanerin. [...] Aokanerinnen haben mehr von der Natur.“

<sup>895</sup> Ad for *Clarins Visage aux Plantes* (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1980): „Nehmen Sie die Natur beim Wort. Die linie VISAGE AUX PLANTES von CLARINS besteht aus reinen Pflanzen-produkten. Präparate die alle Aktivbestandteile der Natur in sich vereinigen. Vor allem die Öle dringen tief in die Haut ein und unterstützen die natürliche Regeneration der Epidermis.“

<sup>896</sup> Neuform ad for *Heliotrop Naturkosmetik* (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 22, 1980): „Naturkosmetik... der sichere Weg zu gepflegter Haut. Unsere Haut braucht Feuchtigkeit, wie Pflanzen den Regen. Feuchtigkeit, die nicht nur an der Oberfläche vorbeiperlt, sondern in der Tiefe wirksam werden kann. Deshalb hat Heliotrop Kosmetik den Wirkstoffkomplex *Hygrosorb*<sup>®</sup>. Er ähnelt dem ‚natürlichen Feuchtigkeitsfaktor‘ (NFF) [...].“

tautologically stating that “*natural cosmetics are the most natural thing in the world*” professes that contemporary natural cosmetics entail not just familiarity with plants but also an enhanced knowledge of the skin in order to “[...] *help the skin help itself so that it can produce its own protective mantle again*”.<sup>897</sup> Kneipp goes a step further by contending that “*Beautiful skin is not just the precondition for a well-cared for appearance but also contributes to the well-being of the entire body*”.<sup>898</sup> These last affirmations remain leitmotifs of natural cosmetics to this day: natural cosmetics are not seen as a “quick fix” solution but as a supportive measure that should tease out the skin’s ability to repair and regenerate itself.<sup>899</sup>

In turn, skincare is inscribed in a holistic constellation: not only does skincare contribute to the well-being of the body, it is also a mirror of its well-being and a gateway to other dimensions, such as the mind or the soul.<sup>900</sup> Thus a related trend in the 1980s is to appeal to a more holistic way of life for women. Since the state of the skin is perceived as a lifestyle revealer, it makes sense to not limit skincare to the obvious “*cleaning, refreshing, nurturing*” steps mentioned in the introductory *Placentubex* quote. Thus, even the discourse used to market *Oil of Olaz*<sup>901</sup>, a product not particularly renowned for its “natural” orientation, relies on healthy living tips such as the following:

Since the skin is nourished from the inside, your beauty programme also starts there with crispy salads, fresh fruit, plenty of milk, vegetables and wholemeal bread. They stimulate the metabolism and help your body to detoxify. Regular movement –such as going for a walk, swimming, riding a bike or whatever you feel like– activates your blood circulation and thus also the circulation in the skin. Moreover, a Scottish shower in the morning is the best medicine for tired winter skin. Of course you shouldn’t forget a massage with a massage glove.<sup>902</sup>

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<sup>897</sup> Douglas ad for Biotherm (*Brigitte*, Heft 19, 1980): „*Natürliche Kosmetik ist für Douglas die natürlichste Sache der Welt.[...] Hier setzt auch die zeitgemäße, naturorientierte Kosmetik ein. Sie hilft der Haut, sich selbst zu helfen. Damit sie wieder ihren eigenen ‚Schutzmantel‘ produzieren kann.*“

<sup>898</sup> Ad for Kneipp Kräuter-Hautpflege (*Brigitte*, Heft 16, 1980): „*Eine schöne Haut ist nicht nur Voraussetzung für gepflegtes Aussehen, sondern sorgt für das Wohlergehen des gesamten Körpers.*“

<sup>899</sup> Cf. the concepts of e.g. *Dr Hauschka* cosmetics (<http://www.dr.hauschka.de/pflege/>): „*Indem sie die Haut als ganzheitliches Organ anspricht und ihre Eigenaktivität anregt, hilft Dr.Hauschka Kosmetik ihr, sich selbst zu regenerieren.*“; or *Weleda* (<http://www.weleda.de/Naturkosmetik/Gesichtspflege/>): „*Dabei verfolgen wir ein salutogenetisches Schönheitskonzept, das die natürliche Gesunderhaltung fördert und hierfür die hauteigenen Kräfte aktiviert. Das Ergebnis: Schöne Haut, die sich selbst schön erhält.*“ [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>900</sup> A good contemporary example can be found on *Weleda*’s website: „*In Balance zu bleiben heißt, bewusst für sein körperliches und seelisches Wohlbefinden zu sorgen. Das Weleda Pflegeverständnis ist dabei mehr als Wellness. Es fördert das allgemeine Wohlbefinden, erhält die Gesundheit des Menschen und unterstützt das individuelle Gleichgewicht von Körper, Seele und Geist.*“ Cf.: <http://www.weleda.de/Naturkosmetik>. [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>901</sup> Known as *Oil of Ulay* in the UK and *Oil of Olay* in North America and South Africa. Cf. <http://www.olay.com/Pages/HistoryofOlayOlay.aspx> [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>902</sup> Ad for *Oil of Olaz Beauty Fluid* (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1980): „*Da die Haut von innen ernährt wird, beginnt Ihr Schönheitsprogramm auch dort. Dazu gehören viele knackige Salate, frisches Obst, viel Milch, Gemüse und Vollkornbrot. Das regt den Stoffwechsel an und hilft, den Körper zu entschlacken. Ihren Kreislauf und damit die Durchblutung der Haut bringt regelmäßige Bewegung auf Trab: spazierengehen, schwimmen, fahrradfahren oder wozu Sie sonst Lust haben. Auch die morgendliche Wechseldusche ist wahre Medizin für müde Winterhaut. Nicht zu vergessen natürlich die anschließende Bürstenmassage mit einem Massagehandschuh.*“

Significantly, appropriate nutrition, movement, water and massage therapies have long been pillars of holistic treatment<sup>903</sup> and, to this day, they remain the cornerstones of both the fitness and wellness ideologies –even if they are not always as explicitly foregrounded. An interesting example is an advertising campaign for *Merz Spezial Creme* (or *Lotion*) starring a short-haired woman “seriously” jogging in an appropriate outfit (i.e. shorts, a sweatshirt and a towel around her neck)<sup>904</sup>, a woman cycling<sup>905</sup> or two women running on the beach in casual wear (one with trousers and a sleeveless T-shirt and the other with a pair of wet trousers and a macramé bikini bra displaying a lot of glistening skin...)<sup>906</sup> The lyrical tone of the accompanying text makes it worth quoting extensively:

Today’s prettiest women always look a bit like if they had just come back from a jog on the beach, a tennis match or a bicycle tour. The touch of sun and wind on their faces, which makes them so attractive, is the radiance and luster of healthy fresh skin. Merz Spezial Hautpflege was designed for these women. It supports the most natural cosmetics in the world: the self-regenerating function of skin cells. Indeed healthy skin is born every day, movement and energy are its essence – new fresh cells continuously replace the old grey skin. Merz does not just protect your skin as well as regulate its fatty acids and moisture balance but also supports this self-regeneration, without which your skin cannot live and look good. [...] Healthy skin is beautiful skin.<sup>907</sup>

First of all, the rhetorical similarities of this ad with my initial quote, i.e. the ad for *Placentubex*, can be explained by the fact that the latter was also manufactured by *Merz*.<sup>908</sup> But compared to the *Placentubex* ad, here there is no explicit emphasis on stress that has to be countered by a holistic consciousness or practice: women just appear effortlessly healthy and sporty and the cream is only represented as a protective or supportive agent.

Many cosmetic producers also self-consciously draw on both technical and natural registers by appealing to the “*results of the most modern cometological research*” while proning the

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<sup>903</sup> Cf. Chapter 4 (*History*).

<sup>904</sup> Ad for Merz Spezial Creme (*Für Sie*, Heft 5, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1980).

<sup>905</sup> Ad for Merz Spezial Creme & Lotion (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1980).

<sup>906</sup> Ad for Merz Spezial Creme (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1980). Surprisingly, there are two versions of the ad with the women running on the beach: the one I have just quoted from the beginning of the year and a later one [ad for Merz Spezial Lotion; *Brigitte*, Heft 17, 1980]. In the first ad the macrame-braed woman displays an unsightly bulge just above the waistline of her jeans that is probably more postural than adipose. The second has corrected this aesthetic “anomaly” by showing what looks like the same model in a similar outfit; however she is jogging in a more erect manner and there is no bulge to be seen. One can only speculate that a stricter “appropriate body” styling code has come to pass in the interval...

<sup>907</sup> Ibid.: „Die hübschesten Frauen von heute sehen immer ein bißchen so aus, als ob sie gerade von einem Strandlauf, einem Tennismatch oder einer Radtour kommen. Der Hauch von Sonne und Wind auf ihrem Gesicht, der sie so anziehend macht, ist der Schimmer und Glanz einer gesunden, frischen Haut. Für diese Frauen ist die neue Merz Spezial Hautpflege bestimmt. Sie unterstützt die natürlichste Kosmetik der Welt: die selbstregenerierende Funktion der Hautzellen. Denn gesunde Haut wird täglich neu geboren, ist unablässig in Bewegung und immer in Schwung – ständig ersetzen neue, frische Hautzellen die alte, graue Haut. Merz schützt nicht nur Ihre Haut und regelt den Fett- und Feuchtigkeitshaushalt, sondern unterstützt diese Selbsterneuerung, ohne die Ihre Haut nicht leben und gut aussehen kann. [...] Gesunde Haut ist schöne Haut.“

<sup>908</sup> Cf. <http://www.merz.de/unternehmen/geschichte/> [slide 9 of 19]: „1953 - Erstes Antifaltenpräparat: Auf dem internationalen Kongress für Schönheitspflege präsentiert Friedrich Merz Placentubex, ein die Haut straffendes und verjüngendes Antifaltenpräparat“. A later ad for Placentubex cream explicitly states that the product has been developed over a number years by Merz scientists (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1983). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

use of “*purely natural active substances*” as illustrated by *Stendhal’s Les Bio-Program*.<sup>909</sup> This combination should ensure “*sensitive skin’s natural resistance*” and provide a “*clear, straightforward and effective concept that is adapted to the demands of the skin as well as the personal needs of our time*”.<sup>910</sup> Paradoxically, the ad includes a rather complex cosmetic programme showing what type of skincare should be used in the morning, in the evening and once or twice a week. Another intriguing ad appeals to Scandinavian nature as a standard without mentioning any specifically natural ingredients. *Pierre Robert* (nice Swedish name by the way...) is supposedly the number one cosmetic supplier in Sweden and the text of the ad states the following:

Discover the Swedes’ beauty ideal with the new skincare range by Pierre Robert, from the land of pure nature with its fresh sources and clear mountain lakes. Pierre Robert Skin Care is an allergy-tested range for every skintype and every product was designed to offer an absolutely neutral pH-value. Pierre Robert Skin Care is produced with the utmost care in the firm’s own laboratories under particularly strict control.<sup>911</sup>

In this example, the purity of Swedish nature becomes an empty signifier for the industrial purity of these cosmetic products since the emphasis here is on the production process. Many other brands, however, are much more straightforward in their allegiance to scientific research and product processing. A brand such as *Helena Rubinstein* does not even foreground nature in its advertising discourse for *Skin Life*. The motto here is “*Science for beauty*” and sophisticated ladies are portrayed with products from the range, which contains a mysterious biological active agent named “*GAM*”.<sup>912</sup> On a similar note, before listing a number of effects such as the reduction of wrinkles or the revitalisation of the skin, *Marbert* state that *Skin Garantie’s* “*effectiveness is scientifically proven*”<sup>913</sup> while *Vitamol’s* pedigree includes consequent Swiss research carried out by Swiss scientists.<sup>914</sup> Most brands go to some length to educate consumers on the skin’s functioning, sometime even introducing the photograph and signature of an expert, such as Dr E. Charlet from the *Drugofa* company in Köln who presents the *Quenty* line, featuring collagen and placenta extract, the star ingredients of the time: “*The skin begins to age from the age of 25. The underlying reason for this are changes in the collagen fibres that are reinforced by damaging environmental influences. The skin becomes increasingly dry and withered. Now the first lines are visible.*”<sup>915</sup> In a more dramatic vein, the French brand *Biotherm’s* strategy is to present its *Émulsion*

<sup>909</sup> Ad for Stendhal Les Bio-Program (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1980): “*Erkenntnissen modernster kosmetologischer Forschung*”; “*reine natürliche Aktivsubstanzen*”

<sup>910</sup> Ibid.: “*Natürliche Widerstandskraft für empfindliche Haut*”; “*ein klares, überschaubares und wirksames Konzept, das sich den Hautanforderungen und den persönlichen Bedürfnissen unserer Zeit anpaßt.*”

<sup>911</sup> Ad for Pierre Robert Pflegeserie (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 1980): “*Entdecken Sie das Schönheitsideal der Schweden mit der neuen Pflegeserie von Pierre Robert aus dem Land der unberührten Natur mit seinen frischen Quellen und klaren Bergseen. Pierre Robert Skin Care ist eine allergie-gesteste Pflegeserie für jeden Hauttyp, bei deren Produkten Wert darauf gelegt wurde, den pH-Wert absolut neutral zu halten. Pierre Robert Skin Care wird mit äußerster Sorgfalt in eigenen Laboratorien entwickelt und unter besonders strenger Kontrolle hergestellt.*”

<sup>912</sup> Ad for Helena Rubinstein’s Skin Life Cream (*Für Sie*, Heft 7, 1980): “*Wissenschaft für Schönheit*”. This discourse contrasts with an ad for *Skin Dew* another *Rubinstein* product: there the natural referentiality of dew is at least consolidated by the recourse to a natural milk protein, cf. ad for Helena Rubinstein’s Skin Dew (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1980).

<sup>913</sup> Ad for Marbert’s Skin Garantie (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1980): “*die Wirkung ist wissenschaftlich bewiesen.*”

<sup>914</sup> Ad for Vitamol’s Zellnährcreme 8 (*Für Sie*, Heft 5, 1980).

<sup>915</sup> Ad for Quenty-Cosmetic (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1980): “*Ab etwa 25 Jahren beginnt die Haut zu altern. Die Ursache hierfür ist eine Veränderung der collagenen Fasern, verstärkt durch schädigende Umwelt-Einflüsse. Die Haut wird zunehmend trocken und welk. Jetzt werden die ersten Fältchen sichtbar!*”

*Vitale*<sup>916</sup> by contrasting apocalyptic artwork –featuring a serious, worried-looking face overcast with clouds as a background for a smiling and relaxed face against a luminous aura-like background– with a table detailing three aspects: the product, the ingredients and the tests performed, thus providing another type of transparency aimed at cultivating trust.

A perhaps even more persuasively “scientific” tack is the one pursued by *Linique*<sup>917</sup> with its so-called “skin analyzer” that offers “*cosmetic education for the benefit of the skin*”. This can only be attained through the correct analysis of the skin: “*Within 30 seconds, the Linique skin analyzer developed by leading dermatologists reveals your true skin-type and tells you how to obtain better looking skin.*” The ad then specifies that this analysis can be carried out at any Linique retailer and the accompanying photograph features the analyzer with its eight horizontal slots including explanations. The appliance is placed on a sober and stylishly designed all-in one Z-shaped Plexiglas chair, as a fitting allegory of scientific transparency and purity – the brand’s main selling point since *Linique* stands for allergy-free products.<sup>918</sup>

Actually, care for sensitive skin is really beginning to establish itself in those years. For instance, *Marbert* in the promotion for its *Sensitive* line states that almost 50% of women have sensitive skin<sup>919</sup> and emphasises the environmental stress that the skin is submitted to: “*The wind, the weather, stress and tensions are a burden for your skin.*”<sup>920</sup> The French *RoC* cosmetics company –a pioneer in scent-free cosmetics<sup>921</sup>– goes a step further when vaunting its products as “*hypoallergenic*”. Before explaining the meaning of the latter, the text of the ad first states that many women’s skin tends to be allergic and thus requires special hypoallergenic care: “*Cosmetics can only be called hypoallergenic, if they diminish allergy risks to a minimum through a scientifically proven composition.*” This is followed by a box detailing the so-called “*RoC-Garantie*”:

- RoC products contain only high-quality pure ingredients that are proven to be particularly kind to the skin by dermatologists.
- RoC contains no fragrance.
- RoC contains no irritating

<sup>916</sup> Ad for Biotherm Émulsion Vitale (*Brigitte*, Heft 3, 1980).

<sup>917</sup> The German-speaking equivalent of the Estée Lauder “Clinique” brand, which was originally launched in 1946, cf. <http://www.elcompanies.com/heritage/timeline.php>. For more on this German idiosyncrasy and the change of name back to “Clinique” in 1994, cf. [http://www.jacobsen-legal.com/case\\_studies\\_2.html](http://www.jacobsen-legal.com/case_studies_2.html) [websites accessed Aug. 2011]. On the history of the company, cf. e.g. Peiss, Kathy, op. cit., Chapter 8 (“Identity and the Market”), pp. 238-270, p. 262: “A new focus on scientific skin care as a necessary grooming practice deflected criticism that cosmetics objectified and demeaned women. Introduced by Estee Lauder in 1967, Clinique projected its hygienic, asexual message in a number of ways, from its trade name and antiseptic green packaging, to its neutral color palette and advertising. Its ‘Twice a Day’ ad, likening skin care to the regular use of a toothbrush, focused exclusively on the product, not on glamorous or sexual situations. ‘Our consumer doesn’t want to live her life through someone else,’ the company’s president explained. ‘She looks at makeup as information.’ Clinique became the cosmetic line of choice for many professional women and feminists.”

<sup>918</sup> Ad for Linique Hautanalysator (*Brigitte*, Heft 19, 1980): „*Der Linique Hautanalysator-kosmetische Aufklärung zum Wohl Ihrer Haut. Klare, reine Haut erreichen Sie durch sinnvolle Hautpflege. Sie ist das Ergebnis der richtigen Hautanalyse. Der von führenden Dermatologen entwickelt Linique Hautanalysator ermittelt in nur 30 Sekunden Ihren wahren Hauttyp und sagt Ihnen, wie Sie eine Besser aussehende Haut bekommen. Eine Hautanalyse erhalten Sie kostenlos in jedem Linique depot. Linique-allergiestet und 100% parfümfrei.*“

<sup>919</sup> However, no proofs or studies are quoted to back these claims.

<sup>920</sup> Ad for Marbert Sensitive (*Für Sie*, Heft 3, 1980 or *Brigitte*, Heft 1, 1980): „*Wind und Wetter, Streß und Strapazen belasten Ihre Haut.*“

<sup>921</sup> In the early 1950s, Jean-Charles Lissarrague begins to develop the first fragrance-free creams upon the requests of dermatologists, cf. <http://www.roc.fr/notre-histoire-%281378%29.cml>. [website accessed March 2011; unfortunately the site is currently down]

colourings and preservatives. •Ingredients are clearly stated on all RoC packaging. •There is a use-by-date on every RoC product •Every RoC tube has an airtight security cap.<sup>922</sup>

This is the first extensive example I have found of a detailed strategy to respect sensitive skins with what I would call a “-free” discourse, i.e. characterising products as fragrance-free, (mostly) preservative- and colour-free, etc. This is supplemented by added transparency since all the ingredients are disclosed on the pack – a pioneer initiative since German law at the time does not require it.<sup>923</sup> The use-by-date and the special cap display an increasing “sensitivity” to the dangers entailed by using spoilt or contaminated products (also major allergy triggers). Surprisingly, however, there is no mention of tolerance tests though –which from our perspective may seem like the first characteristic one would expect from this kind of product. However, the ad draws its own “reassuring” conclusion: *“It is the sum of all strategies that leads to the unique performance. Hypoallergenic beauty care is what your natural beauty demands.”*<sup>924</sup>

<sup>922</sup> Ad for RoC Hypo-allergische Schönheitspflege (Für Sie, Heft 4, 1980 or Brigitte, Heft 3, 1980): *„Hypo-allergisch darf sich nur eine Kosmetik nennen, die durch ihre wissenschaftlich fundierte Zusammensetzung das Risiko einer Allergie auf ein Minimum herabsetzt.“* • *„RoC-Präparate enthalten nur hochwertige, reine Grundstoffe, die von Dermatologen als besonders hautverträglich nachgewiesen sind. •RoC enthält kein Parfum. • RoC enthält keine hautreizenden Farb- und Konservierungsstoffe. •Auf jeder RoC-Packung ist die Produktzusammensetzung offen deklariert. •Auf jeder RoC steht das Verfalldatum • Jede RoC-Tube hat einen luftdichten Sicherheitsverschluß.“*

<sup>923</sup> Compulsory labelling using the so-called INCI (International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients) was introduced in a European directive before being adopted by member countries. Cf. „Beschuß der Kommission vom 8 Mai 1996 zur Festlegung einer Liste und einer gemeinsamen Nomenklatur der Bestandteile kosmetischer Mittel“: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31996D0335:DE:HTML>: *„Die Liste der in den kosmetischen Mitteln enthaltenen Bestandteile soll zwei Teile umfassen, von denen der eine die Ausgangsstoffe für die Riech- und Aromastoffe und der andere die übrigen Stoffe abdeckt. Diese Liste soll Angaben enthalten über die Identität des Bestandteils, insbesondere die chemische Bezeichnung, die INCI-Bezeichnung (vormals CFA-Bezeichnung), die Bezeichnung des Europäischen Arzneibuchs (Ph. Eur.), den INN, die IUPAC-Bezeichnung, die EINECS/ ELINCS-, CAS- und die Colour-Index-Nummer, die gemeinsame Bezeichnung gemäß Artikel 7 Absatz 2 der Richtlinie 76/768/EWG, ferner die Funktionen und gegebenenfalls die Einschränkungen sowie die Anwendungsbedingungen und Warnhinweise, die auf dem Etikett stehen müssen. Abgesehen davon, daß es von Vorteil ist, die in den kosmetischen Mitteln verwendeten Bestandteile zu kennen, ist die Liste auch in Zusammenhang zu sehen mit Artikel 6 Absatz 1 der Richtlinie 76/768/EWG, der die Verpflichtung festschreibt, auf dem Erzeugnis und/oder der Verpackung den Verwendungszweck des Erzeugnisses und die Liste der Bestandteile anzubringen; dies gilt für kosmetische Mittel, die ab dem 1. Januar 1997 auf den Markt gebracht werden.“*

Cf. also: “EU Council directive of 27 July 1976 (including subsequent amendments) on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products (76/768/EEC”): <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20100301:en:PDF>, article 6, § g, p. 9-10: *“Member States shall take all measures necessary to ensure that cosmetic products may be marketed only if the container and packaging bear the following information in indelible, easily legible and visible lettering [...] a list of ingredients in descending order of weight at the time they are added. That list shall be preceded by the word ‘ingredients’. Where that is impossible for practical reasons, an enclosed leaflet, label, tape or card must contain the ingredients to which the consumer is referred either by abbreviated information or the symbol given in Annex VIII, which must appear on the packaging.”*

For the German law, cf. also: „Verordnung über kosmetische Mittel“ [ Kosmetik-Verordnung in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 7. Oktober 1997 (BGBl. I S. 2410), die zuletzt durch die Verordnung vom 9. August 2010 (BGBl. I S. 1146) geändert worden ist]: cf. <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/kosmetikv/BJNR025890977.html>, § 5a Kennzeichnung der Bestandteile: *„Die Bestandteile sind in abnehmender Reihenfolge ihres Gewichtes zum Zeitpunkt der Herstellung des kosmetischen Mittels anzugeben.“* [websites accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>924</sup> Ad for RoC, op. cit.: *„Erst die Summe aller Maßnahmen ergibt die einzigartige Leistung. Hypo-allergische Schönheitspflege. Das, worauf Ihre natürliche Schönheit einen Anspruch hat.“*

All these sophisticated ads and products contrast with simpler claims such as the one put forth by *Kaloderma* that features a pot of cream with the following caption above: “Eventually, a woman discovers Kaloderma...” and below it: “Kaloderma cream provides the skin with what it needs: care and moisture”.<sup>925</sup> There are no bells and whistles with *Mouson* either since its sober slogan “Mouson makes you beautiful” floats above the head of a smiling young woman along with a simple listing of products and few added explanations.<sup>926</sup>

Finally, it is worth mentioning two practices through which cosmetic knowledge is disseminated: scientific vulgarisation articles and cosmetic “agony aunt” columns. An enlightening example of the former is provided by a *Für Sie* article. It begins with a reference to the future duty of declaration [Deklarationspflicht], a law forcing cosmetic producers to reveal all the ingredients contained in their products.<sup>927</sup> According to the author, this move will enable consumers to understand either the price of the products or, for those who are allergic, to find out (more) about potential allergens. The article goes on to emphasise that the main component of most cosmetic products is oil whether vegetable, animal or synthetic. Oils are supposed to keep the skin smooth but can also trigger violent allergies. Products are then listed with the specificities of their combinations –be it oil in water for day creams or water in oil for night creams, tortoise or shark oil in eye cream or paraffine oil in mascara, castor oil in lipstick or the special hydrophilic oils contained in make-up remover that help to remove dirt and skin impurities as well as regulate the skin lipids.<sup>928</sup>

Agony aunt columns, on the other hand, respond to specific queries and anguishes sent in by readers. These extend from dry skin to self-tanning lotions, radical diets (which make breasts shrink and wither), rosacea, swelling beneath the eyes, blemished skin, perfumes, beauty farms, scars left from acne and how to handle contact lenses when applying make-up. In the case of *Für Sie*, it is a physician, Frau Dr. Panka-Dietz,<sup>929</sup> who answers in a no nonsense way. The column emphasises the quality of the counselling offered:

A decisive criterion for our reader advice column is the professional cosmetic knowledge of all our employees as well as an overview of the entire cosmetics market. Through close collaboration with dermatologists and the industry, we are not only informed about novelties and scientific progress but are also warned about the dangers linked to inappropriate treatment.<sup>930</sup>

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<sup>925</sup> Ad for Kaloderma Creme (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 23, 1980): „Irgendwann entdeckt eine Frau Kaloderma...“; „Kaloderma Creme gibt der Haut, was sie braucht: Pflege und Feuchtigkeit“.

<sup>926</sup> Ad for Mouson Kosmetik (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 23, 1980): „Mouson macht schön“.

<sup>927</sup> An obligation discussed earlier on in this chapter.

<sup>928</sup> “Haut wie Samt und Seide: Die feinen kosmetischen Öle sind unerlässlich für unsere tägliche Hautpflege. Wir sagen Ihnen, warum“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 28.02.1980, p. 90).

<sup>929</sup> From my perspective, it is impossible to find out if Dr Panka-Dietz is an actual physician or an invented authority conjured to uphold the scientific credibility of the information provided.

<sup>930</sup> „Das wollten unserere Leserinnen wissen: Seit mehr als 10 Jahren löst Frau Dr. Panka-Dietz die kosmetischen Probleme unserer Leser“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 6, 28.02.1980, pp. 98-99, p. 98): „Entscheidend für unsere Leserberatung ist das kosmetische Fachwissen aller Mitarbeiter und der Überblick über den gesamten Kosmetikmarkt. In enger Zusammenarbeit mit Dermatologen und der Industrie sind wir nicht nur über Neuheiten und wissenschaftliche Fortschritte informiert, sondern können auch die Gefahren einer falschen Behandlung erkennen.“

Professionalism and scientific methods are thus ensured. However, this does not exclude a holistic approach. To a reader complaining about extremely dry skin and wondering whether it might be due to a recent existential shock, the doctor replies: *“The skin is not just a reflexion of the state of our bodies. In your case, it is quite plausible that the emotional burden is the underlying cause.”*<sup>931</sup> Occasionally, beyond various specifically cosmetic recommendations, the physician’s advice also includes very practical holistic strategies: e.g. massages, gymnastics or swimming, while recommending the avoidance of e.g. alcohol, coffee or sunbathing.

### **1983: Highly scientific, sensitive and fit**

Later in the 1980s, the market seems to witness an increasing amount of high-tech creams and lotions. The discourse surrounding these products is very similar: it emphasises tests, proofs, the status of science and it also increasingly relies on high-tech instrumentation and sophisticated illustrations. *Revlon’s* slogan, for instance states: *“Tested by physicians – confirmed by women”*.<sup>932</sup> *Lancôme* emphasises that: *“Numerous experiments prove the visible results of Progrès Intensif Rides, after just two weeks of use”*<sup>933</sup> while *Alcina* soberly states that: *“Eccelente mirrors the high level of dermatological science.”*<sup>934</sup> But *Biotherm* goes even further: *“This double effect has been scientifically proven: the electron-microscopical study clearly shows the restoration of the skin’s surface.”*<sup>935</sup> Scientific discourse is often reinforced by explanatory statistics, diagrams, photographs or other illustrations, as in the *Biotherm* case, where two boxes display the structure of a dehydrated epithelium as opposed to an adequately moisturised one: in the first case the cells are schematically represented as dried up beans through which water is excessively drained. The following comment is appended: *“The cells let too much water through. The cells are dried up.”* The second drawing shows cells as rounded and regular as smarties. In this configuration water requires more detours to evaporate from the surface, prompting the following comment: *“The loss of water is controlled. Cells are filled with water.”*<sup>936</sup> Another ad for a *Biotherm* cream, this time the so-called *Special Rides* backs up its claims by displaying macro-photographs of the skin surface with the following discourse:

Photographs prove the efficacy. Over 1,000 macro-photographs were taken in the course of a 6-week experiment. These close-ups show the effect stages of CREME SPECIAL RIDES on over 100 test persons of various ages. The proof. Results with CREME SPECIAL RIDES on a 42-year old. Photograph before the treatment. Before the treatment, the photo shows a very pronounced diagonal wrinkle, wide and deep, along with a number of lines. [the photograph here shows a seemingly random area of the skin that is characterised by a web of tight little creases] Photo after the treatment. After a 6-week treatment the difference is very visible.

<sup>931</sup> Ibid. p. 98: *„Die Haut ist nicht nur ein Spiegelbild unserer Körperlichen Verfassung. In Ihrem Fall ist es durchaus möglich, daß die Ursachen in Ihrer psychischen Belastung liegen“.*

<sup>932</sup> Ad for *Revlon European Collagen Complex* (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1983): *„Von Ärzten getestet – von Frauen bestätigt.“*

<sup>933</sup> Ad for *Lancôme Progrès Intensif Rides* (*Für Sie*, Heft 14, 1983): *„Zahlreiche Experimente beweisen die sichtbaren Resultate von Progrès Intensif Rides. Schon nach zwei Wochen Anwendung.“*

<sup>934</sup> Ad for *Alcina Eccelente* (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1983): *„Eccelente entspricht den hohen Stand der dermatologischen Wissenschaft.“*

<sup>935</sup> Ad for *Biotherm Hydrothermal Suractivée* (*Für Sie*, Heft 14, 1983): *„Diese doppelte Wirksamkeit wurde wissenschaftlich bewiesen. Die elektronen-mikroskopische Studie zeigt sehr deutlich die Wiederherstellung der Hautoberfläche.“*

<sup>936</sup> Ibid.: *„Die Zellen lassen zuviel Wasser passieren. Die Zellen sind verhärtet.“; „Der Wasserverlust wird kontrolliert. Die Zellen sind mit Wasser gefüllt.“*

The wrinkle is less deep and wide, the lines have disappeared. The skin is smoother and more harmonious.<sup>937</sup>

This wish to document “before and after” states and thus provide “proof” of effectiveness represents a leitmotiv in the cosmetic discourse of the following decades. Another interesting example in this “scientific” category are the ads for *Viviane*, the so-called “*thinking cream*” that adapts to every face because “*its new emulsion system actually combines the care provided by a rich cream with the moisturising properties of a milky lotion.*”<sup>938</sup> While it may still be a far cry from Happyderm –the product I quoted in my introduction to this case study– and its phytodorphines [sic] that are supposed to boost skin happiness,<sup>939</sup> the idea of an “intelligently adaptive” cream is rather revolutionary for the time. Another ad for the same cream provides long explanations over a whole page. Scientific backing here is provided by the fact that “[t]ogether with dermatologists and cosmetics professionals, scientists from Schering’s skin research have developed a novel double-emulsion system that imitates the skin’s natural water and oil film.” The text ends with a reminder that *Viviane* can only be obtained in pharmacies and provides the following rationale:

The international pharmaceutical corporation Schering has developed many successful dermatological creams. VIVIANE itself was developed at the suggestion of dermatologists. The pharmacist is in the best position to judge that skincare is in the very best hands at Schering’s, since he is aware of his responsibility when it comes to sensitive skin problems. His advice is more focused on knowledge about the skin and that is important nowadays. Indeed, every woman’s closest companion is her own skin.<sup>940</sup>

The text thus highlights another important mediation partner in the ranks of the scientific intelligentsia: the (male!) pharmacist and his professional knowledge. A more unusual example is an ad for Placentubex products, which if does vaunt the merits of a special formula developed by *Merz* scientists in the course of years of research, recognises that life

<sup>937</sup> Ad for Biotherm Special Rides (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1983): „Fotografien beweisen die Wirksamkeit. Mehr als 1.000 Makro-Fotografien wurden im 6-Wochen-Experiment festgehalten. Diese Großaufnahmen zeigen die Wirkungs-Etappen von CREME SPECIAL RIDES an über 100 Testpersonen verschiedenen Alters. Der Beweis. Ergebnisse bei einer 42-jährigen Person mit CREME SPECIAL RIDES. Foto vor der Behandlung. Vor der Behandlung zeigt das Foto eine diagonale, sehr ausgeprägte Falte, breit und tief, umgeben von einer Vielzahl von Fältchen. [the photograph shows a seemingly random area of the skin that is characterised by a web of wrinkles] Foto nach der Behandlung. Nach 6 Wochen der Behandlung ist der Unterschied gut sichtbar. Die Falte ist Weniger tief und weniger breit, die Fältchen sind verschwunden, die Haut ist wieder glatter und harmonischer.“

<sup>938</sup> Ad for Schering *Viviane*, (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1983): „Die denkende Creme“; „Ihr neues Emulsionssystem vereint nämlich die pflegenden Eigenschaften einer Fettcreme mit den feuchtigkeitsspenden Eigenschaften einer Milch.“

<sup>939</sup> As an ironic blogger put it: “-what, a skin antidepressant now?” Cf. Weaselwords <http://z8.invisionfree.com/weaselwords/index.php?showtopic=179> (Sekhmet; posted on May 1 2007, 03:05 PM). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>940</sup> Ad for Schering *Viviane* (*Brigitte*, Heft 23, 1983): „Wissenschaftler der Schering Hautforschung haben in Zusammenarbeit mi Hautfachärzten und Kosmetikfachleuten ein neuartiges Doppemulsions-System entwickelt, das dem natürlichen Wasser-Fett-Film der Haut nachgebildet ist.“; „Viele erfolgreiche dermatologische Salben kommen aus dem weltweit tätigen Pharmaunternehmen Schering. VIVIANE selbst wurde auf Anregung von Hautärzten entwickelt. Der Apotheker weiß am besten einzuschätzen, daß die Hautpflege bei Schering in allerbesten Händen ist, denn er weiß um seine Verantwortung, wenn es um hautnahe Probleme geht. Seine Beratung setzt mehr auf das Wissen um die Haut, und das zählt heutzutage. Schließlich ist jeder Frau die eigene Haut am nächsten.“

experience has a decisive impact on the state of the skin: “A woman’s existential experiences –both the significant and the less significant– impact not just her personality but also her skin”. The ad therefore recommends “a healthy portion of cheerfulness” besides the collagen-rich cream.<sup>941</sup>

Otherwise, within the scientific discourse niche, a subfield is dramatically expanding: that of products for sensitive skins, the emergence of which I described in the previous section. As was the case then, the „-free“ discourse is repeatedly emphasised, e.g. as in Avon’s slogan for *Pure Care*: “No perfume. No colourings. Only care”.<sup>942</sup> Beyond this type of discourse, an ad for *RoC* products emphasises the transparency of its products: “Open and honest” or “We have nothing to hide”– before stating the following: „Not everyone follows this scientific concept. But we believe that your natural beauty is absolutely entitled to it.”<sup>943</sup> This “transparency” postulate represents an interesting antithesis to the otherwise often secretive strategies involving mysterious ingredients that are privileged by many brands –no doubt also to protect their costly patents.

But the most striking development in this field (which I also hinted at in the previous section) is the development of a fully-fledged “environmental stress” rhetoric. I am including three examples that display different perceptions of what are the most significant environmental stress factors. *Clarins* emphasises dimensions that may be difficult to influence individually: “Be sensitive to your delicate skin since pollution, air-conditioners, dust, heat and cold already put enough pressure on it”,<sup>944</sup> whereas *Toscana* adds factors that are strongly influenced, if not determined by individual lifestyles: “Nowaday the skin is increasingly endangered. More and more women experience sensitive skin due to pollution, stress, lack of movement and the hectic rhythm of everyday life”.<sup>945</sup> The coupling of stress as a generic phenomenon with everyday hustle and bustle reinforces the impression that individuals are caught in a treadmill existence, which is paradoxically characterised by sedentariness. But by far the most interesting discourse is outlined in an ad for *Payot’s Amniotique* products. Rather unsurprisingly the ad begins thus: “Today many influences disturb the sensitive balance of your skin – the wind and the weather, emotional tensions, the polluted environment and the normal cycle of life. Its sensitivity makes it vulnerable and thus easily unattractive”.<sup>946</sup> Environmental stress here, if it does have an external component in the shape of pollution and weather, has a strong internal correlate in the shape of emotional tension, whereas everyday stress is normalised into a form of natural rhythm. In a way, this makes the effect of the cream all the more surprising:

<sup>941</sup> Ad for *Placentubex line* (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1983): „Alle kleinen und großen Erfahrungen im Leben einer Frau prägen nicht nur ihre Persönlichkeit. Sondern auch ihre Haut.“; „Eine gesunde Portion Fröhlichkeit“.

<sup>942</sup> Ad for *Avon Pure Care* (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 20, 1984): „Kein Duft. Keine Farbe. Nur Pflege.“

<sup>943</sup> Ad for *RoC Schönheitspflege* (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1983): „Offen und ehrlich“; „Wir haben nichts zu verheimlichen“; „Nach diesem wissenschaftlichen Konzept arbeitet sicherlich nicht jeder. Wir glauben aber, Ihre natürliche Schönheit hat einen selbstverständlichen Anspruch darauf.“

<sup>944</sup> Ad for *Clarins Douceur* (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1983): „Seien Sie gegenüber Ihrer sensiblen Haut empfindlich denn Luftverschmutzung, Klimaanlage, Staub, Hitze und Kälte setzen ihr genug zu.“

<sup>945</sup> Ad for *Toscana Sensitive* (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1983): „Heute ist die Haut stärker gefährdet. Durch Luftverschmutzung, Streß, Bewegungsmangel und die alltägliche Hektik bekommen immer mehr Frauen eine empfindliche Haut.“

<sup>946</sup> Ad for *Payot Amniotique* (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1983): „Heute stören viele Einflüsse die sensible Balance Ihrer Haut – Wind und Wetter, emotionale Spannungen, die verschmutzte Umwelt und der normale Zyklus des Lebens. Sie wird in ihrer Empfindlichkeit verwundbar und dadurch allzu leicht unattraktiv.“

Amniotique soaks the skin cells with an active complex that nature itself creates as the first embryonal cell nourishment, i.e. amniotic fluid. Exceptionally rich, soothing and boosting substances care for and strengthen your sensitive skin and protect it from the harshness of life. It becomes smooth, soft and delicate again and can better resist a tough environment.<sup>947</sup>

Suddenly, the relatively neutral depiction of the environment shifts to menacing undertones, with “survival of the fittest” implications. In this context, the skin is represented as a defenseless baby that requires a form of “oral regression” in the shape of a protective pouch provided by the cream. This amniotic fluid imitation paradoxically implies that the late modern individual has been betrayed by an environment implicitly denatured by technology but that a technology imitating nature can provide a survival shield –a new nature of sorts.

In contrast, avowedly natural cosmetics seem to be less foregrounded in these years. There are still the typical Aok ads that peddle David Hamilton style images of pretty young women in lace dresses sniffing daisies in a meadow with the following injunction: “*Retain a sense of the natural. Enjoy simple things. Reexperience the beauty of the woods, the meadows and the flowers. Be a closer ally of nature*”.<sup>948</sup> But a more subtle type of intermingling between scientific and natural discourse seems to be taking place as illustrated by an ad for the Vitamol line that features a photograph of and a pseudo-interview with a certain Inge B., a Zurich photographer. Towards the middle of the interview, the following section is highlighted:

I know that the skin itself cannot produce vitamins, which is why I use Vitamol with its balanced vitamin complex. This skincare gives me a fresh and youthful appearance. Moreover, my sensitive skin tolerates Vitamol better than most products. Hmmm, nature does indeed provide the best cosmetics.<sup>949</sup>

This assertion is particularly significant of the contemporary mindset because, on the one hand, it recognises the limits of nature, i.e. the skin (as a natural being) is incapable of producing its own food, which means technology has to come to the rescue with a vitamin cream. But on the other hand, technology is naturalised because vitamins are part of Nature’s bounty.

The next noteworthy development is an increasing segmentation of the offer according to age. There, opinions seem to diverge as to the appropriate age to start providing special care for the skin. *Lysmina* for example states: “*For a growing number of women, their skin becomes demanding and sensitive at an increasingly early age. This is why skincare should*

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<sup>947</sup> Ibid.: „Amniotique trankt die Hautzellen mit einem Wirkstoff-Komplex, den die Natur selbst als erste embryonale Zellnahrung hervorbringt: dem Amnion Liquide. Ungewohnlich nahrstoffreiche, beruhigende und aufbauende Substanzen pflegen und starken Ihre empfindliche Haut und schutzen sie vor den Harten des Lebens. Sie wird wieder glatt, weich und zart und kann der rauhen Umwelt besser standhalten.“

<sup>948</sup> Ad for Aok Natural Care Kosmetik (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983): „Bewahren Sie sich den Sinn fur das Naturliche. Freuen Sie sich an den einfachen Dingen. Erleben Sie mal wieder, wie schon Walder, Wiesen und Blumen sind. Seien Sie ein bischen mehr mit der Natur im Bunde.“

<sup>949</sup> Ad for Vitamol Schweizer Vitamin-Kosmetik (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1983): „Ich weiss, dass die Haut selbst keine Vitamine bilden kann. Deshalb nehme ich Vitamol mit der ausgewogenen Vitamin-Kombination. Und diese Pflege gibt mir ein jugendlich-frisches Aussehen. Ausserdem vertragt meine empfindliche Haut Vitamol so gut, wie kaum etwas anderes. Tja, Die Natur hat eben die besten Schonheitsmittel.“

start at 25 so as to support the natural functions of the skin.”<sup>950</sup> Although this discourse is not explicitly related to an environmental stress factor, one can plausibly assume a connection since the text goes on to describe what substances are required to support these functions. The “active collagen and elastin complex, precious plant jojoba oil, the natural moisturising factor (NMF) and a special UVB filter” seem to imply that environmental conditions have a strongly desiccating effect on the skin. Aok situates the need for special care at a later moment: “Take more time now for face care because, from the age of 30, the skin gradually loses its elasticity and natural regeneration diminishes”.<sup>951</sup> But the most self-consciously developed segment is that of mature skin as exemplified (and apparently pioneered) by Qenty forty: “Qenty forty was specially developed for skin after 40. At this age the skin increasingly loses its tonus and elasticity.”<sup>952</sup> In contrast with the casual garb of the younger models in the afore-mentioned ads, this ad presents a youthful-looking but artfully controlled woman. Her hairstyle, make-up, jewellery and clothing are low-key but flattering and her gaze seems to reflect a mature self-confidence. This “power-styling” thus suggests that if 40-year old skin is more demanding, it is just a reflection of the general entitlement entailed by experience.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the emergence of “fitness” for the skin as exemplified in creams manufactured by Marbert or Guerlain. The first company presents Splendance as “face fitness” and describes the cream as both “high-performance care” and “progressive beauty care”, thus highlighting two pillars of this ideology: performance and progress.<sup>953</sup> Guerlain’s Ultra-Sport face cream depicts a sportily but smartly dressed young woman (in corduroy trousers, a houndstooth blazer, a white shirt and tie). A black dog is clamped between her legs and she firmly holds both his collar and the leash. The caption reads:

Naturalness embarks on a career. “Formule Vitalisante” simulates the fundamental functions of the epidermis and reinforces its natural defences. The grapeseed oil and linoléate d’éthyle [sic] active complex provide the skin with “beauty building blocks” in the shape of unsaturated fatty acids. ULTRA-SPORT, an uncomplicated and effective line of products, it is the ideal beauty and fitness programme, especially for fine, delicate and sensitive skin. “Formule nettoyante”. “Formule tonifiante”. “Formule hydratante”. “Formule vitalisante”. “Crème de protection colorée” [sic].<sup>954</sup>

Both the illustration and the text point towards the paradox of the fitness ethic: the body (hence the skin) is perceived as a natural entity but this entity needs to be technologically

<sup>950</sup> Ad for Lysmina special care (*Für Sie*, Heft 17, 1983): „Immer mehr Frauen bekommen immer früher eine anspruchsvolle und empfindliche Haut. Deshalb heißt ab 25 Jahren pflegen, die natürlichen Hautfunktionen unterstützen.“ „Wirkstoff-Komplex aus natürlichem Collagen und Elastin, wertvollem, pflanzlichem Jojobaöl, dem natürlichen Feuchthalte-Faktor (NMF) und einem speziellen UV-B-Lichtschutz“.

<sup>951</sup> Ad for Aok Natural Care (*Brigitte*, Heft 11, 1983): „Nehmen Sie sich jetzt mehr Zeit für die Gesichtspflege, denn ab 30 verliert die Haut nach und nach an Elastizität, die natürliche Regeneration läßt nach.“

<sup>952</sup> Ad for Qenty forty (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 39, 1982): „Qenty forty wurde speziell für die Haut ab 40 entwickelt. In diesem Alter verliert die Haut zunehmend an Spannkraft und Elastizität.“

<sup>953</sup> Ad for Marbert Splendance (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1983): „Hochleistungs-Pflege“; „fortschrittlichen Schönheitspflege“.

<sup>954</sup> Ad for Guerlain Ultra Sport (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1983): „Natürlichkeit macht Karriere. ‚Formule Vitalisante‘ stimuliert die lebenswichtigen Funktionen der Epidermis und verstärkt ihre natürlichen Abwehrkräfte. Die Wirkstoffkombination von Traubenkernöl und Linoléate d’éthyle führt der Haut ‚Schönheitsbausteine‘ in Form von ungesättigten Fettsäuren zu. ULTRA-SPORT, eine unkomplizierte und wirksame Pflegeserie, sie ist das ideale Schönheits- und Fitness-Programm, ganz besonders für feine, sensible und empfindliche Haut. ‚Formule nettoyante‘. ‚Formule tonifiante‘. ‚Formule hydratante‘. ‚Formule vitalisante‘. ‚Crème de protection colorée‘.“

shaped (or strengthened) to withstand the unnatural pressures of late modern life. Additionally, the discrepancy between the names of the components reflects the fact that nature is indeed embarking on a scientific career: the straightforward “grape seed oil” that should be grasped by the average consumer contrasts with the French chemical designation for “ethyl linoleate”, an unsaturated fatty acid ester.<sup>955</sup> The no doubt voluntarily mystifying use of the “chic” French designation can be read as an attempt to mask the perhaps worrying chemical implications of the ingredient. Moreover, the *Ultra Sport* name suggests values of performance and progress similar to those voiced in the *Marbert* ad while emphasising the programmatic aspect of skincare in the 1980s. Beauty may seem natural but it requires a heck of a lot of work: the number of steps (including cleansing, toning, moisturising, vitalising & protecting) required in order to keep the skin fit and competitive belies the vaunted uncomplicatedness of the programme.

Cosmetic programmes are also part and parcel of women’s magazines beauty advice. An article in *Für Sie*, for example, recommends that women from 30 onwards take better care of their skins: “*Even if you feel really well both bodily and mentally and you are fully satisfied with the image in your mirror – your skin is actually beginning to age now. But this is no reason to give up quietly. You can do a lot for your appearance. We show you what.*” A blurb recommends doing a skin test before buying new products because the skin tends to get drier with age. Practical advice then includes how to cleanse properly (avoiding “*the aggressive products of the ‘spotty’ years*”), the daily use of special eye cream as well as massaging large amounts of cream (with a good balance between moisturising and fatty ingredients) on both face and neck as well as the daily use of a special night cream. In terms of body care, the article also advocates daily sports –especially swimming or daily gymnastics with dumbbells and a daily massage with a special anti-orange skin appliance under the shower not to mention a massage cream afterwards.<sup>956</sup>

As to novel products, one can mention *Aapri* cream wash that replaces soap for delicate face skin.<sup>957</sup> But the greatest novelty is gel that is introduced in all sorts of products from haircare to gel masks, eye, face, body and foot gels not to mention gel toothpaste and gel-based make-up (mainly lip gloss and rouge). Beyond the obvious advantage of being transparent and thus signalling a certain “purity”, an article in *Brigitte* lists the advantages of gel-based products thus: “*Gels are easily spread on the skin, they do not stick and are very good at transporting active ingredients*”.<sup>958</sup>

### **1985-1986: Energy against stress and the battle against age**

Cleansing, clearing and scrubbing become increasingly important steps in the mid-1980s with more ads for peelings, make-up remover and tonic from *Aapri*, *Nivea* or *CD*. The main motto seems to be best expressed by the *Nivea* or *Aapri* slogans: respectively “*thoroughly*

<sup>955</sup> This ester seems to be endowed with emollient and fragrance/flavour-enhancing properties: Cf. e.g. [http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cosmetics/cosing/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.details\\_v2&id=76066](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cosmetics/cosing/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.details_v2&id=76066) [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>956</sup> „Der aktuelle Schönheitplan für die Frau um 30“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 31.08.83, pp. 38 ss.): „*Auch wenn Sie sich körperlich und seelisch richtig wohl fühlen und Ihr Spiegelbild Sie voll zufriedenstellt—Ihre Haut beginnt spätestens jetzt zu altern. Doch das ist kein Grund, still zu resignieren. Sie können viel für Ihr Aussehen tun. Wir zeigen Ihnen, was.*“; „*die aggressiveren Produkte der ‘pickligen’ Jahre*“.

<sup>957</sup> Ad for *Aapri* Aprikosen-Waschcreme (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1983).

<sup>958</sup> „Gel für alle Gelegenheiten“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 25, 1983, pp. 34-35): „*Gels verteilen sich gut auf der Haut, kleben nicht und transportieren Wirkstoffe aufs beste.*“

*but delicately*” or *“in-depth but softly*”. More than in other products, naturalness is repeatedly invoked: *“Discover your absolutely natural beauty”* (Aapri), *“it contains naturally pure ingredients”* (CD) or *“The natural beauty of your skin awakens”* (Nivea).<sup>959</sup>

Surprisingly however, natural cosmetics seem to be rather weakly represented. *Claire Fisher* cosmetics appear new on the market<sup>960</sup> and the type of discourse used to market these products appears very similar to the one used for sensitive and allergic skin. Additional claims include the fact that they contain *“natural active ingredients which have a proven normalizing and soothing effect”*, that products can be returned *“if not tolerated or qualitatively flawed”* and most interestingly that *“all products are sensibly preserved: as little as possible but as much as required, so that germs and bacteria do not spoil them, thus causing irritations of the skin.”*<sup>961</sup> This last claim anticipates nature puritans’ potential criticism by stating that a moderate use of chemistry is necessary to counteract the unhealthy proliferation of an unwanted nature.

Another tack taken by mainstream cosmetics that seek the natural aura is to quote nature as a sort of pedigree without providing any concrete information on the ingredients actually used. A good example is an ad by *Ellen Betrix* vaunting the merits of the *Pure + Natural* line that *“protects and cares for your skin with the strengths of nature and provides it with all the indispensable building blocks and precious active ingredients that it really needs and can assimilate.”*<sup>962</sup> The ad never reveals any of the cream’s components so the *“strengths of nature”* are bound to remain mysterious. Similarly, even if *Yves Rocher* does reveal the main ingredient in its so-called *D.N.S. végétal* *“from the origin of nature”*, as a cosmetic foray into nascent industrially-oriented genetic engineering, it remains enigmatic:

DNA is a biological substance that can be found in the nucleus. It bears the genetic information and plays a decisive roll in cell regeneration. Tests show that the extract from plant nuclei with DNA increases the cells’ oxygen supply and thus encourages their activity. Vegetal DNA activates the cell renewal of the epidermis and provides the skin with a new dynamic and elasticity. Its high effectiveness has been proven by scientific tests.<sup>963</sup>

<sup>959</sup> Ads for Aapri Aprikosen Gesichtspeeling (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 1985): *„porentief doch sanft“*; *„Entdecken Sie Ihre ganz natürliche Schönheit“*; Nivea Reinigungsmilch & Gesichtswasser (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1985 & *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 35, 1986): *„Gründlich, aber zärtlich“*; *„Die natürliche Schönheit Ihrer Haut lebt auf.“*; CD Reinigungsmilch & Gesichtswasser (*Prima*, Heft 11, 1986): *„sie enthält natürlich reine Wirkstoffe“*.

<sup>960</sup> Actually, according to Claire Fisher herself, they were launched on the market in 1981-1982 (cf. <http://www.claire-fisher.de/consumer/philosophie.aspx> & <http://www.webnews.de/mitglied/claire-fisher>). For a time, the brand was manufactured by Pfizer before being taken over by Chefaro Pharma GmbH (cf. <http://www.deutsche-chefaro.de/unternehmen.aspx>) that belongs to the Belgian multinational Omega Pharma (cf. <http://www.omega-pharma.be/easycms/derma>). The brand is sold exclusively in pharmacies (<http://www.claire-fisher.de/consumer/philosophie.aspx>). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>961</sup> Ad for Claire Fischer line: *„Wirkstoffe aus der Natur, die nachweislich eine normalisierende und beruhigende Wirkung haben“*; *„bei Unverträglichkeit oder Qualitätseinbußen“*; *„Alle Produkte sind sinnvoll konserviert: so wenig wie möglich, aber so viel wie nötig, damit Keime und Bakterien sie nicht verderben und so Hautreizungen verursachen können.“*

<sup>962</sup> Ad for Ellen Betrix Pure + Natural (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1986): *„schützt und pflegt Ihre Haut mit den Kräften der Natur und fährt ihr all die unerläßlichen Bausteine und wertvollen Wirkstoffe zu, die sie wirklich braucht und verarbeiten kann.“*

<sup>963</sup> Ad for Yves Rocher DNS végétal (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986): *„aus dem Ursprung der Natur“*; *„DNS ist eine biologische Substanz konzentriert im Zellkern. Sie ist der Träger der genetischen Information und spielt eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Zellregeneration. Tests zeigen, daß der Extrakt aus pflanzlichen Zellkernen mit DNS die Sauerstoffversorgung der Zellen erhöht und so ihre Aktivität fördert. DNS végétal aktiviert die*

Several conclusions can be drawn from these explanations. First of all, the concept of “nucleus”, “genetic information” and presumably DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid; in German Desoxyribonukleinsäure – DNS] appear to be prevalent enough to be included in a vulgarised biotechnological explanation. Secondly, the process that unfolds in plants is seen as directly applicable and beneficial to the human skin. Thirdly –if only implicitly– the type of nature offered here is only accessible through high-tech methods and its effectiveness must be proven by scientific tests.

More classically, *Aok* continues to articulate its rhetoric around a rather clichéd nature-centred discourse with several attempts at defining it as a fountain of youth: “*Nature is always young, because it has the strength to regenerate itself year after year*”<sup>964</sup> or as the ultimate panacea: “*Nature – that is strength, health, beauty and life*”.<sup>965</sup> It also encourages its consumers with a rather weird injunction: “*Build an alliance with nature – against stress and the environment. For naturally beautiful skin.*”<sup>966</sup> It is not the alliance with nature that is surprising here since this was already the essence of *Aok*’s motto in the early 1980s – a fact underscored by a small picture of a young woman gathering plants in a rocky landscape. Neither is the anti-stress discourse revolutionary. Rather, it is the coalition against the environment that is new and perturbing, since in this case the “environment” is not perceived in the now dominant ecological acceptance but as the threatening and hectic man-made (urban) landscape.

Even in more mainstream products, discourse focuses on the deadly stress and environment couple. *Lian* soberly states: “*Every day, your skin is burdened by stress and the environment*”<sup>967</sup> whereas *Placentubex* frames negative influences with a “scientific” backing: “*Scientists note that stress, indoor climate and increasingly strong environmental influences deprive your skin of its youthful freshness earlier than ever.*”<sup>968</sup> In these two examples, it seems that the environment is again understood as the threatening man-made one. In contrast, *Élastine* privileges a more subjective and down-to-earth perspective: “*My skin is an expression of my well-being and the traces left by stress, hustle and bustle, dust and wind get to my skin.*”<sup>969</sup> Which is why *Lysmina* suggests the following cure: “*Every day retire from your environment for a few minutes. Give yourself a break. Treat your skin to a little relaxation.*” If this advice smacks of Eastern meditative influences, this impression is reinforced by the picture of a woman in a short kimono-style robe sitting in a simplified lotus-position and holding a tray where all the products of the *Lysmina* line are carefully positioned –all this against a rice paper screen background reminiscent of a tea ceremony.<sup>970</sup>

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*Zellerneuerung der Epidermis und schenkt der Haut neue Dynamik und Spannkraft. Die hohe Wirksamkeit wurde durch wissenschaftliche Tests bewiesen.*”

<sup>964</sup> Ad for *Aok Natural Active* (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1985): „*Die Natur ist immer jung, denn sie hat die Kraft, sich Jahr für Jahr zu regenerieren.*”

<sup>965</sup> Ad for *Aok Pure Vital* (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1985): „*Natur – das ist Kraft, Gesundheit, Schönheit und Leben.*”

<sup>966</sup> *Ibid.*: „*Schließen Sie ein Bündnis mit der Natur – gegen Streß und Umwelt. Für eine natürlich schöne Haut.*”

<sup>967</sup> Ad for *Lian* Pflegesystem (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 36, 1986): „*Ihre Haut wird täglich durch Stress und Umwelt stark belastet.*”

<sup>968</sup> Ad for *Placentubex C* (*Für Sie*, Heft 23, 1985): „*Wissenschaftler stellen fest, daß Streß, Raumklima und starker werdende Umwelteinflüsse der Haut ihre jugendliche Frische immer früher entziehen.*”

<sup>969</sup> Ad for *Élastine* Pflegeserie (*prima*, Heft 8, 1986): „*Meine Haut ist der Ausdruck meines Wohlbefindens und das, was Streß und Hektik, Staub und Wind an Spuren hinterlassen, macht auch meiner Haut zu schaffen.*”

<sup>970</sup> Ad for *Lysmina* die Reine Kosmetik (*Freundin*, Heft 10, 1985): „*Entziehen Sie sich täglich für ein paar Minuten Ihrer Umwelt. Schenken Sie sich etwas Ruhe. Gönnen Sie Ihrer Haut ein wenig Entspannung.*”

Otherwise sera seem to have become very fashionable, with products from *Clarins*, *Lancôme* or *Helena Rubinstein*. The first company claims that its *Double Sérum Multi-Régénérant* (comprising an *Hydra Sérum* and a *Lipo Sérum*) combine 17 main ingredients and supports 5 functions: “regeneration, revitalisation, moisture regulation, skin respiration and protection”<sup>971</sup> – functions that are reflected in another French product, *Energie Active* by *Biotherm*, a day cream that promises the same palette in slightly altered words: “moisture balancing, regeneration, revitalization, oxygen exchange, skin-like protection”.<sup>972</sup> Activation is also a key-word in the ads for *Lancôme’s Sérum Oligo-Major* (combining animal tissue and yeast extracts as well as minerals)<sup>973</sup> or *Juwel-Regenerations-Activum* (also with minerals and vitamin E)<sup>974</sup> and *Helena Rubinstein’s Existence Skin Building Serum* – a particularly apt name in the heart of the fitness era. This impression is reinforced by a facial massage appliance, the so-called *Dermoaktivator* and a statement whereby the firm has made the “revolutionary” discovery that “skin needs energy, in order to remain strong and taut”.<sup>975</sup>

Another central emphasis in those years is on night creams. They should be used because “Today, sleep as a natural recuperation process no longer suffices to eliminate signs of tiredness from the skin, since it is burdened by stress and environmental influences.”<sup>976</sup> Nature here is seen as losing against the negative side-effects of technology. Night creams are thus a privileged tool to regenerate the skin since the skin’s biorhythmic curve<sup>977</sup> seems to imply that “cell regeneration is particularly effective during the night, which is why the skin is particularly receptive to nurturing active ingredients”. This process should make it easier to counter “negative environmental influences such as exhaust gases, hard water, dry heat, dust and stress”.<sup>978</sup>

<sup>971</sup> Ad for *Clarins Double Sérum* (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1985): “Regeneration, Revitalisierung, Feuchtigkeitsregulierung, Hautatmung und Hautschutz”.

<sup>972</sup> Ad for *Biotherm Energie Active* (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986): “Feuchtigkeits-Ausgleich, Regenerierung, Revitalisierung, Sauerstoffaustausch, hauteigener Schutz”.

<sup>973</sup> Ad for *Lancôme’s Sérum Oligo-Major* (*prima*, Heft 3, 1986).

<sup>974</sup> Ad for *Juwel-Regenerations-Activum* in Ampullen (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 39, 1986). It should perhaps be noted here that instead of the usual glamorous and younger-looking model, the woman presented here looks like a “normal” forty-something housewife (she is presented as Frau Katrin Berger) with particularly fresh skin. This seems to be a strategy more readily embraced by what one could describe as more “working-class” publications or magazines designed for an older target group, such as *Bunte* or *Frau im Spiegel*. There, ads for *Sanabil* [Vitamin E-Creme für die Haut ab 40] (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985) or *frei öl* (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 38, 1986) also picture realistic models with well preserved skin.

<sup>975</sup> Ad for *Helena Rubinstein Existence Skin Building Serum* (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1985): „Haut braucht Energie, um fest und straff zu sein.“

<sup>976</sup> Ad for *Biotherm Actif Nuit* (*Für Sie*, Heft 14, 1985): „Der natürliche Erholungsprozeß des Schlafes reicht heute nicht mehr aus, Müdigkeitserscheinungen der Haut – ausgelöst durch Streß und Umwelteinflüsse – zu beseitigen.“

<sup>977</sup> This seems to be confirmed by „Ab 17 Uhr nimmt Ihre Haut am meisten auf“, a *Brigitte* article featuring an interview with a dermatologist, Prof. Bernward Rohde. When questioned about whether the skin has a biological clock and whether it reacts differently by day and by night, the specialist replies: „Die Haut reagiert nach einem festgelegten System, um sich zu erneuern und um Schäden auszubessern. Einmal geht es um die Durchblutung, zum anderen um die Zellerneuerung.“ Further he specifies the times when the skin is especially active: „[...] morgens zwischen fünf und sechs Uhr, nachmittags ab 17 Uhr, gegen 21.30 und von 22 Uhr wieder bis morgens um fünf Uhr.“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 1986, pp. 67 ss., p. 67).

<sup>978</sup> Ad for *Ellen Betrix Effect Rich Night Care* (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985): „Nachts läuft die Zellerneuerung auf Hochtouren. Darum ist die Haut im Schlaf auch besonders aufnahmefähig für Aktive Pflegewirkstoffe“; „Schädliche Umwelteinflüsse wie Autoabgase, hartes Wasser, trockene Heizungsluft, Staub und Streß“.

For women who cannot be bothered with the stress of a beauty routine involving a myriad of special products, the field still offers all-in-one preparations, from *Monteil's Supplegen* ("24 hours care"), to *Merz Spezial Crème Multi-Aktiv für Tag und Nacht* ("and you just need one").<sup>979</sup> But the most striking example is no doubt the ad for *Penaten's Gesichts- und Körperpflege* [face and body care] that makes fun of the diversification of cosmetics by presenting 16 identical pots of cream in four rows, with a different caption over each pot (e.g. "for the nose", "for the shoulders", "for the belly", "for the hands" or "for the calves"). Only the sixteenth pot states "For you, to test". The rationale here is that since the cream was especially conceived for delicate baby skin, it is also perfectly adapted to any adult sensitive skin. Hence –as a family cream– it is even more multifunctional.<sup>980</sup>

Creams for an older segment, which were launched in the previous years, are really booming, as displayed by the two leaders in the fields: *Quenty Forty* and *Harriet Hubbard Ayer*. The former, a German firm, continues along the lines developed until then: it emphasises the justifiable claims of older skin and displays understatedly elegant forty-somethings.<sup>981</sup> And the latter, a company based upon the legacy of Harriet Hubbard Ayer,<sup>982</sup> uses models that radiate an even stronger "superwoman" aura. The mature, self-assured sophistication emanating from these women is also reinforced by the following texts: "I have decided. I use Radiance Energy. Today I know what I want. I want to enjoy my job and I feel comfortable in my own skin" or "I know what I want. I use the Double Action Line. Just as I attach great importance to quality for all the important things in life, I make high demands on my cosmetics."<sup>983</sup> These ads seem to pay a tribute to the increasing professionalisation of women, a development that is seen as providing them with increased self-confidence and –implicitly– purchasing power.

Feature articles concentrate on the everlasting anti-ageing preoccupation, i.e. wrinkles and how to prevent them. *Für Sie*, for example, takes a personalised tack by advising a young homemaker of 34, Christine Meyer, on how to treat the first wrinkles since "This moment arises in every woman's life: the moment when she discovers her first wrinkles".<sup>984</sup> Before the *Für Sie* beauty team stepped in to help her, she only used a toner and an all-purpose cream. To attenuate her nascent wrinkles and tone her skin, she had to be taught how to use a complete series for dry skin (special eye and throat creams, a day cream with a sun filter), how to massage her face, how to use a face scrub and a mask once a week and how to treat

<sup>979</sup> Ads for *Monteil Supplegen* (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985): „die 24-Stunden-Pflege“ & *Merz Spezial Creme* (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985): „Und Sie brauchen nur noch ein“.

<sup>980</sup> Ad for *Penaten Gesichts- und Körperpflege* (*Für Sie*, Heft 14, 1985): „Für die Nase“; „Für die Schulter“; „Für den Bauch“; „Für die Hände“; „Für die Waden“; „Für Sie, zum probieren“.

<sup>981</sup> Ads for *Quenty forty* (*Bunte*, Heft 13, 1985 & *prima*, Heft 7, 1986 & *Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 43, 1986).

<sup>982</sup> Cf. <http://ayer-cosmetics.com/en/historie/> [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>983</sup> Ads for *Harriet Hubbard Ayer Radiance Energy + Facial Stimulator* (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985 & *prima*, Heft 4, 1986) & *Harriet Hubbard Ayer Double Action Line* (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1986): „Ich habe mich entschieden! Ich nehme Radiance Energy. Ich weiß heute was ich will. Ich habe Spaß an meinem Job und fühle mich wohl in meiner Haut“; „Ich weiss, was ich will. Ich nehme die Double Action Line. Ebenso, wie ich in allen wichtigen Dingen des Lebens wert auf Qualität lege, stelle ich auch bei der Wahl meiner Kosmetik hohe Ansprüche.“ The rhetorical style of this ad is very suggestive of the discourse used to promote the *Du Darfst* light foods in 1980, to wit: „Ich will so bleiben, wie ich bin... ..und ich mache mir nichts vor: Essen macht nun mal nicht schlank. Aber ich ernähre mich kalorienbewußt und bleibe so besser in form. ‚Du darfst‘ steht mir, schmeckt mir und paßt zu mir.“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 15, 1980)

<sup>984</sup> „So werden Sie mit den ersten Fältchen fertig“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 11.09.1985, p. 59): „Der Augenblick kommt im Leben jeder Frau: Der Moment, in dem sie ihre ersten Falten entdeckt“.

her skin with ampoules and specific anti-wrinkle creams twice a year. Avoiding prolonged sunbathing, wearing sunglasses to avoid creases around the eyes and avoiding drastic weight gains or losses are general rules that are also listed in the article. While these recommendations are not new and represent the backbone of most cosmetic vulgarisation articles, their enumeration in parallel with the woman's previous routine appears almost overwhelming –as much in terms of time and money investment as ideologically. Indeed, it displays westernised societies' internalised expectations about women, whose self-worth and social recognition are intimately tied to values of youth, performance and attractiveness, hence appropriate grooming –values which at that point in time do not yet apply as stringently to men.

Another article, in *prima*<sup>985</sup> this time, details how wrinkles emerge, describes the best anti-wrinkle substances and a couple of novelties in the field before answering the question of potential habituation to anti-wrinkle creams. Besides explaining the intricacies of skin metabolism to the lay reader, the most interesting section is the one detailing advances in cosmetology and its limits:

Recently, scientists have found new ways to counter the declining vitality of the skin. One of the strategies are active ingredients: the “je ne sais quoi” in creams, ampoules and lotions that boosts the metabolism, improves the cellular structure, and mitigates natural deficiencies, without crossing the boundary to pharmacy, because this is forbidden for cosmetics. Moreover, nowadays the effects – even in depth – are provable thanks to state-of-the-art scientific methods.<sup>986</sup>

Even though cosmetics, as a field in which scientists are described as the motors of discovery, potentially submits itself to the burden of scientific proof, these very scientists have to walk a tightrope between effectiveness and a clear demarcation from pharmacy. However the article does not articulate the nature of this demarcation and the scant explanations provided for specific substances –from aloe vera to RNA through collagen, elastin, carotene, royal jelly, hyaluronic acid, NMF (natural moisturising factor), panthenol, phytohormones, “Repair Complex” and retinol– do not really enable a lay-reader to grasp the significant differences between the two fields. To wit, ribonucleic acid is defined thus: “*Stimulates the production of new cells and participates in the protein synthesis of skin cells*”. Other explanations fluctuate between the rather ambitiously specialised use of “*mucopolysaccharide*” to describe hyaluronic acid (embedded in a more straightforward explanation, it is true), a terse but understandable formulation such as “*A package of natural moisturising factors, such as: lactic acid, urea, sugar derivatives*” for NMF<sup>987</sup> and the rather

<sup>985</sup> „Länger schöne und glatte Haut – das ist möglich“ (*prima*, Heft 9, 1986, p. 109).

<sup>986</sup> Ibid.: „In letzter Zeit sind die Wissenschaftler auf neue Wege gestoßen, wie sie der nachlassenden Vitalität der Haut begegnen können. Ein Mittel dazu sind die Wirkstoffe: das “gewisse Etwas” in Cremes, Ampullen, Lotionen, das den Stoffwechsel ankurbeln, die Zellstruktur verbessern, naturgegebene Mangelerscheinungen lindern soll, ohne die Barriere zur Pharmazie zu überspringen. Denn das ist in der Kosmetik verboten. Die Wirkungen – auch in der Tiefe – sind übrigens heute durch modernste wissenschaftliche Methoden nachweisbar.“

<sup>987</sup> A good dermatological description of the NMF can be found here: Ehrich, Dana, *Klinische Wirksamkeit und Verträglichkeit von topisch appliziertem Agmatin*, online dissertation (<http://sundoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/diss-online/06/07H055/prom.pdf>), Faculty of Medicine, Martin-Luther-University, Halle-Wittenberg (defended on 21.12.2006), p. 5 (Einleitung) : „Neben den lipophilen sind aber auch hydrophile Elemente vorhanden, die für die Funktionsweise der Hornschicht essentiell sind. Substanzen, die Wasser innerhalb der Hornschicht binden, werden als Wasserbindungsfaktoren oder Natural Moisturizing Factor (NMF) bezeichnet

vague “*Food of the queen bee. Contains many vital elements*” to explain the benefits of royal jelly. On the other hand, more recent developments are more carefully described, as in the example of substances used to counter the “new” enemy, i.e. “free-radicals”, which are described as “*aggressive degradation products that arise from oxidation and attack the cells. Among other things, they can damage genetic information, i.e. the construction design of the cell, so that it no longer functions correctly*”. Finally the article ends on a sober note, emphasising that if consumers need not fear an habituation effect (“*Anyway the skin only absorbs and assimilates what it needs*”), anti-wrinkle preparations are only effective when applied regularly and over a long period, and their effect subsides over a period of 28 days after application ceases.<sup>988</sup>

If the two preceding articles have shown the complexity of everyday routines to fight wrinkles and have displayed the sophistication of new products, the strategies suggested and the effects promised seem rather limited compared to more radical ventures to combat ageing skin, since cosmetology also offers treatments that appear inextricable from pharmacy –if not cosmetic surgery. A sensational but also rather scary anti-wrinkle revolution is exposed in a *Bunte* article on the new technique developed by an American cosmetologist, Alexander Le Bon, and recently imported into Germany.<sup>989</sup> Indeed, not only does the treatment he offers far outstrip the time and financial investments required by more mainstream practices, it also leaves the reader with nagging doubts about potentially pernicious physiological and psychological side-effects.

The main illustration above the title “*Thirty years younger: a cosmetologist combats facial wrinkles without anaesthesia, scalpel or injections*” exhibits the head of a woman divided in two: the left half shows a wrinkled granny face and the right half displays a face where most

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[24]. Dieser ist ein Mix aus verschiedenen niedermolekularen, wasserlöslichen Substanzen, der neben Harnstoff, ein wichtiger Vertreter hinsichtlich therapeutischer Verwendung, hauptsächlich aus Aminosäuren, Lactat, Pyrrolidincarbonsäure und verschiedenen anorganischen Ionen besteht (Tab. 1) [24, 48, 75]. Der NMF ist vor allem in den Corneozyten lokalisiert und macht rund 10% der Corneozytenmasse aus [48]. Bestandteile des NMF sind auch extrazellulär zu finden, insbesondere Harnstoff, Lactat und Zucker [61, 75]. Die Komponenten des NMF werden in erster Linie im Corneozyten erzeugt, durch komplette Hydrolyse eines Proteins, des Filaggrins [27]. Durch Anziehen und Binden von Wasser in der Hornschicht ist der NMF verantwortlich für die Regulation der Hydratation [48].“ Otherwise, cosmetic implications are described here (including scientific sources): “NMFs make up an expansive group of ingredients that include amino acids, ceramides, hyaluronic acid, cholesterol, fatty acids, triglycerides, phospholipids, glycosphingolipids, urea, linoleic acid, glycosaminoglycans, glycerin, mucopolysaccharide, and sodium PCA (pyrrolidone carboxylic acid). Ingredients that mimic the lipid content of skin include apricot oil, canola oil, coconut oil, corn oil, jojoba oil, jojoba wax, lanolin, lecithin, olive oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, shea butter, soybean oil, squalane, and sweet almond oil, all of which can be extremely helpful in making dry skin look and feel better.” <http://www.cosmeticscop.com/cosmetic-ingredient-dictionary/definition/989/natural-moisturizing-factor-nmf.aspx>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>988</sup> Ibid.: „Regt Zellneubildung an und ist an der Eiweißsynthese der Hautzellen beteiligt“; „Mucopolysaccharid“; „Ein Paket natürlicher Feuchtigkeitsfaktoren, z.B: Milchsäure, Harnstoff, Zuckerverwandte“; „Futterstoff der Bienenkönigin. Enthält viele Vitalstoffe“; „aggressive Abbauprodukte, die bei Oxydation entstehen und die Zellen angreifen. Unter anderem kann dadurch die Erbinformation, also der Bauplan der Hautzelle, beschädigt werden, so daß sie nicht mehr richtig funktioniert.“; „Es wird von der Haut ohnehin nur das aufgenommen und verarbeitet, was fehlt.“

<sup>989</sup> Von Bassewitz, Corinna, “Dreißig Jahre jünger: Ohne Narkose, Skalpell und Spritzen bekämpft ein Kosmetiker Falten im Gesicht” (*Bunte*, Heft 18, 25.04.1985, pp. 52-53). However, the article does later emphasise that the method has been perfected from a process discovered 90 years previously by a dermatologist named Garbo Gustavson in New York.

of the creases seem to have been ironed out. The complex process labelled as “chemo-surgery” is then detailed as follows:

First Alexander Le Bon examines the client’s complexion. Then, on the basis of a secret recipe, he prepares a tincture adapted to the skin, which he then applies to all the wrinkles on the face. This procedure lasts almost three hours. Finally, the face is covered with a plaster mask that airtightly seals the treated area. [...] When the plaster mask is removed [after 3 days!], the skin is red and still very sensitive. [...] The face is then treated with a cooling powder. [...] On the seventh day a creamy mask containing healing substances is applied and removed on the tenth and final day. Now the skin is only slightly flushed.<sup>990</sup>

The method can be summed up as an extremely aggressive abrasion of the epithelium, followed by a lengthy healing process of the raw dermis to form a new “rejuvenated” epithelium. According to the cosmetologist, the effect of the treatment lasts about a year, but the article does not specify whether it can be repeated or not. However, the cosmetologist spontaneously insists that “*Cosmetics are a positive illusion, when they are correctly applied*” and that this treatment appeals to men and women of all ages because it can also be used to correct other skin imperfections such as e.g. a rough skin texture or pigmentation marks. But the main prerequisite for the treatment is “*a healthy attitude towards oneself*” since “*the psychological dimension plays an important role in cosmetic treatments*”. The article closes with enthusiastic reports from the husband of a client and another female client, as well as a reference to the costs (8-10,000 DM) of the treatment as well as counterindications.<sup>991</sup>

Other feature articles on cosmetics focus on more traditional skin care techniques and products that are not primarily geared towards anti-ageing: from the importance of face and body scrubs,<sup>992</sup> to the care of particular features (e.g. eyes),<sup>993</sup> special seasonal care,<sup>994</sup> as well as specific skin challenges or ailments such as allergies. An article on the latter not only provides a lay public with a comprehensible clinical picture of this particular ailment but also aims to demystify a number of connected myths or aspects. After stating that dermatological clinics have compiled lists of potential allergens, the article goes on to emphasise the following: “*Actually, there are less synthetic substances in these than plant-based ones. Besides lanolin and certain aromatic compounds, plants reputed as ‘therapeutic’ such as camomile and arnica frequently trigger allergies*”. Moreover, it warns against exaggerated allergy suspicion: “*If one suddenly reacts with a rash, red patches or small pimples when using one’s usual or a new cosmetic product, most of the time it is not an allergy at all. Indeed, it could simply be a case of using the wrong product*”. Other causes include changing cosmetic needs over the years, products that are too rich for an oily skin or skin that has

<sup>990</sup> Ibid.: „Zuerst untersucht Alexander Le Bon das Hautbild des Kunden. Dann mixt er nach einem Geheimrezept eine auf die Haut abgestimmte Tinktur, mit der sämtliche Falten im Gesichtsbereich bestrichen werden. Diese Prozedur dauert fast drei Stunden. Anschließend wird das Gesicht in einer Pflastermaske verpackt, die das behandelte Feld luftdicht versiegelt. [...] Wenn die Pflastermaske abgenommen wird [after three days!], ist die Haut gerötet und noch sehr empfindlich. [...] Es folgt dann eine Behandlung des Gesichts mit einem kühlenden Puder [...] Am siebten Tag schließlich wird eine Crème-Maske aus Heilsstoffen aufgelegt, die am zehnten und letzten Tagen abgenommen wird. Jetzt ist die Haut nur noch leicht gerötet.“

<sup>991</sup> Ibid.: „Kosmetik ist eine positive Illusion[sic], wenn sie richtig angewandt wird“; „eine gesunde Einstellung zu sich selber“; „bei einer kosmetischen Behandlung spielt der psychologische Moment eine wichtige Rolle.“

<sup>992</sup> E.g. „Peeling: Die Rubbelmassage, die Sie schöner macht“ (prima, Heft, 10, 1986, p. 117).

<sup>993</sup> E.g. „Pflegen Sie Ihre Augen schön“ (prima, Heft 11, 1986, p. 147).

<sup>994</sup> E.g. „Extras, die der Haut jetzt guttun“ (prima, Heft 3, 1986, p. 83).

been washed too frequently and thus suffers from a damaged acid mantle. Finally, it reveals what should be understood under the “allergy-tested” label: “*This means that a preparation has been tested on a series of test subjects –usually typical allergy sufferers– and was deemed innocuous*” and the meaning of “*hypo-allergenic*”: “*Products are labelled as ‘hypoallergenic’ when they are particularly mild and do not contain any of the known allergens from the so-called negative lists*”.<sup>995</sup>

### **1988-1989: Pure nature, performance and Dorian Gray’s tools**

Natural cosmetics seem to be enjoying an upswing in the late 1980s with the emergence of new lines or products and the heightened promotion of existing ones. Surprisingly the *Aok* staple is much less dominant: it is *Claire Fisher* cosmetics that seem to have taken over in terms of “presence”. As in the discourse surrounding mainstream products, the “environmental stress” rhetoric is also present in natural care advertisements. *Claire Fisher* recommends rewarding the skin with its *Crème Gelée Royal* because “*after all, [your skin] has bravely wrestled against environmental influences and climate change*”.<sup>996</sup> Here, an interesting addition to the usual environmental factors is the influence of climate change. This reference is in fact rather puzzling since, until very recently, the impact of climate change may have been (often controversially) charted for the global ecosystem but not really for the human body, let alone the skin.<sup>997</sup> It thus seems that this reference should be read more generally as an additional threat to human life. At any rate, as described by *Ellen Betrix*, nature no longer seems to be taken for granted: “*Crystal clear water, pure and clean air, refreshing summer rain – pure nature has become precious*”.<sup>998</sup>

<sup>995</sup> „Allergie auf Kosmetik?“ (*prima*, Heft 11, 1986, p. 150): „*Synthetische Stoffe finden sich darin übrigens seltener als Stoffe pflanzlicher Herkunft. Neben Wollfett (Lanolin) und gewissen Duftstoffen sind z.B. auch als ‚Heilpflanzen‘ bekannte Kräuter wie Kamille und Arnika häufige Allergieauslöser.*“; „*Wer plötzlich bei seiner alten oder einer neuen Kosmetik mit Ausschlag, Rötungen oder Pickelchen reagiert, der hat zum Glück in den meisten Fällen noch lange keine Allergie. Möglicherweise benutzt man einfach das falsche Produkt.*“; „*Das heißt, daß ein Präparat an einer Reihe von Testpersonen – meistens typische Allergiker in Kliniken -ausprobiert und für harmlos befunden wurde.*“; „*mit ‚hypoallergen‘ werden Produkte bezeichnet, die besonder mild sind und keine der bekannten Allergieauslöser aus den sogenannten Negativlisten enthalten*“.

<sup>996</sup> Ad for *Claire Fisher* Kosmetik (*prima*, Heft 6, 1988): „*[Ihre Haut] hat sich schließlich tapfer gegen Umwelteinflüsse und Klimawechsel gewehrt.*“

<sup>997</sup> A few relatively recent exceptions are e.g.: Van der Leun, Jan C., de Gruijl, Frank R., “Climate Change and Skin Cancer”, *Photochemical and Photobiological Sciences*, Issue 5, 2002, pp. 324-326, also available here: [http://www.global500.org/docs/CC\\_and\\_SC.pdf](http://www.global500.org/docs/CC_and_SC.pdf); Hui, Young, Thong, Haw-Yueh, Maibach, Howard I., “Global Warming and its Dermatological Impact on Aging Skin”, *Textbook of Aging Skin*, Eds Miranda A. Farage, Kenneth W. Miller & Howard I. Maibach, Berlin & Heidelberg: Springer, 2010, pp. 427-428; Boschert, Sherry, “Climate Change May Bring More Disease”, *Skin and Allergy News*, 07.01.2011, online: <http://www.skinandallergynews.com/news/medical-dermatology/single-article/climate-change-may-bring-more-skin-disease/5e4e50f2b5.html>. An article focusing on a German perspective (Augustin, Jobst, Franzke, Nadine, Augustin, Matthias & Kappas, Martin, “Does climate change affect the incidence of skin and allergic diseases in Germany?”, *Journal der Deutschen Dermatologischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 6, Issue 8, 2008, pp. 632-638) even states the following in the abstract conclusion: “*Only few scientific articles on the relationship between climate changes and the prevalence of skin diseases have been published. They do not allow a reliable statement on future developments. The outlook for changes in prevalence requires further clarification using published climate models.*” Cf.: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1610-0387.2008.06676.x/abstract>. [Websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>998</sup> Ad for *Ellen Betrix* Mild + Soft line (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989): „*Kristallklares Wasser, reine, saubere Luft, erfrischender Sommerregen - die pure Natur ist kostbar geworden*“.

*Apotheker Scheller* goes a step further and conjoins environmental strain with the stress potential of synthetics in mainstream cosmetics,<sup>999</sup> thus going even a step further than contemporary discourse on allergy-tested or hypo-allergenic products: “Nowadays, many women have very sensitive skin. It reacts negatively to the weather, stress and poor air quality, and increasingly also to synthetic substances in skincare products”. Which is why this product line is advertised as containing “only high-quality natural plant extracts, cold-pressed oils and vegetable fats, but no synthetic colourings and perfumes”.<sup>1000</sup> Similar formulations are used by *Ellen Betrix*: “With natural active ingredients, with vitamin E. But perfume- and colouring-free”<sup>1001</sup> as well as *shoynear*: “This why shoynear products contain the greatest possible amount of natural ingredients and a minimum of emulgators and preservatives”.<sup>1002</sup>

Nevertheless, even if ingredients are as natural as possible and processing kept to a minimum, rational care is stressed as with other mainstream cosmetics. It is thus necessary to use products embedded in a specific system, as described in an ad for *Claire Fisher*: “It provides systemic care for every skintype: with soft cleansing, intensive day- and night care as well as tender body care”<sup>1003</sup> or in a programme, as expounded in an ad for *Apotheker Scheller*: “This why Apotheker Scheller has consciously designed its natural cosmetics programme based on very simple and traditional formulations”.<sup>1004</sup> Finally, even though aloe vera has not yet attained its future “cosmetic panacea” status, it seems to be gradually gaining in popularity as an effective moisturiser.<sup>1005</sup>

As to mainstream products, the appeal of progress and performance is still considerable as encapsulated in the formula coined by *L’Oréal*: “You keep up with the times. Progress and performance are essential for you”.<sup>1006</sup> Strangely, science and technology are particularly extolled in publicity for French cosmetics.<sup>1007</sup> A good example of this phenomenon is provided by *Lancôme* with its ads for *Niosôme* and *Noctosôme*. Alongside a title extolling “The treasures of science”, the first cream is presented against a background of glass or plastic bubbles that supposedly symbolise a revolutionary discovery:

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<sup>999</sup> This vision thus contradicts the aforementioned *prima* article that reminded its readers that natural ingredients were more likely to trigger allergies than synthetic ones.

<sup>1000</sup> Ad for *Apotheker Scheller* Naturkosmetik (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 1989): „Viele Frauen haben heute sehr empfindsame Haut. Sie reagiert gereizt auf das Wetter, Streß und dicke Luft. Und immer häufiger auch auf synthetische Stoffe in Hautpflege-Produkten.“; „nur hochwertige natürliche Pflanzenextrakte, kaltgepresste Öle und Pflanzenfette, aber keine synthetischen Farbstoffe und Parfüms.“

<sup>1001</sup> Ad for *Ellen Betrix* Mild + Soft line (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989): „Mit natürlichen Wirkstoffen, mit Vitamin E. Aber ohne Farbstoff und ohne Parfüm“.

<sup>1002</sup> Ad for *shoynear* Hydrosoft line (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989): „Deshalb enthalten shoynear Präparate einen größtmöglichen Anteil natürlicher Inhaltsstoffe und ein Minimum an Emulgatoren und Konservierungsmitteln.“

<sup>1003</sup> Ad for *Claire Fisher* Kosmetik (*prima*, Heft 7, 1988): „Sie pflegt jede Haut mit System. Mit sanfter Reinigung, intensiver Tages- und Nachtpflege und zarter Körperpflege“.

<sup>1004</sup> Ad for *Apotheker Scheller* Naturkosmetik (*Für Sie*, Heft 16, 1989): „Apotheker Scheller hat sein Naturkosmetikprogramm deshalb bewußt auf ganz einfachen, traditionellen Rezepturen aufgebaut“.

<sup>1005</sup> Cf. e.g. Ad for *Alovisa* Haut Vital [Naturtrend Aloe Vera] (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 1989) or ad for *Claire Fisher* Aloe Vera Fältchencreme (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 1989).

<sup>1006</sup> Ad for *L’Oréal* Plénitude (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989): “Sie gehen mit der Zeit. Für Sie zählen Fortschritt und Leistung“.

<sup>1007</sup> Is it because of France’s long and outstanding engineering tradition? Or its secular consideration for scientific rationality ever since the Enlightenment? I can only speculate here...

10 years of research and an invaluable scientific discovery are enclosed in this pot: Niosôme – the finest lipidic particles, the structure of which exactly mimics the lipidic particles produced by the body. When science and beauty reach out to each other, extraordinary things happen. [...] A care system, based on 9 international patents. A development that was kept secret for a long time until, finally, anti-aging day creams caused a stir and a sensation internationally.<sup>1008</sup>

The discourse surrounding this product is particularly revealing of the role of applied science in cosmetics. Research here focuses on imitating bodily components and processes but, as opposed to nature whose treasures are freely available, *Lancôme's* discoveries are highly protected because this type of research is both time-consuming and very expensive –not to mention the appeal of a certain mysteriousness or secrecy in the pursuit of beauty. The ad for *Noctosôme*, the so-called *Système Rénovateur de Nuit* [night-time renovating system], is presented as “*The number 1 night-care based on the principles of chronobiology*” since it “*is attuned to the natural rhythms of the skin*”.<sup>1009</sup> Sophisticated scientific discourse –few consumers are probably aware of the meaning of “*chronobiology*”– has to be spelt out here, revealing that the cream has been engineered to serve natural rhythms.

An even more spectacular example of the bridging between nature and technology is an ad for *Monteil's Ice Pure Nature Factor 100* presented as “*Nature + Technology: the revolutionary breakthrough in modern face care*” while smaller letters spell out: “*Pure Nature Energy – Without preservatives – fosters your inexhaustible strength directly at the basis of your skin*”.<sup>1010</sup> At face value, nature just functions as a sort of vague pedigree or an absence of at least one potentially high-tech feature, i.e. preservation. A more elaborate and text-rich ad for the same product provides more information on this “*natural wonder*”. According to the explanations, the *Pure Nature Factor 100* stems from an alga. Researchers have managed to isolate this “*100% pure biological energy ingredient with a revolutionary property: structural comparability with the skin's intercellular fluid*”. What is stressed again here is technology's ability to isolate interesting natural substances that mimic some aspect of human skin biology or metabolism. There follows a long explanation on how *Ice* provides a unique “*energy service*” that reinforces all skin functions. Of course:

Until now, only *Monteil* has managed to isolate this natural ingredient in a 100% pure form and with full caring effectiveness by means of a patented technology. The airtight dosage system is also a new and exemplary patented solution that guarantees the absence of germs, thus maximum effectiveness and tolerance – without any preservatives! The result when

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<sup>1008</sup> Ad for *Lancôme Niosôme Système Anti-Âge* (*prima*, Heft 6, 1988): “*Die Kostbarkeiten der Wissenschaft*”; „*In diesem Tiegel stecken 10 Jahre Forschung und eine wertvolle Entdeckung der Wissenschaft: Niosôme – feinste Fettkörperchen, deren Aufbau exakt den hauteigenen Fettkörpern entspricht. Wenn sich Wissenschaft und Schönheit die Hand reichen, geschieht Außergewöhnliches. [...] Ein Pflege-System, das auf 9 internationalen Patenten beruht. Eine Entwicklung, die lange geheimgehalten wurde, bis sie schließlich als die Tagespflege gegen das Altern für internationalen Aufsehen und Furore sorgte.*”

<sup>1009</sup> Ad for *Lancôme Noctosôme* (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989): “*Die 1. Nachtpflege, die auf den Prinzipien der Chronobiologie aufgebaut ist*”; „*die auf die natürlichen Rhythmen der Haut abgestimmt ist*”.

<sup>1010</sup> Ad for *Monteil Ice Pure Nature Factor 100 Für Sie*, 10, 1989: „*Natur + Technologie: Der revolutionäre Durchbruch in der modernen Gesichtspflege*” & „*Pure Natur-Energie – Ohne Konservierungsstoffe – entfaltet ihre unerschöpfliche Kraft direkt an der Basis Ihrer Haut.*”

used daily: your skin is loaded with energy –soft, youthfully fresh and resistant. A natural beauty.<sup>1011</sup>

Without wanting to anticipate on my conclusions about the challenging marriage between nature and technology, it is interesting to note that whenever nature is mentioned, it is always purified, contained or controlled: in airtight sterile packaging, through patents, etc. Moreover, energy emerges here as the positive sister or antidote to stress. It is also a major theme in an ad for *Ellen Beatrix's Daily Skin Energizer* which suggests either falling in love or using the cream with a "liposome and ceramide system" to preserve a lovely youthful skin – an impression somewhat belied by the propped up head of a young woman (beneath the "Energy" heading), whose pose and sulky expression suggest neither energy nor enamoured radiance even if she does boast youthful skin.<sup>1012</sup> Energy, albeit in its inverted form i.e. strain, is also the theme of an ad for *Elizabeth Arden's Micro 2000 Complexe Anti-Stress* that is meant to provide an "energy boost for your skin". This is the first instance I have found of the word "stress" being used in the name of a cream. So-called hydrospheres which are "100 times smaller than any lipid forms used until now" form the basis of this "technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to solve the problem of the 20<sup>th</sup> century"<sup>1013</sup> –there again a very progressivist discourse.

Stress can also be perceived as the undertone of an ad for *Phas's "Resistance Liposom Activcreme"*. It portrays a young woman casually but elegantly attired, sitting or rather lounging –with her feet up on the opposite seat– in what looks like the first class compartment of a train. Her attitude connotes relaxation, since she has taken off her shoes and negligently placed her briefcase and her coat on the neighbouring seat. However, this attitude may be misleading since she is clasping a slip of paper and her glasses in her left hand whilst balancing what looks like a first-generation laptop between her legs with the other hand. The caption states: "A fresh look for 18 hours without any signs of tired skin". After describing the effects of the cream, the text reads: "The liposomes regularly release their active components. Your skin is supplied with new energy during 18 hours, without interruption." This spells new resistance against signs of tiredness and ageing and the result is "a radiant look everyday, from early morning to late at night".<sup>1014</sup> *Resistance* thus embodies the tensions of the fitness era: the sporty and relaxed attitude belies a rigorous working schedule. The woman is portrayed as an achiever but she must give the impression that it is somehow effortless. *Resistance* therefore efficiently provides a continuous supply of external energy to a superficially relaxed human motor: a "conveyor-belt" treatment is suggested to remedy the ills of a "conveyor belt" life. Corporate performance or at least

<sup>1011</sup> Ad for Monteil Ice (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1989): „Naturwunder“; „100% rein biologischen Energie-Wirkstoff mit einer bisher noch nie dagewesenen Eigenschaft: Die strukturelle Vergleichbarkeit mit der interzellularen Flüssigkeit der Haut.“; „Energie-Service“; „Nur Monteil ist es bisher durch patentierte Technologie gelungen, diesen Natur-Wirkstoff 100%ig rein und voll wirksam für die Pflege zu bewahren. Auch das luftdichte Dosiersystem ist eine neue, beispielhafte Patentlösung, die Keimfreiheit und damit beste Wirkung und Verträglichkeit garantiert. Ganz ohne Konservierungsstoffe! Das Ergebnis bei täglicher Anwendung: Ihre Haut ist energiegeladen - zart, jugendlich frisch und widerstandsfähig. Eine Naturschönheit.“

<sup>1012</sup> Ad for Ellen Beatrix Daily Skin Energizer (*Brigitte*, Heft 23, 1989): „Liposomen-Ceramid-System“.

<sup>1013</sup> Ad for Elizabeth Arden Micro 2000 Complexe Anti-Stress (*freundin*, Heft 20, 1989): „Energieschub für Ihre Haut“; „100 mal kleiner als alle bisher verwendeten Lipidarten“; „Technologie des 21. Jahrhunderts zur Lösung des Problems des 20. Jahrhunderts“.

<sup>1014</sup> Ad for Phas Resistance (*stern*, Heft 10, 1989): „18 Stunden frisches Aussehen ohne Zeichen von Hautermüdung“; „Gleichmäßig setzen die Liposome ihre Aktiv-Stoffe frei: 18 Stunden lang wird Ihrer Haut ununterbrochen neue Energie zugeführt.“; „jeden Tag von früh bis spät erholtes, strahlendes Aussehen“.

professional readiness also seems to be the motto of another *Phas* ad, this time for its *Grand Soin Anti-Rides* that portrays a young-looking middle-aged woman sitting on white steps outside a building. Her clothes are also relaxed but smart, an impression reinforced by her expensive looking jewellery. Her legs are splayed apart and she negligently balances a camera on the step before her. Further equipment lies around here as well as what appears to be a camera case. Her gaze self-confidently sustains that of the reader. The cream is described as “*ideal as special care in particularly demanding times*”.<sup>1015</sup>

Besides this type of sophistication, simpler all-in-one products are a resistant niche as emblematised by *Margaret Astor* moisturising creams that promote short and straightforward routines such as “*showering 1 x day and Moisturizing Cream N° 1*”.<sup>1016</sup> The small text beneath the bust of a woman smiling under the shower emphasises that the skin requires good circulation –provided by a cold shower– and moisturising –provided by the cream. Another example from the same company states: “*My daily beauty routine: laughing and Moisturizing Cream from Margaret Astor*”. The accompanying text supports this creed by adding “*When it comes to skincare, I am against thousands of pots and tubes*”.<sup>1017</sup> But the ultimate all-in-one cream is no doubt the evergreen Nivea. Indeed, beyond its existential mission –i.e. “*Nivea Crème. Essential for the skin.*”– it fits into the zeitgeist because it does not require preservatives. The ad goes on to explain that a blend between the purity and quality of the ingredients, the specificity of its water in oil emulsion as well as a special manufacturing process make preservatives superfluous.<sup>1018</sup>

Otherwise, the market displays an increasing segmentation: beyond creams for (post-)40 year olds and 30 year olds,<sup>1019</sup> product lines for the younger generation seem to be flourishing, from the *bebe* line that states that “*compared to older skin, young skin has completely different needs*”,<sup>1020</sup> to *Qenty sporty* that already provides moisturising and collagen for the skin of twenty year olds and above,<sup>1021</sup> to *Payot’s Ligne Purifiante* that caters to the urgent needs of young combination skin with products that promise to: “*•free clogged pores •normalise sebaceous secretions •prevent inflammation •strengthen the skin’s natural defenses, •make blackheads and pimples disappear quickly*”.<sup>1022</sup> Rather than nourishment or regeneration, the emphasis here is on purification.

In terms of novelties, one can note the special cleansing pads advertised by *Aapri* that are pre-drenched in an apricot cleansing lotion with one side devoted to “*in-depth cleansing*”

<sup>1015</sup> Ad for *Phas Grand Soin Anti-Rides* (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989): „*ideal als Spezialpflege in Zeiten besonderer Beanspruchung*“.

<sup>1016</sup> Ad for *Margaret Astor Feuchtigkeitscreme N° 1* (*prima*, Heft 5, 1988): „*1 x täglich duschen und Feuchtigkeits-Crème N° 1*“.

<sup>1017</sup> Ad for *Margaret Astor Feuchtigkeitscreme* (*prima*, Heft 12, 1988): „*Mein tägliches Schönheitsprogramm: Lachen und Feuchtigkeits-Crème von Margaret Astor*“; „*Ich bin gegen tausend Töpfe und Tiegel bei der Pflege*“.

<sup>1018</sup> Ad for *Nivea* (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 1989): „*Nivea Crème. Was die Haut zum Leben braucht*“.

<sup>1019</sup> E.g. Ad for *Qenty beauty* [Für die entscheidenden Jahre der Haut zwischen 30 und 40...] (*Brigitte*, Heft 10, 1989).

<sup>1020</sup> Ad for *bebe Gesichtspflege* (*Für Sie*, Heft 13, 1989): „*Eine junge Haut hat ganz andere Ansprüche als eine ältere*“.

<sup>1021</sup> Ad for *Qenty sporty* (*prima*, Heft 5, 1988).

<sup>1022</sup> Ad for *Payot Ligne Purifiante* (*prima*, Heft 5, 1988): „*Porenverstopfungen lösen •Talgabsonderungen normalisieren, •Entzündungen vorbeugen, •natürliche Abwehrkräfte der Haut stärken, •Mitesser und Pickel schnell verschwinden lassen.*“

and the other for the “*delicate areas of the face*”.<sup>1023</sup> Talking about cleansing, there can also be too much of a good thing, as illustrated by an ad for *BASIS pH* washing lotion –featuring a good-looking quasi-naked young man sitting in a shower or sauna setting. His posture betrays an interesting “new man” vision –blending strength with vulnerability or tenderness– that will become increasingly ubiquitous towards the turn of the century. Indeed, his slightly uplifted heels and his elbows resting on on his knees emphasise muscle bulge while his hands protectively clutch a white towel against his face. The picture thus complements the text that develops a particularly insistent didactical rhetoric, highlighting individuals’ responsibility in the health of their skins:

Please. Change your washing habits. Or your washing lotion. Dermatologists contend that over-frequent washing and showering harms the skin. This is reason enough to reconsider one’s views on skincare. A mild washing lotion would already be a first step, but not real progress. You should be aware that after each wash tiny particles of the cleaning substances remain on the surface of the skin and that, long after washing, they “perforate” the natural fatty protection of the skin. Thus, depending on skin type, the protective functions of the skin can lose their balance. Real progress would be a washing lotion –such as *BASIS pH* washing lotion– that has been proven to leave just about no residue on the skin. Furthermore, it is free of alkaline soap, it is colouring- and fragrance-free, is very well tolerated by the skin while containing a balanced proportion of lipid-replenishing substances.<sup>1024</sup>

*BASIS pH* thus appears to be a genuine forerunner of a trend towards synthetic washing lotions and soaps that will take off much later, i.e. towards the mid- 1990s, while building on the “-free” as well as “environmental threat” discourses that we have already discussed. In this case though, the man-made environment does not remain anonymous (such as “stress” or “pollution”). Instead, it is consumers who are directly indicted for a harmful, if still unconscious habit. The ad questions a normalised hygienic procedure –washing one’s body with conventional soaps– thus implicitly criticising most existing soaps. But pointedly, even if the ad does quote dermatologists’ condemnation of excessive hygiene, it does not advocate washing less but provides a technological quick-fix in order to avoid the negative side-effects of our modern obsession with cleanliness.<sup>1025</sup>

Otherwise, an ingredient that seems to be making its mark is an extract from the thymus gland that is supposed to have an enhanced rejuvenating effect.<sup>1026</sup> It should perhaps be

<sup>1023</sup> Ad for Aapri Duo Reinigungs Pads (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1989): „Tiefenreinigung“; „zarten Gesichtspartien“.

<sup>1024</sup> Ad for *BASIS pH* Wasch-Lotion (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 1989): „Bitte. Ändern Sie Ihre Waschgewohnheiten. Oder Ihre Wasch-Lotion. Allzu häufiges Waschen und Duschen schadet die Haut, meinen die Dermatologen. Grund genug also, seine Ansichten über die Hautpflege neu zu überdenken. Eine milde Wasch-Lotion wäre da schon ein erster Schritt, aber noch kein Fortschritt. Sie müssen wissen: Nach jedem Waschen bleiben häufig winzige Restpartikel der reinigenden Substanzen auf der Hautoberfläche zurück und „durchlöchern“ noch lange nach dem Waschen den natürlichen Fettschutz der Haut. Aber je nach Hauttyp können dann die Schutzfunktionen der Haut andauernd aus dem Gleichgewicht geraten. Ein wirklicher Fortschritt wäre eine Wasch-Lotion, die nachweislich keine nennenswerten Rückstände auf Ihrer Haut zurücklässt, wie die *BASIS pH* Wasch-Lotion. Und die ist obendrein noch alkaliseifen-frei, farbstoff-frei, parfum-neutral, sehr gut hautverträglich und enthält einen ausgewogenen Anteil an rückfettenden Substanzen.“

<sup>1025</sup> Indeed, according to Ulrich Wengenroth, this advice contrasts with 1970s mainstream advice to shower every other day or the famed “save water, shower with a friend” slogan popularised in the 1960s.

<sup>1026</sup> An isolated example already stems from 1985, i.e. an ad for Merck Thymoderm (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1985). More recent examples include ads for Toscana Thymosome [a coinage drawing on thymus and liposome] (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1989) and bipharm Sympathik 2000 Liposomen-Gel [Mit hochwirksamem Vitamin A und wertvollem Thymusextrakt] (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1989).

noted here that animal extracts are extremely frequent in mainstream products, especially collagen or placenta extracts. At this point in time, there is no trace of placatory discourse to spare the sensitivity of animal lovers or simply of those who may not like the idea of applying substances derived from aborted animal fetuses onto their skins...

The main obsession of feature articles on skin care revolves around proven and novel anti-ageing strategies. Similar explanatory or warning columns can be found in all the main women's magazines. For example, an article in *Für Sie* focuses on the conditioning of the various substances and distinguishes between moisturising creams, micro-pearls, active sera, beauty capsules, liposomes as well as a new product category: anti-wrinkle fluids designed to be used with special plasters against expression wrinkles. The plasters supposedly provide mechanical assistance to control the effects of emotional expression on the face:

Our expressions, triggered by laughing, crying, talking and frowning, cause wrinkles that deepen over the years. These expressions, which are so difficult to control, can be restrained for a while by using the special anti-wrinkle plaster. This helps delay the formation of wrinkles, the texture of the skin is smoothed out and our expressions are trained to diminish wrinkle-inducing movements. [...] Since our expressions also change during the night, the most practical strategy is to let the plaster work during the night. It can also be used when one has time at home during the day.<sup>1027</sup>

These explanations provide a particularly interesting illustration of the paradoxes involved in skin care: on the one hand, a number of ads and articles emphasise to what extent positive emotional expression –e.g. joy or falling in love– is a boon for the skin. But on the other hand, technological aids are devised to rein this expressivity because not even joy should be allowed to leave its mark on perfect porcelain skin.

A couple of other anti-ageing articles show that if the new products on offer can be positively considered, perspectives on the specific merits of these technoscientific achievements vary widely. To wit an article in *prima* provides a very dithyrambic (and uncritical) perspective on cosmetic progress:

Cosmetic research has impressively progressed in the past years. It has discovered the main reasons for premature skin aging and found new ways to prevent and fight damage. Moreover, cell biologists and biochemists can scientifically prove the success of treatments and document them with modern analysis and evaluation methods. The aim now is to outsmart the skin by smuggling from outside the active ingredients and cellular building blocks that over time are no longer so abundantly produced by the body. The biggest challenge here is transporting these substances into the subcutaneous tissue where new cells are formed. Indeed this is not a path foreseen by nature since the skin is an excretory organ.<sup>1028</sup>

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<sup>1027</sup> „Schöne glatte Haut“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 11, 10.05.1989, pp. 48-56, p. 56): „Durch unsere Mimik, die durch Lachen, Weinen, Sprechen und Stirnrunzeln sichtbar wird, entstehen Falten, die sich über Jahre immer tiefer in die Haut eingraben. Durch das spezielle Anti-Falten-Pflaster wird die Mimik, die sich nur schwer kontrollieren läßt, für einige Zeit ruhiggestellt. Dadurch wird die Faltenbildung hinausgezögert, das Hautrelief geglättet und unsere Mimik trainiert, weniger faltenbildende Bewegungen zu machen. [...] Da unsere Mimik auch nachts in Aktion ist, ist es am praktischsten, das Pflaster während des Schlafens wirken zu lassen. Wer tagsüber zu Hause etwas Zeit hat, kann es natürlich auch dann benutzen.“

<sup>1028</sup> „Anti-Falten-Kosmetik: Was ist wirklich dran?“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1988, p. 122): „Die Kosmetikforschung hat in den letzten Jahren einen großen Schritt vorwärts getan. Sie hat die Hauptursachen vorzeitiger Hautalterung

A number of points are noteworthy: first of all the problematic assessment of what constitutes a big step in scientific developments. The second point is the heavy emphasis on scientific proof and modern methods. But the third point is by far the most interesting since outsmarting nature –by changing the very essence of the skin– is explicitly spelt out as the aim of mainstream cosmetology. This stands in stark contrast to the natural cosmetics creed, namely the mobilisation of the skin’s own resources to rebalance itself. Otherwise, the article goes on to detail the various ingredients that are packaged into the main “transportation” innovation, i.e. liposomes or niosomes, and provides answers to a number of FAQs. A caveat is nevertheless highlighted in the margin: *“These anti-ageing products are not cheap and are often burdened by enormous R&D costs. Their composition is variable despite many similarities. Therefore, study the ingredients on the packaging and make sure you get comprehensive advice from your parfumerie.”*<sup>1029</sup> This advice sharply contrasts with that to be found in a *Frau im Spiegel* article. Even if the latter provides a small glossary of the most current active substances, it very pragmatically states the following:

Anti-ageing products usually all contain the same active ingredients, but in different combinations and concentrations. Anyway nowadays every cosmetic product is dermatologically tested and manufactured so as to cause as little irritation as possible. Your choice of cream is mainly a matter of personal taste.<sup>1030</sup>

Apart from these general features, an arresting article –in journal form– unveils the long and dubious flirt of a *Brigitte* contributor, Barbara de Bernadinis, with a self-imposed treatment involving highly concentrated Vitamin A. The impetus to start the treatment is provided by an unpleasant realisation: while trying on a low-cut evening dress, the journalist realises that her décolleté is tanned like old leather after years of repeated sunburning.<sup>1031</sup> She then opts to test a type of dermabrasion using tretinoin, a specific Vitamin A extract that is supposed to gradually reveal a younger, fresher skin after triggering a number of scary outbreaks (spots, dandruff, blotches, open wounds, etc.). Even though this treatment may not seem quite as drastic as the “Le Bon” method described earlier, it nevertheless raises a number of scientific and ethical questions, since the journalist describes her initial crusade to find a dermatologist willing to prescribe the highly-concentrated version of the cream that is not available over the counter. Despite the serious warnings of specialists, she does not consult one when her skin starts reacting in a particularly alarming way:

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*erkannt und neue Wege gefunden, den Schäden vorzubeugen und sie zu bekämpfen. Und: Die Zellbiologen und Biochemiker können Behandlungserfolge wissenschaftlich beweisen und mit modernen Analyse- und Auswertungsmethoden belegen. Man will jetzt die Haut überlisten und jene Wirkstoffe und Zellbausteine, die im Lauf der Jahre vom Körper nicht mehr so reichlich produziert werden, von außen einschleusen. Die größte Schwierigkeit dabei ist der Transport dieser Substanzen in die unteren Hautschichten, wo die neuen Zellen gebildet werden. Dieser Weg ist nämlich von der Natur nicht vorgesehen, denn die Haut ist ein Ausscheidungsorgan.“*

<sup>1029</sup> *Ibid.:* „Diese Anti-Falten-Produkte sind nicht billig und teilweise durch enorm hohe Forschungskosten belastet. Die Zusammensetzung ist unterschiedlich, wenn auch viele Ähnlichkeiten bestehen. Studieren Sie deshalb die Inhaltsangaben auf der Packung, und lassen Sie sich in der Parfümerie ausführlich beraten.“

<sup>1030</sup> „Alles Gute für Ihre Haut“ (*Frau im Spiegel*, Heft 24, 09.06.1988, p.39): „Die Anti-Falten-Produkte enthalten häufig alle die gleichen Wirkstoffe, nur in anderer Zusammensetzung und Konzentration. Dermatologisch getestet und so reizarm wie möglich hergestellt ist sowieso heute jede Kosmetik. Für welche Creme Sie sich entscheiden, hängt in erster Linie von Ihrem ganz persönlichen Geschmack ab.“

<sup>1031</sup> De Bernadinis, Barbara, „Meine 223 Tage mit der „Wunder-Creme“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1989, pp. 74-80, p. 78).

December 1st: innumerable spots on my décolleté have exploded and are beginning to bleed. Later I hear from Prof. Raab, that these may have been the early stages of a malignant evolution. My underarms and the inner part of my upper arms (where I never applied tretinoin) are covered with red dots, some of them pea-sized. I'm scared. But which dermatologist can I consult without being ridiculed? I should really have consulted a dermatologist during the treatment.<sup>1032</sup>

In the end, however, the treatment appears to have been successful, nigh miraculous, since the 53-year old experimenter is showered with compliments on her appearance. To conclude, the article displays the rabidness of measures some women are willing to put up with in order to regain the youthful self-image that westernised society more or less subtly imposes upon them.

Another article in *Für Sie*, not focused on anti-ageing this time, takes a much more sensible tack on skin problems such as lifeless looking skin, itchy red blotches, dandruff, blackheads, pimples, little red arteries, small blisters on the lips, cracks or fissures on the corners of the mouth by stating the following: *“There is always a good reason behind skin reactions such as pimples or little red arteries. Your body is signalling that something is out of kilter. If you are able to correctly interpret the SOS calls, you can quickly do something about it.”*<sup>1033</sup> A feature in *Brigitte* also reminds its readers that there can be too much of a good thing, namely too much care –thus partially contradicting other contemporary advice that states that: *“The skin does not get habituated to cosmetics in the sense of getting spoiled or diminishing effectiveness. The skin takes what it needs, what it hungers after. If the skin defends itself and reacts with irritation, it is not due to too much care but to the wrong one.”*<sup>1034</sup> The former article, if it does recognise the importance of choosing appropriate care according to skin type (e.g. avoiding the use of fatty creams on oily skin) emphasises the risk linked to excess. From this perspective, a sudden reaction to a product does not necessarily signal allergy but that the skin has been “creamed to death” –a phenomenon that has begun to emerge 20 years prior to the publication of the article:

The women affected are mainly middle-aged individuals who have regularly used moisturising creams for years. The constant creaming has caused a swelling of the epidermis and the skin's natural protection has been permanently destroyed. To quote Professor Fritsch: Women should only apply cream when their skin really requires it.<sup>1035</sup>

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<sup>1032</sup> Ibid.: „1. Dezember: Unzählige Punkte an meinem Dekolleté platzen auf und beginnen zu bluten. (Später erfahre ich von Prof. Raab, daß es sich um Vorstufen von bösartigen Entwicklungen gehandelt haben könnte.) Auch mein Unterarme und die Innenseiten der Oberarme (wo ich niemals Tretinoin aufgetragen habe) sind mit bis zu erbsgroßen roten Punkten übersät. Mich packt die Angst. Und: Bei welchem Hautarzt kann ich mich jetzt sehen lassen, ohne Spott zu ernten? Ich hätte während der Kur doch mal zu einem Dermatologen gehen sollen.“

<sup>1033</sup> „Wenn die Haut plötzlich schuppig wird“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 26.04.1989, pp. 59-60, p. 59): „Hautreaktionen wie Pickel oder rote Äderchen haben immer einen Grund. Ihr Körper signalisiert, daß irgendetwas nicht stimmt. Wenn Sie die SOS-Rufe richtig deuten, können Sie schnell etwas dagegen tun.“

<sup>1034</sup> „Anti-Falten-Kosmetik: Was ist wirklich dran?“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1988, p. 122): „Eine Gewöhnung der Haut an Kosmetik im Sinn von Verwöhnen oder Nachlassen der Wirkung gibt es nicht. Die Haut nimmt sich, was ihr fehlt und wonach sie Hunger hat. Wenn die Haut sich wehrt und empfindlich reagiert, war es nicht zuviele, sonder die falsche Pflege.“

<sup>1035</sup> „Hautpflege: Wieviel ist zuviel?“ [Die Haut braucht ständig Fett und Feuchtigkeit – so haben wir es gelernt. Aber kann man auch übertreiben? Ärzte meinen: ja!] (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1989 pp. 86-88, p. 86): „Betroffen sind vor allem Frauen mittleren Alters, die jahrelang regelmäßig Feuchtigkeitcremes benutzt haben. Das ständige eincremen ließ die Hornhaut aufquellen, der natürliche Schutz der Haut wurde permanent gestört. Dazu Professor Fritsch: Frauen sollten sich nur dann eincremen, wenn ihre Haut tatsächlich danach verlangt.“

Otherwise, apart from the usual seasonal advice columns –including homemade curd, honey or carrot masks in the summer–<sup>1036</sup> there are a few signs that more naturally-oriented cosmetics may be the next trend. For example, a *Für Sie* article on different types of clay enjoins its readers to use the effectiveness of nature for their beauty. It then vaunts the many benefits of this element that can be used in facial, hair or whole-body masks, in creams, toothpastes, shampoos, face and body powders as well as talcum powders, not to mention internal use. The most noteworthy characteristic of these various types of clay is their high mineral and trace element content. Their other properties include purifying and detoxifying, anti-bacterial effects as well as a positive impact on the moisture metabolism and resistance of the skin, of connective tissues and inner organs.<sup>1037</sup>

### 1990-1992: Natural extracts, high-tech transport and enviro-stress

In the early 1990s, the growing popularity of natural cosmetics seems to consolidate. *Claire Fisher*, for instance, presents an array of ingredients that will become increasingly popular in both natural and mainstream cosmetics and especially in body- or hair care, i.e. aloe vera, wheat germ oil, jojoba, or silk protein.<sup>1038</sup> But a new trend seems to have been explicitly taken over from mainstream cosmetics, that of incorporating plants extracts as in e.g. *Clarins's Crème Hydratante aux extraits de 'Cellules Fraîches' Phyto-Marines* –an ad that reminds one of the aforementioned *Monteil* ad for *ICE factor 100*. Freshness is ensured by a timely harvest and reminds one of the discourse promoted in the health food realm, where ingredients are processed rapidly to retain a maximum of vitamins and minerals: “*Apropos, the plants used are processed immediately after they have been harvested. In this way the entire concentrated energy of the active ingredients is preserved.*”<sup>1039</sup> But an even more striking ad is provided by *Lierac* under the heading “*Nature's strength for your skin –this is phyto-cosmetics*”:

In plain English, at the LIERAC company, phyto-cosmetics means scientific skincare with plant-based active ingredient extracts. [...] Nowadays, thanks to progressive technologies, scientists can purposefully select medically renowned plant extracts for the beauty and health of the skin. By the way –and this is really new in natural cosmetics– it is not the whole plant that is used but only extracts (e.g. from the flower, the stem or the leaf) that are effective to solve a particular problem.<sup>1040</sup>

<sup>1036</sup> „Schönheitsmasken: Zum Selbermachen für eine glatte Gesichtshaut“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 15, 05.07.1989, p. 75).

<sup>1037</sup> “Erde hat's in sich: Für Make-up, Haut und Haar“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1989, pp. 42-50): „Nutzen Sie die Wirkung der Natur für Ihre Schönheit“.

<sup>1038</sup> Ads for *Claire Fisher Kosmetik* (*Prima*, Heft 5, 1990; *Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1992; *Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1992; *Für Sie*, Heft 26, 1992).

<sup>1039</sup> Ad for *Clarins Crème Hydratante aux extraits de de "Cellules Fraîches" Phyto-Marines* (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1992): „Übrigens werden die verwendeten Pflanzen unmittelbar nach der Ernte weiterverarbeitet. So bleibt die ganze konzentrierte Energie der Aktivstoffe erhalten.“

<sup>1040</sup> Ad for *Lierac Kosmetik* [Eine neue Kosmetik-Marke in Deutschland stellt sich vor] (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1992): „Die Kraft der Natur für Ihre Haut – das ist Phyto-Kosmetik“; „Phyto-Kosmetik, das heißt bei der Firma LIERAC im Klartext: wissenschaftliche Hautpflege mit pflanzlichen Wirkstoffextrakten. [...] Heutzutage können die Wissenschaftler – dank fortschrittlicher Technologien – dabei ganz gezielt aus der Medizin bekannte Pflanzenextrakte für die Schönheit und Gesundheit der Haut einsetzen. Dabei nutzt man übrigens – und das ist ganz neu in der Naturkosmetik – nicht die ganze Pflanze, sondern nur die Extrakte (z.B. von Blüte, Stengel oder Blatt), die für ein Problem wirksam sind.“

Here the emphasis is on schooling consumers to understand the term “phyto-cosmetics”, which sounds much more sophisticated than “natural cosmetics” since it is derived from the Greek via the French –the use of French being a guarantor of ultimate know-how and glamour in the cosmetic realm. Thus, phyto-cosmetics, although they can reasonably be conceived of as the equivalent of natural cosmetics (since the latter are also primarily plant-based), is defined as a blend of nature with scientific expertise. Although there should be a clear distinction between cosmetics and pharmacology or medicine –as we have discussed it previously, the parentage here is clearly emphasised. Indeed, it is medicine that lends it legitimacy to the use of specific plants in the cosmetics realm. The last sentence though is potentially the most controversial one. Arguably, recent developments in the realms of cell biology and biotechnology have enabled researchers to further refine extraction techniques in order to isolate evermore specific substances but the process in general is not as new as the article would have us believe. Natural cosmetics have long relied on plant extracts obtained through various, more or less primitive procedures such as boiling, pressing, distilling, etc. Even “simple” remedies such as herbal teas or ointments are rarely based on decoctions of the whole plant: often they incorporate only flowers, leaves, roots or extracts thereof. Thus when the rest of the text goes on to enumerate the types of extracts used in the cosmetics – from ivy to camomile, lady’s mantle, horsetail, prunus, calendula and ruscus, not to mention more exotic plants such as “*Jioh extract (from China)*”,<sup>1041</sup> a plant I have not been able to identify, or “NMF” a mysterious compound moisturiser we have already encountered in previous years— it does nothing more than perpetuate an age-old tradition, albeit in a more refined scientific garb.

A similar type of discourse can be found in ads for Aok. It is reflected on a number of levels. The photograph shows a sophisticated woman with hair tied back and light but elegant make-up emerging from the “collar” of an exotic flower: a technologically stylised natural beauty. The title states: “*The formula that minimises your wrinkles. Nature plus liposomes*”. The addition of the two suggests that the latter are not natural but that this formula is an anti-ageing panacea, an impression reinforced by the logo of the brand – a strange leaf made up of half a “natural” leaf and half a diagram with the following caption: “*highly effective plant-based care*”, echoing the “*naturally effective*” motto.<sup>1042</sup> This type of layout is reflected in another Aok ad, showing a pot of cream placed in a similarly exotic leaf, but much lower as if it needed protection from the plant. It thus stresses the caption “*the more sensitive your skin, the more it is prone to wrinkles*”. To counter this sensitivity a blend of marshmallow (the plant, NOT the candy), mimosa and so-called “bio-ceramides” is offered in a cream “*with high effectiveness but without side-effects*”.<sup>1043</sup> Effectiveness without side-effects is a theme that comes up in a new eco-formulation as can be witnessed in an ad for Nivea day and night cream. The latter is praised as follows: “*The night cream with macadamia and sasanqua oils sustainably regenerate my skin*”.<sup>1044</sup> This represents a step away from the alarmist discourse on environmental stress to offer “sustainability” as a solution to a number of environmental problems. In this field, however, it is Weleda that

<sup>1041</sup> Ibid.: „*Jioh Extrakt (aus China)*“.

<sup>1042</sup> Ad for Aok Aktiv Complex Plus (*prima*, Heft 10, 1992): „*Die Formel, die Ihre Falten verringert. Natur plus Liposome.*“; „*Hochwirksame Pflege auf pflanzlicher Basis*“; „*Von Natur aus wirksam*“.

<sup>1043</sup> Ad for Aok Pure Sensitive Tagescreme (*Für Sie*, Heft 26, 1992): „*Je empfindlicher Ihre Haut, desto eher neigt sie zu Falten*“; „*mit hoher Wirkung ohne Nebenwirkungen*“.

<sup>1044</sup> Ad for Nivea Gesicht (*prima*, Heft 12, 1990): „*Die Nachtcreme mit Macadamia- und Sasanqua Öl regeneriert meine Haut nachhaltig.*“

appears to be the most consequent company, since beyond the naturalness of the products themselves, it pays attention to the sustainability of manufacturing processes as well: *“The new almond facial care line is natural and, like all Weleda products, it is elaborated with the help of particularly natural manufacturing processes.”*<sup>1045</sup> Significantly, the discrepancy between “naturalness” and “manufacturing processes” is simply glided upon.

In the field of mainstream cosmetics, the main developments seem to be a heightened focus on vitamins, especially vitamins A and E for their anti-oxidising properties, and on various improvements in the field of liposomes. Beneath the rather momentous heading *“As from today, liposomes are out of date”*, Qenty forty states the following:

■Vitamin E currently the best protection against ageing skin. ■Classic liposomes cannot transport vitamin E. ■Therefore Qenty forty has developed the new active ingredient-courier\* that can fulfil this task. ■ It brings vitamin E to the place where skin is born. (\*Composed of phytantriol and vitamin E.)<sup>1046</sup>

This cream is thus a good example of the cosmetic developments described in an afore-discussed article in *prima*, which saw the main challenge as finding an appropriate carrier to bring necessary substances to the *“subcutaneous tissue where new cells are formed”*.<sup>1047</sup> In keeping with its name, *Marbert’s Profutura* cream is described as using other vehicules to transport vitamin A and E, so called *“nanoparts”*.<sup>1048</sup> This represents the first allusion to nanotechnology in the cosmetics realm, but no specific technical details are provided here. Other brands, while using other names, are more explicit as to the function of these micro-carriers. *Heliotrop Activ*, for instance, contains yet another magic combination, whereby the *“nanoparts”* seem to have been replaced by so-called *“ultraparts”*: *“Liposomes plus ultraparts are natural micro-globules from soy plant derived lecithin: they represent the optimal association of two biologically active ingredient transport systems. The skin is thus provided with in-depth moisturisation and precious natural materials.”*<sup>1049</sup>

Other companies extol seemingly much more complex structures under such evocative names as *Capture* or *Icône* (*Christian Dior*), *Initiator* (*Yves Saint Laurent*), *Authentique* (*Payot*) or *Immunage* (*Elizabeth Arden*). With the triumphant verdict *“Science’s victory over time”* the *Christian Dior* ad for *Capture* presents a special *“Dior liposome\*”*, the fruit of *“\*Research on the cell membrane together with a team from the Pasteur Institute, Paris”*.<sup>1050</sup> Here the

<sup>1045</sup> Ad for Weleda Mandel Gesichtspflege (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1992): *„Die neue Mandel Gesichtspflege ist natürlich und entsteht wie alle Weleda-Präparate unter Anwendung besonderer, naturgemäßer Verarbeitungsprozesse.“*

<sup>1046</sup> Ad for Bayer Qenty forty (*Brigitte*, Heft 25, 1992): *„Seit heute sind Liposome von gestern“; „■Vitamin E ist der derzeit beste Hautalterungsschutz. ■Klassische Liposome können aber Vitamin E nicht transportieren. ■Deshalb wurde der neue Wirkstoff-Kurier\* von Qenty forty entwickelt, der diese Aufgabe erfüllt. ■Er bringt Vitamin E dahin, wo die Haut entsteht. (\*Bestehend aus Phytantriol und Vitamin E)“.*

<sup>1047</sup> op. cit. *„Anti-Falten-Kosmetik: Was ist wirklich dran?“*.

<sup>1048</sup> Ad for Marbert Profutura (*Für Sie*, Heft 26, 1992).

<sup>1049</sup> Ad for Heliotrop Active (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992): *„Liposome plus Ultraparts sind natürliche Mikrokügelchen aus dem Lecithin der Sojapflanze: Sie stellen die optimale Verbindung von zwei biologischen Wirkstofftransportsystemen dar. So wird die Haut tiefenwirksam mit Feuchtigkeit und hochwertigen Naturstoffen versorgt.“*

<sup>1050</sup> Ad for Christian Dior Capture (*prima*, Heft 4, 1990): *„Der Sieg der Wissenschaft über die Zeit“; „\*Erforschung der Zellmembran gemeinsam mit einem Team des Institut Pasteur, Paris“.*

prestige of a renowned research institution<sup>1051</sup> is enrolled to lend added scientific credibility to the product. In a much longer description of the *Capture* and *Icône* creams, we read that what distinguishes *Icône* –as a guarantor of holy perfection– from other creams is that it contains an exclusive “*biological active ingredient orthokeraten* [sic?]” that “*gives back to the epidermis all the attributes of normal skin*”.<sup>1052</sup> On the face of it, the name “orthokeraten” may imply that this ingredient can provide the type of corrective treatment for the skin that orthopedics provides for bones and joints.<sup>1053</sup> *Yves Saint Laurent* with its sci-fi sounding *Initiator* programme draws a “ground-breaking” conclusion: “*The source of all beauty is – life*”. And this life is enabled by so-called initiators which are “*biologically active substances that are identical to the essential raw materials that are naturally present in the skin*”.<sup>1054</sup> Another ad for the same line goes on to describe the function of what sounds like an army of little robots: “*Every single initiator has a very specific function: the initiator responsible for oxygen supply lends the skin its glow, the moisturising initiator improves its ability to retain moisture. The regeneration and revitalisation initiators ensure a youthful appearance.*” Further on, under the still rather dissonant heading “*Pleasure and beauty through high-tech textures*”, the text explains that:

Innovative, patented textures were developed so as to ensure an immediate penetration and distribution of the active substances. These refreshing and smooth micro-crystal emulsions, which are composed of millions of minute droplets smaller than liposomes have an ideal penetration potential and are immediately absorbed by the skin. Daily care thus becomes an unforgettable experience.<sup>1055</sup>

This is a good example of how technology is increasingly being harnessed to foster a sensuous experience. In terms of structure, *Payot* also boasts the use of crystals: “*The Authentique complex embodies the newest scientific discoveries of biotechnology. The original liquid crystals system ensures bio-availability: the active substances are released according to the needs of the epidermis, they penetrate better with optimal*

<sup>1051</sup> Cf. <http://www.pasteur.fr/ip/easysite/pasteur/en/institut-pasteur>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1052</sup> Ad for Christian Dior *Icône* & *Capture* (*prima*, Heft 3, 1990): „*biologischen Wirkstoff Orthokeraten*“; „*gibt der Epidermis alle Eigenschaften einer normalen Haut zurück*“. It is the first ad to mention a distinction awarded by the *Stiftung Warentest* magazine: „*Die Verbraucherzeitschrift ‚Stiftung Warentest‘ bestätigt die außerordentliche Wirkung des Produkts mit dem Testurteil ‚gut‘.*“

<sup>1053</sup> Unfortunately, however, I have found no traces of what this substance is supposed to be in German. If it translates as “orthokeratin”, the dental glossary defines it as “*An epithelial component of hyperkeratosis which is void of nuclei.*” Cf. <http://www.dentalglossary.net/definition/1709-Orthokeratin>. This would mean that it basically functions as a protective layer on the epithelium. However, it could also be a coinage between “ortho” and “keratin”, roughly translating as “right skin”. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1054</sup> Ad for Yves Saint Laurent *Initiator*-Pflegesystem (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1992): „*Die Quelle aller Schönheit – ist das Leben.*“; „*biologische Aktivstoffe, identisch mit den lebenswichtigen Rohstoffen, die von Natur aus in der Haut vorhanden sind.*“; „*Jeder einzelne Initiator hat eine ganz bestimmte Aufgabe: der Initiator zur Sauerstoffversorgung schenkt der Haut Leuchtkraft, der Feuchtigkeitsinitiator verbessert die Feuchtigkeitsbindung. Die Initiatoren zur Regeneration und Revitalisierung sorgen für jugendliches Aussehen.*“; „*Vergnügen und Schönheit durch High-Tech-Texturen*“.

<sup>1055</sup> Ad for Yves Saint Laurent *Initiator*-Pflegesystem (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1992): „*Innovative, patentierte Texturen wurden entwickelt, die ein sofortiges Eindringen und Verteilen der Wirkstoffe gewährleisten. Diese erfrischenden, geschmeidigen Mikro-Kristall-Emulsionen, die aus Millionen kleinster Tröpfchen bestehen, kleiner als Liposome, besitzen ein ideales Eindringungsvermögen und werden sofort von der Haut aufgenommen. Dadurch wird die tägliche Pflege zu einem unvergeßlichen Erlebnis.*“

*effectiveness.*<sup>1056</sup> This mechanism seems to imply that the skin will not be needlessly invaded, as hinted at in previous articles denouncing “care-overkill”. Otherwise, beyond an inflationist lyricism about timelessness (to wit: “*The discovery of timeless beauty. A care system that actively works against time*”), Payot seems to be really addicted to scientific jargon:

For the first time in the history of skincare, we have managed to integrate a molecule of natural origins into a cream with an ideal dosage of 8%. Super Phyco Dismustase (S.PH.D.) is extracted from very special plants that can only be found in the open sea. The amazing thing is that its effect is absolutely similar to the natural function of the skin. Tests conducted at the “INSERM” institute have proved it.<sup>1057</sup>

Here again, a company has recourse to a mysterious alga, extracts from it a miracle molecule that by chance mimics the skin function –and the latter is confirmed by yet another prestigious scientific institution.<sup>1058</sup> Time and a miracle molecule (so-called Cyclan™) are also the two mainstays of Revlon’s publicity for *Evivesse* a “*skin rescheduling cream - crème de recyclage*” that claims it can confer a younger rhythm to skin. This time it is not chronobiology that is at stake, as in creams that are designed to bring specific nutrients to the skin at especially receptive times, but rather an attempt to accelerate the renewal process of the epithelium –a feat “proven” by a small diagram showing comparative cell renewal rates, with and without *Evivesse*. Thus, the product at stake here is not adapted to the skin’s natural, daily cycles but aims to dictate a new rhythm.

*Lancôme* also relies on molecular discourse. But before going into “scientific” details, a long introit aims to instil a sense of humility in the reader, by unveiling the challenges not only of cosmetic ventures in particular but of the body enterprise as a whole:

The human body is an incredibly complicated system, the secrets of which still represent a challenge for scientific research. The more knowledge we gather, the greater the “human miracle” seems to become. The demands made upon research are increasingly high and the problems more complex. In parallel, the readiness to accept seemingly inevitable phenomena has diminished. The ageing process of the human body no doubt belongs to the biggest challenges of our times.<sup>1059</sup>

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<sup>1056</sup> Ad for Payot Authentique (*prima*, Heft 5, 1992): „*Der Complexe Authentique vereinigt in sich die neuesten wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse der Biotechnologie. Das originale System der Flüssigkristalle sichert die Bio-Verfügbarkeit: die Wirkstoffe werden entsprechend dem Bedarf der Epidermis frei, sie dringen besser ein, mit optimaler Wirksamkeit.*“

<sup>1057</sup> Ad for Payot Jeunesse du Visage (*prima*, Heft 3, 1992): „*Die Entdeckung zeitloser Schönheit. Ein Pflegesystem, das aktiv gegen die Zeit wirkt.*“; „*Zum erstenmal in der Geschichte der Hautpflege ist es gelungen, ein Molekül natürlichen Ursprungs in einer idealen Dosierung von 8% in eine Crème zu integrieren. Das Molekül Super Phyco Dismustase (S.PH.D.) wird aus ganz bestimmten Pflanzen gewonnen, die nur im offenen Meer existieren. Das Sensationelle: Es ist in seiner Wirkung absolute analog zur natürlichen Hautfunktion. Das haben Tests des Instituts “INSERM” bewiesen.*“

<sup>1058</sup> A state institution this time, the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale (INSERM), cf.: <http://english.inserm.fr/what-s-inserm/the-institute-missions>. [Website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1059</sup> Ad for Lancôme Niosôme+ by the Aurel Parfümerien (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992): „*Der menschliche Körper ist ein höchst kompliziertes System, dessen Geheimnisse nach wie vor eine Herausforderung für die wissenschaftliche Forschung darstellt. Je mehr Wissen wir erlangen, umso größer scheint das ‚Wunder Mensch‘ zu werden. Die Anforderungen an die Forschung werden immer höher, die Fragestellungen immer diffiziler, und die Bereitschaft, sich mit scheinbar Unabänderlichem abzufinden, immer geringer. Der Alterungsprozeß des menschlichen Körpers gehört sicher zu den größten Herausforderungen unserer heutigen Zeit.*“

The tone here again is reminiscent of popular science textbooks: one senses the will to inspire awe in the average consumer, a sense of wonder before the challenges of nature that is only eclipsed by an even greater respect for the endeavours of Science with a capital "S". Interestingly, the text also highlights the rabid "feasibility drive" of late modern society, a society that is no longer prepared to bow before the limits of nature. This introduction should thus prepare the reader to get the full measure of the exploit performed by *Lancôme* researchers who *"for the first time have been able to perfectly imitate skin lipids. The lipid microspheres in the new Niosôme+ system now perfectly match those of the skin, not just molecules with a single chain but very different molecules with 1, 2 and 3 chains."*<sup>1060</sup>

Compared to these dithyrambic assessments of scientific achievement, publicity for *frei öl* presents a much more down-to-earth and slightly ironic perspective:

The international beauty scene is seething. Thousands of laboratories across the world are searching for the ultimate beauty secrets. An increasing number of high-tech creams promise women and men an attractive appearance over a longer period of time as well as a touch of eternal youth. Increasingly complicated and exotic formulations emerge on the market and tackle our stressed and exhausted skin with ever novel active substances. However the effect of many of these substances praised as silver bullets against ageing skin is often contested within dermatological circles.<sup>1061</sup>

The ad concludes that the only substances that seem to earn the approbation of international skin specialists are vitamins, especially vitamins A and E. In keeping with the matter-of-fact tone of the introduction, the ad does not waste much effort in providing (pseudo-)scientific explanations about their dermatological functions since it simply states that *"These little jack-of-all-trades are indispensable secret helpers in everyday beauty care since, in a sense, they rebuild the skin from the inside"*.<sup>1062</sup> However, it cannot help mentioning the substantial proofs obtained by means of scientific studies conducted in American and German university dermatological clinics –whereby the frequent use of *frei öl* is supposed to accelerate skin renewal.

In terms of environmental stress, the discourse is becoming more and more fanatical to the point of aping conspiracy theories. To wit, an ad for *Clarins's Multi-Active Jour* face cream describes the following scary scenario:

Destructive forces are tirelessly at work, from morning till evening: the harmful UV rays, the dry atmosphere at the office, the big temperature differences between inside and out, the

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<sup>1060</sup> Ibid.: „Zum ersten Mal konnten die hauteigenen Lipide perfekt nachgebildet werden. Die Lipid-Mikrosphären in dem neuen Niosôme+ System sind jetzt ebenso wie die der Haut nicht nur Moleküle mit einer Kette, sondern es sind sehr unterschiedliche Moleküle mit 1, 2 und 3 Ketten.“

<sup>1061</sup> Ad for *frei öl* (*stern*, Heft 51, 1992): „Es brodelt in der internationalen Beauty-Szene. In tausenden von Labors ist man weltweit den ultimativen Geheimnissen der Schönheit auf der Spur. Immer neue High-Tech Cremes versprechen Frauen und Männer längere Zeit ein attraktives Aussehen und den Touch ewiger Jugend. Immer kompliziertere und exotischere Rezepturen kommen auf den Markt und bearbeiten mit immer neuen Wirkstoffen unsere gestreßte und abgeschlaffte Haut. Dabei ist die Wirkung mancher als Wunderwaffe gegen alternde Haut angepriesenen Substanzen unter den Haut-Experten häufig umstritten.“

<sup>1062</sup> Ibid.: „Diese kleinen Alleskönner sind die unentbehrlichen, geheimen Helfer bei der täglichen Schönheitspflege, da sie die Haut gewissermaßen von innen wieder aufbauen.“

pollutants in the air: all these continuously attack your skin, which is reason enough to protect it.<sup>1063</sup>

Another ad from the same company for a make-up line takes a similar tack while suggesting that its products provide a type of protective buffer for the skin while still leaving enough air for it to be able to breathe (thank godDESS!).<sup>1064</sup> In this type of discourse, the skin is somehow personalised or used as a synecdoche for the entire body or person. Indirectly, it is the late modern, urban lifestyle that is being indicted here, since the ad hints at the harm caused by modern insulation, air-conditioning and traffic. Other companies are more scientifically specific in their condemnation. RoC, for instance, denounces the “*disintegration of the supportive connective tissue through enzymes hostile to the skin*” as the main culprit.<sup>1065</sup> The ultimate enemies against which Elizabeth Arden’s *Immunage UV Schutzsystem* is wrestling are free radicals: “*Light is primarily responsible for the ageing of the skin – not biological ageing. Dermatologists have confirmed it. The skin is constantly exposed to harmful light rays: outside, in closed rooms, even under artificial light*”.<sup>1066</sup> Hence the enemy here is not even man-made. Nevertheless, its ubiquitousness is bound to instil a form of protective paranoia reflected in the picture featuring an elegant woman with a 1950s hairdo and a scarf wrapped around her head, wearing futuristic-looking “black-mirror” sunglasses.

The contrast between the sophistication and threatening tenor of these bellicose discourses and the no-frills statements of *Lian* or *Nivea* could hardly be greater. Indeed, with the picture of a young woman sitting in a car against a bigger illustration showing an enlargement of half her face, *Lian* soberly states: “*Lian ... I’ve tried it and I’m convinced. Within just a few days, Lian perceptibly smoothes the texture of the skin*”.<sup>1067</sup> An ad for *Nivea* is even more radically laconic since beside the illustration showing a pretty young woman emerging from a bed cover, the caption says “*Simply beautiful*” together with the *Nivea* motto “*Essential for the skin*”.<sup>1068</sup>

Otherwise, products for sensitive skins are still a strong presence on the market, with e.g. products from *Oil of Olaz*, *Babor* or *Penaten*. Ads for the latter are probably the most representative. Against a background showing a young woman in a bathrobe, the caption echoes the straightforward simplicity of the afore-quoted *Lian* and *Nivea* ads: “*I want nothing that my skin does not tolerate. I want everything that my skin needs*”. The text goes on to emphasise a purity discourse while also indicting both the (man-made) environment and harmful rays:

<sup>1063</sup> Ad for Clarins Multi-Active Jour (*Für Sie*, Heft 25, 1992): „*Unermüdlich, von morgens bis abends, sind zerstörerische Kräfte am Werk: Die schädlichen UV-Strahlen, das trockene Klima im Büro, die großen Temperatur-Unterschiede zwischen drinnen und draußen, die Schadstoffe in der Luft: All das greift Ihre Haut pausenlos an. Grund genug, sie zu schützen.*“

<sup>1064</sup> Ad for Clarins [Der Wirkstoff] makeup (*prima*, Heft 7, 1992).

<sup>1065</sup> Ad for RoC Soin Fondamental (*Für Sie*, Heft 25, 1992): „*den Abbau des stützenden Bindegewebes durch hautfeindliche Enzyme*“.

<sup>1066</sup> Ad for Elizabeth Arden Immunage (*prima*, Heft 5, 1990): „*In erster Linie ist Licht für die Alterung der Haut verantwortlich - nicht das biologische Altern. Dermatologen bestätigen es. Die Haut ist ständig schädlichen Lichtstrahlen ausgesetzt. Im Freien, in geschlossenen Räumen, auch bei Kunstlicht.*“

<sup>1067</sup> Ad for Beiersdorf Lian (*prima*, Heft 5, 1990): „*Lian ...hab’ ich probiert und bin überzeugt. Lian pflegt die Haut schon nach wenigen Tagen spürbar glatter.*“

<sup>1068</sup> Ad for Nivea (*Für Sie*, Heft 24, 1992): „*Einfach schön*“; „*Was die Haut zum leben braucht*“.

Penaten PurAktiv is a particularly well-tolerated face cream because it is so pure. It is free of colourings and preservatives. And when nothing irritates the skin, the active caring substances are a lot more effective. Sensitive skin is thus actively cared for and reliably protected from harmful environmental and light influences.<sup>1069</sup>

After the first early 1980s breakthrough, purity is also echoed in a “gel texture” revival, with a plethora of products from e.g. *Nivea’s Augen Make-up Entferner Gel*, to *Shiseido’s Vital-Perfection Daily Eye Primer*, *Oil of Olaz’s Hydro-Gel-Linie*, *Ellen Betrix’s Aqua Care* line or *bebe’s Hydro-Gel*.<sup>1070</sup> A feature article in *prima* praises the fact that gels do not contain fat (as an echo of contemporary dietary requirements?), are rapidly absorbed by the skin, hence economical, and do not require emulsifiers, which means they are less likely to cause allergies. Moreover, they are full of active substances such as hyaluronic acid, collagen, aloe vera, panthenol or vitamin A. The article recommends them especially for women with oily or mixed skin or young and/or sensitive skins. An additional blurb provides a short 2-question interview with the scientific manager of the *Ellen Betrix* dermatological-cosmetological laboratory. Dr Magdalene Hubbuch explains that the new generation of gels are in fact hydro-gels containing a large amount of water: “From a chemical perspective, they contain so-called scaffolding components. These can be natural products such as proteins, pectins or algae but often they are artificially manufactured substances that are called polymers.” Their refreshing or cooling effect is due to these polymers: “These are chemical compounds characterised by long molecular chains. One can picture them as millipedes bearing a bucket of water on each leg, which is how they can absorb up to 95 percent moisture.”<sup>1071</sup>

During these years, one can find a number of skin-related feature articles that discuss anything from the impact of care and lifestyle, to sensitive or impure skin, new anti-ageing strategies, eye care, appropriate cleansing, how to care for the skin after the summer holidays, or how to look glowing in 15 minutes in order to face a spontaneous invitation. The most noteworthy common denominator in these articles is a heightened emphasis on the influence of lifestyle, diet and stress on the skin.

For instance, an emblematic article in *Brigitte* on what the skin betrays starts off with a warning against junk food: “As a rule, a trained beautician can detect at first glance whether someone eats mostly salad and wholemeal products or if Coca-Cola and chips are menu staples.”<sup>1072</sup> The feature goes on to indict two further culprits, namely alcohol and cigarettes

<sup>1069</sup> Ad for Penaten PurAktiv (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1992 or *Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1992): „Ich will nichts, was meine Haut nicht verträgt. Ich will alles, was meine Haut braucht.“; „Penaten PurAktiv ist eine besonders hautverträgliche Gesichtspflege, weil sie so pur ist. Frei von Farb- und Konservierungsstoffen. Und wenn nichts die Haut irritiert, können sich die wirksamen Pflegesubstanzen effektiv entfalten. So wird empfindliche Haut aktiv gepflegt und zuverlässig vor schädlichen Umwelt- und Lichteinflüssen geschützt.“

<sup>1070</sup> Ads for Nivea Gesicht (*prima*, Heft 7, 1992), Shiseido Vital-Perfection Daily Eye Primer (*Für Sie*, Heft 22, 1992), Oil of Olaz “Hydro-Gel-Linie” (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1992), Ellen Betrix’s Aqua Care (*prima*, Heft 11, 1992), bebe Hydro-Gel (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1992).

<sup>1071</sup> „Gel: schon mal ausprobiert? Die neue Frische für die Haut“ (*prima*, Heft 9, 1992): „Chemisch gesehen enthalten sie sogenannte Gerüstbildner. Das können Stoffe aus der Natur sein, wie Eiweißstoffe, Pektine oder Algen. Aber auch häufig künstlich hergestellte Substanzen, die Polymere heißen.“; „Das sind chemische Verbindungen mit langen Molekülketten. Man muß sie sich wie Tausendfüßler vorstellen, die an jedem Bein einen Wassereimer haben. Und dadurch können sie bis zu 95 Prozent Feuchtigkeit aufnehmen.“

<sup>1072</sup> „Die Haut verrät es: Ob wir Liebeskummer haben oder uns falsch ernähren, ob wir gestreßt sind oder uns selbst nicht mögen...“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 24, 1992, pp. 72-76): „Ob sich jemand hauptsächlich von Salat und

that account for sallow skin: the former is reproved for slackening the connective tissue while the latter leads to bad circulation, hence pale and wrinkly skin. The only solution foreseen is to avoid both, or at the very least diminish one's intake. The last offender described in the article is nervousness or stress "*that is literally written all over many individuals' foreheads*", before quoting the example of a young woman who suffered from atypical acne for years until she left her boyfriend... The physiological effects of stress are analysed in terms of constricted blood vessels that impede the disposal of waste products, leading to the skin's "*surlly*" reaction.<sup>1073</sup> The remedy recommended is frequent relaxation, including slower and deeper breathing in stressful situations. Finally, the article closes with an exercise designed to train abdominal breathing.

Another emerging concern is a new distrust in the sun –not only on holiday but also on the home front. Thus an article in *prima* warns readers about the protracted dangers of UV rays that lead to premature ageing. There again, one senses the type of paranoia I have discussed in the previous sections on environmental stress, since it is emphasized that these rays are active even when the sky is grey as well as indoors and when using artificial lights. This then explains the growing selection of day or moisturising creams that contain UV-filters as well as vitamins A and E, supposed to strengthen the skin's defense mechanisms. For those who cannot renounce sun worship, the article recommends the new generation of self-tanning lotions "*whose only commonality with the old self-bronzers is a skin-friendly substance (dihydroxyacetone, abridged as DHA) that tans the horny layer of the skin. Their novelty lies in the fact that they also provide care as well as UV-filters against the sun.*"<sup>1074</sup>

Another crucial recognition, discussed in a *prima* article, is the importance of preserving the skin's acid balance and avoiding harsh soaps as well as overintense cleansing so as not to endanger it. In the coming years, this will become a leitmotiv in advertising for syndets [i.e. synthetic detergents as opposed to conventional soaps] that are supposed to be less aggressive towards the skin. The feature begins by explaining the meaning of pH-value and describes the acid mantle protecting the skin before emphasising that mild products should emulate the skin's naturally acidic pH that lies between 5 and 6.<sup>1075</sup>

Finally, there are three feature articles in *prima* –designed to clarify scientific terminology to debunk cosmetological myths as well as present testing procedures– that are worth discussing. They are designed to enlighten readers in a field often riddled with esoteric-sounding nomenclature as well as highly complex high-tech processes –which are rarely factually explained since advertising tends to oscillate between the extremes of bombast and secrecy– and to clarify the tensions between popular expertise on the skin and rapidly evolving scientific knowledge.

The first feature, significantly entitled "*What on earth is 'butylhydroxianisole'?*" attempts to sum the then current debate pertaining to ingredient lists on cosmetic products. It begins by

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*Vollkornprodukten ernährt oder Coca-Cola und Pommes frites ganz oben auf dem Speisezettel stehen, das kann eine geschulte Kosmetikerin meist schon auf den ersten Blick erkennen.*"

<sup>1073</sup> Ibid., p. 74: „das steht manchem buchstäblich auf der Stirn geschrieben.“; „unwirsch“;

<sup>1074</sup> „Wenn Ihre Haut nach dem Urlaub urlaubsreif ist“ (*prima*, Heft 9, 1990): „Selbstbräuner der neuen Generation sind jetzt der Geheimtip Nr. 1! Sie haben nämlich mit den alten Selbstbräunern nicht mehr gemeinsam als den hautfreundlichen Wirkstoff (Dihydroxyaceton, abgekürzt DHA), der die Hornschicht bräunt. Neu an ihnen ist, daß sie die Haut gleichzeitig pflegen und durch UV-Filter vor Sonne schützen [...].“

<sup>1075</sup> „Reinigen – ganz einfach“ (*prima*, Heft 11, 1992, pp. 91-92).

stating that the debate is in fact already more than 10 years old and that producers still have not reached an agreement since some contend that chemical descriptions are too opaque for consumers, whereas others systematically criticise every labelling system. However a growing number of producers are yielding to the labelling trend of at least naming the types of preservatives contained in their products since so many consumers are allergic. The article also mentions an EU-commission supposed to elaborate a set of cosmetic regulations. It goes on to add that German producers follow the North American example by having recourse to the system developed by the Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association (CTFA).<sup>1076</sup> But it emphasises that despite the obvious advantages of drawing on a successful labelling system, German consumers may be linguistically discriminated by the use of English chemical terminology. However a closer analysis reveals that this is just a superficial problem and that the real crunch for consumers is to actually understand terms such as “butylhydroxianisole” –which is apparently quite a common preservative. The article thus recommends contacting producers who often have German-speaking brochures, tables and lists of ingredients and explanations for interested consumers or dermatologists. Finally the feature ends up listing a number of strategies initiated by producers to avoid or limit the use of preservatives: e.g. especially fine water in oil emulsions, aseptic manufacturing and sterile packaging in airtight containers, small quantities packed in aluminium tubes, etc.<sup>1077</sup> Due to increasing allergy concerns, this is an issue that will increasingly resonate in the following years.

The next article “*Were you aware of it? Here you can test your cosmetic knowledge! What is prejudiced, now obsolete or actual fact?*” provides an interesting contrast since instead of focusing on scientific knowledge in order to vulgarise it, it aims to help readers assess the validity of popular wisdom by listing the most common assumptions about cosmetics before denouncing or mitigating them. Assumptions range from the need to regularly change cosmetics to avoid tiring the skin, avoiding chocolate, fatty meat cuts and spices in the case of acne, cleansing the skin only if one has used make-up, eating vitamins instead of applying them externally, etc.<sup>1078</sup>

Finally, under the heading “*News from the laboratory*”, the title of the next article triumphantly proclaims that “*Cosmetics are effective: it can be proved!*”.<sup>1079</sup> It then describes the tests required to quantify preservability (which is fixed at the legal minimum of 30 months) –including extreme temperature differences and a so-called “shaker” test. It also details voluntary tests to prove effectiveness, e.g. profilometry involving a before and after molding of the skin to assess whether wrinkles have diminished, coxelography, a type of video surveillance for the complexion or, more prosaically, plasters to measure the production of sebum on the surface of the skin. And last but not least, it mentions the allergy tests that are often carried out on a large scale by the biggest producers. At the end of each section, consumer advantages are then emphasised: freshness, effectiveness and high tolerance –since cosmetics apparently account for only 1% of all allergies.

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<sup>1076</sup> Compulsory cosmetic labelling according to the INCI system was enforced later, i.e. as from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 1997. Cf. earlier discussion. In 1997, the CTFA became the Personal Care Products Council, cf.: <http://www.ctfa.org/ctfa-becomes-personal-care-products-council> [websitesite accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>1077</sup> „Was, bitte ist ‚Butylhydroxianisol‘?“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1990, p. 48).

<sup>1078</sup> „Hätten Sie es gewußt? Hier können Sie Ihr Kosmetik-Wissen testen! Was ist Vorurteil, inzwischen überholt oder Tatsache?“ (*prima*, Heft 8, 1990, pp.54-55).

<sup>1079</sup> „Kosmetik Wirkt: Das läßt sich beweisen!“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1992, p. 48): „News aus den Labors“.

On the face of it, this last point may prove troubling since, at the time, there is already such a hype about hypoallergenic products that one might be tempted to perceive cosmetic allergies as extremely prevalent. However, even if so-called contact allergies –the most frequent manifestation of cosmetic allergies– are often quoted as a significant type of allergy,<sup>1080</sup> it is quite challenging to obtain reliable statistics. There seems to be a number of reasons for this: from the tension between the popular and scientific definitions of allergy or intolerance, to varying categorisations of allergies, cross-allergies, diagnostic challenges, individual perception, etc.<sup>1081</sup> Furthermore even when considering a single category such as “contact allergies”, not all these allergies can be traced back to cosmetic ingredients, far from it. If one leaves aside latex (which is often treated as a separate allergy category despite its being primarily a contact allergy) it is the metal nickel that heads the list (17.2%), followed –way back– by fragrances (7.2%), Peruvian balsam (6.7%), etc. Even relatively common cosmetic ingredients actually account for a very small percentage of contact allergies, e.g. lanolin alcohol (2.9%).<sup>1082</sup> Thus, even if the figure quoted by the aforementioned article can potentially be challenged, it is still safe to say that, contrary to popular perception, cosmetic allergies are on the whole still rather uncommon.

### 1995-2000: Actively techno-natural

In the second half of the decade, naturally-oriented cosmetics still represents a strong niche market that gradually incorporates some of the trends of mainstream cosmetics –e.g. segmented care for younger and older skin, specific ingredients such as vitamins or alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs) and vehicles such as liposomes or so called nanosomes– whilst pursuing their own path with e.g. attention to specific fatty acids or green tea.<sup>1083</sup> A new theme is an added attention not only to the well-being of the skin but also to that of the environment, as thematised in an ad for *Apotheker Scheller* products: “*It is exclusively based on gently extracted natural ingredients, which irritate neither the skin nor the*

<sup>1080</sup> According to e.g. the „Aktionsplan gegen Allergien“ website by the Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz: [http://www.aktionsplan-allergien.de/cln\\_162/nn\\_461368/SharedDocs/Downloads/10\\_Forschung\\_Wissen/Statistik\\_Allergiker.html](http://www.aktionsplan-allergien.de/cln_162/nn_461368/SharedDocs/Downloads/10_Forschung_Wissen/Statistik_Allergiker.html), in 2008, about 7% of the German population suffers from contact allergies, compared to e.g. respiratory allergies (30%), food allergies and intolerances (6%), insect poisons (2.5%), drug allergies (10%), neurodermitis (3%) and hayfever (12%), statistics published on 05.02.2008, source: ga<sup>2</sup>len Global Allergy and Asthma European Network. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1081</sup> Cf. e.g. Zentrale des IVDK [Informationsverbund Dermatologischer Kliniken], Institut an der Universität Göttingen: Schnuch, Axel, Geier, Johannes Lessmann, Holger, Uter, Wolfgang, „Untersuchungen zur Verbreitung umweltbedingter Kontaktallergien mit Schwerpunkt im privaten Bereich“, *Umweltforschungsplan des Bundesministeriums für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit*, Forschungsbericht 299 61 219, UBA-FB 000574, Berlin: Umweltbundesamt, 2004. Accessible here: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/2620.pdf>, p. 2. Or Engelhardt, Melanie, „Allergene in Nahrungsmitteln und Kosmetika: ausgewählte Beispiele und rechtliche Grundlagen“, Seminararbeit at the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, Lehrstuhl für Lebensmittelchemie Prof. Dr. Peter Schreier, 2006, pp. 7-8. Accessible here: [http://www.pharmazie.uni-wuerzburg.de/Studium/Lmc/Seminare/Allergene\\_Nahrungsmittel\\_Kosmetika.pdf](http://www.pharmazie.uni-wuerzburg.de/Studium/Lmc/Seminare/Allergene_Nahrungsmittel_Kosmetika.pdf) [both websites accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>1082</sup> Cf. e.g. Deutscher Allergie- und Asthmabund e.V., „*Bewusster Leben mit Kontaktallergien; Ratgeber zu allergenen Kosmetikinhaltstoffen: INCI-Deklaration verstehen und nützen*“, Mönchengladbach: June 2009, p. 7, statistics published in 2006, source: T. Opper, A. Schnuch.

<sup>1083</sup> Cf. e.g. ads for Claire Fisher Intensivpflege [Für die Haut ab 40... mit grünem Tee, AHA-Komplex, Vitaminen] or Apotheker Scheller Nachtkerzenöl Liposomen Hydro-Creme und -Concentrat, Augentrost Nanosomen-Creme: „*Das gehaltvolle Naturöl der Nachtkerze pflegt durch seinen außergewöhnlich hohen Gehalt an Gamma-Linolensäure*“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1995).

environment".<sup>1084</sup> Here, for the first time, "environment" is used in the sense of natural ecosystem rather than man-made or technological surroundings. But the most decisive development is a much more marked attention to the holistic management of the body: "Feeling well is the best care. A beautiful smooth skin and a radiant appearance are a matter of individual responsibility. Fitness, a healthy diet and a dash of enthusiasm are part of it, as is gentle care."<sup>1085</sup> A similar type of discourse can be witnessed in an ad for Yves Rocher's *Beauté Nature* line foregrounding a feisty young woman riding her bike in a natural, forest-like setting (the outline of her male companion can just be distinguished in the background): "We want to really feel good in our skin. Therefore we have consciously decided to live naturally. And that is how we want to care for ourselves as well."<sup>1086</sup> Well-feeling/being thus appears to be an endeavour requiring a new holistic consciousness of and responsibility for the self in its many facets as well as the natural environment.

In the mainstream cosmetics field, there seems to be a gradual blurring of boundaries between high tech and nature, even if techno-intensive discourse has by no means died out, as emblematised by a *Dior* ad for *Capture* that trumpets "Science's new victory over time" with its pure micro-protein (developed together with the *Institut Européen de Biologie Cellulaire*, as a scientific guarantor) that "revitalises the vital cellular functions" (as documented by in vitro testing – the proof obsession once again...)<sup>1087</sup> A similar type of discourse is propounded by *Helena Rubinstein* in an ad for *Face Sculptor* "with pro-phosphor". The product promises "smoother facial contours 'without surgery'", while the rest of the text hastens to add "a cream is no substitute for a facelift but an intensive treatment with *Face Sculptor Serum* plus *Face Sculptor Crème* closely resembles this intervention". The discourse around these products seems to trivialise the recourse to cosmetic surgery and indirectly endorses a very invasive and controversial procedure. In a sense, the message appears to be: "If you cannot afford the time or the money for a facelift or if you still have reservations about it but still care deeply about your appearance, *Face Sculptor* is a good substitute". One can also note that *Helena Rubinstein* seems to be yielding to the "more transparency" trend initiated by some producers (as noted in the previously discussed feature article) since it lists some of the main ingredients in its products, e.g. for instance: "with pro-phosphor, modelling active ingredients (30%), caffeine" for the *Concentrated Line Lift Serum*. However, in this case, the bluff remains since it is unlikely that the average consumer will be able to associate any concretely relevant properties with pro-phosphor,<sup>1088</sup> not to mention the humbug involved in the designation "modelling active

<sup>1084</sup> Ibid.: „Sie basiert ausschliesslich auf schonend gewonnenen Naturstoffen, die weder Haut noch Umwelt reizen.“

<sup>1085</sup> Ibid.: „Sich wohlfühlen ist die beste Pflege. Für schöne, glatte Haut und ein strahlendes Aussehen kann man selbst am meisten tun. Fitness, gesunde Ernährung und ein Schuss Enthusiasmus gehören genauso dazu wie eine sanfte Pflege.“

<sup>1086</sup> Ad for Yves Rocher *Beauté Nature* [nie wurde die Natur der Frau so respektiert] (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1998): „Wir wollen uns in unserer Haut so richtig wohlfühlen. Deshalb leben wir ganz bewußt natürlich. Und genau so wollen wir uns auch pflegen.“

<sup>1087</sup> Ad for *Dior Capture* (*Brigitte*, Heft 5, 1998): „Der neue Sieg der Wissenschaft über die Zeit“; „belebt die vitalen Funktionen der Zelle“.

<sup>1088</sup> The only significant mention I have found of this ingredient is in an excerpt drawn from "Helena Rubinstein's *Face Sculptor*", *Cosmetic International, Cosmetic Product Reports*, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2000 (as quoted on the following website: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-60897841.html>): "The *Eye Sculptor Patch* contains Pro-Phosphor which 'transforms the inorganic phosphorus found naturally in the skin into essential phosphocreatine which is found at the heart of the skin cells and is their natural reserve of energy. As a result the skin is instantly firmed and lifted.'" [website accessed Aug. 2011]

*ingredients*” that could cover just about anything. Nevertheless, the ad does contain the first (footnoted!) specification or disclaimer for moisturising substances that I have found. They are described as effective only “*in the upper layers of the epidermis*”, thus mitigating the in-depth effect that is implied by the “facelift” comparison and that is vaunted by most cosmetic companies.<sup>1089</sup>

But most mainstream companies promote a blend of “natural” and “technological” ingredients to support the skin’s “natural” regeneration or protection. *Pond’s*, for instance, advertises a *Hydro-Aufbau Crème* that blends the “evening primrose oil” natural hit with liposomes and “protective” Vitamin E.<sup>1090</sup> Other companies seem to more self-consciously draw on a natural- high-tech repertoire, with a terminology that is just as opaque and mystifying as the high-tech discourse we have witnessed until now. A good example is provided by *Sans Soucis* who trumpets: “*There is a world novelty from Nature in Repair Energy: Biocell.*” The illustration shows the face of a young woman (ecstatically or sleepily?) upturned towards a lily flower but the text seems to purposefully retain the initial ambiguity: “*Biocell is a unique new active ingredient from the most precious plant in the world.*”<sup>1091</sup> *Biotherm* also seems to enjoy using the “bio” prefix not just in its brand name but also in its *Biojeunesse* line that contains “*Plancton Thermal Biotechnologique™ [sic!], the concentrated active ingredient found in hot springs [that] naturally activates the skin’s functions*”. French chic seems to be at work again, since not translating the name of the active ingredient adds a layer of mystification to what may already appear as a strange collocation: a natural ingredient but in “biotechnological quality”. Consumers are left in the dark as to what exactly “*biotechnologique*” refers to in this particular case. Instead the epithet simply functions as a guarantor of scientific credibility, but a credibility that should nevertheless enable the obtention of “*a skin that gives you pleasure*”. Thus nature, technology and pleasure seem to be reunited in the pursuit of the same cosmetic goal.<sup>1092</sup>

Otherwise, during these years mainstream cosmetics present a festival of active substances –both “natural” and synthetic. Some of them seem particularly enduring such as vitamins, liposomes or thymus extract. Vitamins as antioxidants to combat free radicals are actually one of the enduring hits: from “cocktails” such as the one presented by *Elizabeth Arden’s Spa* line with vitamins A, C and E (as well as minerals)<sup>1093</sup> to *Lancôme’s Vitabolic* gel (with active vitamin C, ginseng and ginkgo)<sup>1094</sup> or more puristic products such as *L’Oréal’s Futur•e* with pure vitamin E: “*Every day, thanks to its unique technology (patented micro-capsules)*

<sup>1089</sup> Ad for Helena Rubinstein Face Sculptor line (*Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1998): „Mit Pro-Phosphor“; „Ebenmässiger Gesichtskonturen ,ohne Chirurgie“; „Eine Crème ersetzt kein Lifting. Doch eine Intensivbehandlung mit Face Sculptor Serum plus Face Sculptor Crème kommt dieser Behandlung schon sehr nahe.“; „Mit Pro-Phosphor, modellierenden Aktivstoffen (30%), Koffein“; „In den oberen Schichten der Epidermis“.

<sup>1090</sup> Ad for Pond’s Hydro-Nourishing Cream (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1995).

<sup>1091</sup> Ad for Sans Soucis Repair Energy Tagespflege (*Brigitte*, Heft 11, 1995): „In Repair Energy wirkt eine Weltneuheit aus der Natur. Biocell.“; „Biocell ist ein einzigartiger, neuer Wirkstoff aus einer der wertvollsten Pflanzen der Welt.“

<sup>1092</sup> Ad for Biotherm Biojeunesse (*Brigitte*, Heft 22, 1995): „Plancton Thermal Biotechnologique™, das Wirkstoffkonzentrat der Thermalquellen, aktiviert die Hautfunktionen auf natürliche Weise.“; „Eine Haut die Spaß macht“. See how this credibility is still buttressed e.g. here: <http://www.biotherm.ca/en/ca/discover/index.aspx>. [website accessed in Aug. 2011].

<sup>1093</sup> Ad for Elizabeth Arden Spa Skincare (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1995).

<sup>1094</sup> Ad for Lancôme’s Vitabolic Source d’Eclat Profond (*Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1998).

*Futur•e distributes pure vitamin E where your skin most needs it.*<sup>1095</sup> And an ad for RoC's *Retinol Actif Pur* line boasts that "*Rétinol [sic] is vitamin A in its purest and most active form. RoC was the first to be able to stabilise it*" –a fact "proven" by a small logo stating the patent number of the substance.<sup>1096</sup>

Other popular faddish substances include ceramides<sup>1097</sup> (i.e. "*lipid molecules [...] found in high concentrations within the cell membrane of cells*")<sup>1098</sup> or oxygen –a brand new trend that promises to dramatically reduce wrinkles that are perceived as mostly due to a starkly declining oxygen supply over the years.<sup>1099</sup> A more lasting fashion seems to be the inclusion of so-called "AHAs", i.e. alpha-hydroxy acids (usually stemming from natural fruit acids) that are supposed to function like a mild peeling. Sometimes they are blended with other substances to protect the sensitised skin.<sup>1100</sup> Finally *Biotherm's Hydra-Detox* banks on a "new" process rather than a magic substance since it declares that "*Moisturising alone is not enough. Before that the skin must be 'detoxified'*". It then boldly states that *Hydra-Detox* is "*the first moisturising product, that naturally 'neutralises' harmful substances and facilitates their evacuation*".<sup>1101</sup> It should be noted though that consumers are left in the dark when it comes to the natural credentials of the process. Nevertheless, it is the first example I have found in the cosmetic realm of a product that promises a detoxification –an otherwise enduring trend in alternative health therapies.<sup>1102</sup>

<sup>1095</sup> Ad for L'Oréal Futur•e Feuchtigkeitspflege + tägliche Dosis reines vitamin E (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1998): „*Dank seiner einzigartigen Technologie (patentierte Mikrokapseln) verteilt Futur•e jeden Tag Reines Vitamin E dort, wo Ihre Haut es am meisten braucht.*“

<sup>1096</sup> Ad for RoC Retinol Actif Pur line (*Brigitte*, Heft 4, 1998): „*Rétinol ist Vitamin A in seiner reinsten und aktivsten Form und konnte von RoC erstmalig stabilisiert werden.*“

<sup>1097</sup> E.g. ads for Elizabeth Arden Ceramide Time Complex Capsules (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1995) or Juvena Juvenance (*Bunte*, Heft 41, 1995).

<sup>1098</sup> Exceptionally, I would like to quote the *Wikipedia* entry since it appears fully referenced (if still anonymous of course...), cf.: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceramide>. [website accessed Aug. 2010]

<sup>1099</sup> E.g. ads for Lancaster Skin Therapy Vital Oxygen Supply (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 1995) or Monteil Activance (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1996).

<sup>1100</sup> E.g. ads for Jade AHA-Aktiv-Complex-Creme (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1995) or Ellen Betrix Fresh&Protect: „*Weil erneuerte Haut zwar schöner ist, aber auch empfindlich. Und weil sie Schutz braucht. Deshalb gibt es jetzt die Beta Hydroxy-Pflege, die Ihre Haut erneuert und gleichzeitig mit Vitamin E vor Umwelteinflüssen schützt.*“ (*Für Sie*, Heft 8, 1996).

<sup>1101</sup> Ad for Biotherm Hydra-Detox (*Brigitte*, Heft 6, 1998): „*Feuchtigkeit allein reicht nicht aus. Vorher muss die Haut 'entgiftet' werden.*“; „*Die 1. Feuchtigkeitspflege, die auf natürliche Weise Schadstoffen in der Haut 'neutralisiert' und deren Abtransport begünstigt.*“

<sup>1102</sup> Detoxifying or body cleansing traditions have a long and transcultural history, e.g. practices rooted in sweating: from the North American sweat-lodge to the oriental hammam, the Finnish sauna or the Russian banya. These practices are often rooted in traditional medical systems such as Ayurveda and its Panchakarma procedures, as defined e.g. by the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India): "*Panchakarma means the "five therapies"/five therapeutic means of eliminating toxins from the body are Vaman (emesis), Virechan (purgation), Nasya (nasal insufflation), Basti (enema) and Raktamoskshana (blood-letting by using leech and different instruments). This series of five therapies help remove deep-rooted stress and illness causing toxins from the body while balancing the doshas (energies that govern all biological functions).*" Cf. [http://ccras.nic.in/Ayurveda/20081010\\_Therapies.htm](http://ccras.nic.in/Ayurveda/20081010_Therapies.htm). However, there are a number of critical (contemporary) voices raised against what is perceived as pure quackery, especially as it pertains to commercial detox products: cf. e.g. <http://www.skepdic.com/detox.html> (including a number of references); *The Detox Dossier*, Eds Alice Tuff & Harriet Ball, 2009, online publication: <http://www.senseaboutscience.org.uk/PDF/Detox%20Dossier.pdf>; Prasad, Aarathi, "Champneys detox patches draw out harmful toxins from your body overnight", *There Goes the Science Bit: a guide to standing up for science for early career researchers*, Eds Alice Tuff & Frank Swain, London: Sense about Science, online

Products for sensitive skin remain a strong niche market with new products designed to desensitise skin. The talk here is mainly centered around the term “sensitivity” or “irritation threshold” [Reizschwelle] but there seems to be some linguistic confusion: whereas *Payot’s Les Sensitives* suggest that “*The sensitivity threshold of your skin diminishes by up to 75% and redness is significantly reduced*”,<sup>1103</sup> *Vichy’s SenSium* contends that its products enable an “*increase of the sensitivity threshold thanks to skin-regulating care: 94% less irritation after 4 weeks*”.<sup>1104</sup> However both products have recourse to “natural” ingredients: epaline<sup>1105</sup> and liquorice extracts for *Payot* and alginates, a natural polymer,<sup>1106</sup> for *Vichy*. Whereas all are characterised as soothing, the latter is described as a second skin in surgery because it contributes to wound healing, is hypoallergenic and contributes to protection from free radicals and drying.<sup>1107</sup> Interestingly though, an earlier ad for *Payot* presents a more positive perspective on sensitive skin, presenting it as an asset. The cream by mitigating the sensitivity of the skin is seen as contributing to the blossoming of its specific beauty: “*Thus my delicateness has become my trump card and I am very sensitive to that.*”<sup>1108</sup>

A relatively new niche in terms of skin protection is represented by products initially stemming from soap and body lotion research, i.e. a series of pH-neutral or rather skin-neutral brands. Early ads stress similar characteristics to those found in previous body-care products, i.e. a specific attention to the protection or restoration of the skin’s acidic protection, the so-called “acid mantle”, sometimes with the addition of other skin friendly substances such as e.g. vitamin E or dexpanthenol<sup>1109</sup> –an effect reinforced by an illustration

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publication, 2007, <http://www.senseaboutscience.org/data/files/resources/15/There-Goes-the-Science-Bit.pdf>, pp. 6-7. [all websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1103</sup> Ad for *Payot Les Sensitives (Für Sie, Heft 10, 1996)*: „*Die Reizschwelle Ihrer Haut senkt sich bis zu 75% und Rötungen werden erheblich reduziert*“.

<sup>1104</sup> Ad for *Vichy Sensium (Brigitte, Heft 8, 1995)*: „*Erhöhung der Reizschwelle mit der Hautregulierenden Pflege: 94% weniger Reizbarkeit nach 4 Wochen.*“

<sup>1105</sup> It has proved difficult to obtain straightforward information on this substance. On this old catalogue of *Arnaud Cosmétique* (2006) originally obtained from this website: <http://www.in-cosmetics.com/ExhibitorLibrary/574/CatalogueArnaudCosmetique.pdf>. [unfortunately the information is no longer available], I found the following information: Epaline® 100 (INCI: Zea Mays oil) is described as “*peroxydized maize oil obtained by means of an oxydation process controlled and developed by the Laboratoires Carilène. Soothing, anti irritation and microcirculation-stimulating properties*” [Huile de maïs peroxydée, obtenue par un procédé d’oxydation contrôlée et développé par les Laboratoires Carilène. Propriétés apaisante, anti-irritante et stimulante de la microcirculation cutanée. p. 7]. Unfortunately, I found next to no explanations on the laboratory’s own homepage: [http://www.arnaudgroup.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=82&Itemid=164](http://www.arnaudgroup.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=82&Itemid=164). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1106</sup> Actually, alginates are “*cell-wall constituents of brown algae (Phaeophyceae). They are chain-forming heteropolysaccharides made up of blocks of mannuronic acid and guluronic acid*”. Cf. [http://www.seaweed.ie/uses\\_general/alginate.html](http://www.seaweed.ie/uses_general/alginate.html) [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1107</sup> Cf. *ibid.*: “*Calcium alginate is insoluble in water and this led to the development of fibres that could be woven into various textiles or parts of textiles, and their use in bandages, particularly for large wounds and burns, became widespread.*”

<sup>1108</sup> Ad for *Payot Les Sensitives (Brigitte, Heft 8, 1995)*: „*So ist meine Empfindlichkeit mein Trumpf geworden. Und dafür bin ich sehr sensibel.*“

<sup>1109</sup> Panthenol and dexpanthenol are very ubiquitous cosmetic ingredients (cf. e.g. Household Products Database, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/household/brands?tbl=chem&id=2077&query=panthenol&searchas=TblChemicals>) used as a humectants, emollients and moisturisers. They also contributes to the healing of superficial wounds. For more specific information, cf. e.g. Ebner, Fritz, Heller, Andreas, Rippke, Frank & Tausch, Irene, Topical Use of Dexpanthenol in

showing e.g. a naked mother and child hugging.<sup>1110</sup> A later product, *Eubos's Med Crème* (with jojoba oil, panthenol, allantoin and vitamin E) emphasises its contribution to the protection of the skin's "biosphere" –an interesting borrowing from ecological discourse.<sup>1111</sup> All of these ads emphasise a scientific or medical affiliation with expressions such as "medical skin protection care" or "medically effective" (pH5-Eucerin), "recommended by dermatologists" (*Eubos*) or "science for healthy skin" (*sebamed*).

Another market that is really booming is that for "young senior" or "baby boomer" cosmetics which now reaches out to those consumers who are well into their 50s or even their 60s. All the ads I have collected in this series stem from the lifestyle magazine *Bunte* that seems to boast a slightly older readership than the likes of *Brigitte* or *Für Sie*. Actress Hannelore Elsner stars in an ad for *Marbert's Cell Activation* in a glamorous and flatteringly blurred photo under the caption "Why should my skin look older than I actually feel?". She goes on to sum up the babyboomer zeitgeist by adding the following: "Actually, I was pretty surprised when I suddenly turned fifty because my thoughts and feelings were absolutely no different from those I had at forty. This is the way many women feel nowadays".<sup>1112</sup> A very similar discourse is peddled by *Oil of Olaz* who presents an older but just as carefully groomed and radiant woman with the following affirmation: "My skin should look as good as I feel".<sup>1113</sup> Finally, a (seemingly prematurely) white-haired woman with a dazzling smile is the icon of *Nivea's Vital* line that is supposed to provide "new vitality to mature skin every day". In all these creams, vitamins (A, B5, C or E) play a central role.<sup>1114</sup>

A new product on the market is *Imedeen*, a skin-specific food supplement including "marine biological proteins, polysaccharides, vitamin C and zink". The campaign for *Imedeen* mainly stars Ann Archer –an American actress in her late forties– as well as a series of anonymous consumers. The common denominator of all the ads is an emphasis on the effects of an unbalanced lifestyle, e.g.: "Stress, too little movement, an unbalanced diet make the skin appear sallow and grey". If outer cosmetics are recognised as providing a valuable contribution to the youth and beauty of the skin, its limits are also stressed: "Lasting success can only be obtained by additional nourishment from the inside".<sup>1115</sup> Hence, this represents an implicit recognition that holistic measures are necessary to ensure effective wrinkle prevention...

Among a number of relatively new strategies to fight acne or impure skin, an article in *Brigitte* presents another technological novelty: an array of plasters to prevent or cure nasty spots, pimples and blackheads. These plasters either contain a number of active substances

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Skin Disorders, *American Journal of Clinical Dermatology*, Vol. 3, Issue 6, pp. 427-433. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1110</sup> Ads for *sebamed VISIO Gesichtspflege* (*Für Sie*, Heft 10, 1996): „Wissenschaft für gesunde Haut“ & pH5-Eucerin Intensiv Creme (*Für Sie*, Heft 7, 1996): „medizinische Hautschutzpflege“; „medizinisch wirksam“.

<sup>1111</sup> Ad for *Eubos Med Creme* (*Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1998): „von Dermatologen empfohlen“.

<sup>1112</sup> Ad for *Marbert Cell Activation* (*Bunte*, Heft 41, 1995): „Warum sollte meine Haut alter aussehen als ich mich fühle“; „Eigentlich war ich ziemlich erstaunt, als ich plötzlich fünfzig war. Weil nämlich mein Denken und Fühlen kein bißchen anders war als mit Vierzig. Und so empfinden wohl heute viele Frauen.“;

<sup>1113</sup> Ad *Oil of Olaz Pro-Vital Linie* (*Bunte*, Heft 49, 1995): „Meine Haut soll so gut aussehen, wie ich mich fühle.“

<sup>1114</sup> Ad for *Nivea Vital line* (*Bunte*, Heft 44, 1995): „täglich neue Lebenskraft für reife Haut“.

<sup>1115</sup> Ads for *Imedeen Nahrungs-Komplement Zur Ergänzung vitaler-Hautnährstoffe* (*Bunte*, Heft 42, 1995; *Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1995 & *Für Sie*, Heft 9, 1996): „meeresbiologischen Proteinen, Polysacchariden, Vitamin C und Zink“; „Streß, wenig Bewegung, unausgewogene Ernährung lassen die Haut schnell fahl und grau erscheinen.“; „Ein dauerhafter Erfolg kann aber nur durch zusätzliche Nahrung von innen erzielt werden.“

to disinfect and dry the affected areas overnight or rely on more mechanical action to rapidly remove oil, dirt and blackheads. These strips can be applied to the famous T-zone, i.e. the chin, the nose or the forehead. Prominent examples include *Elizabeth Arden's Visible Difference Pore-Fix C* or *Nivea Visage kao bioré®*. Finally, the article emphasises a new phenomenon, so-called late acne that seems to be plaguing an increasing number of 30-year olds. The causes remain unclear, but stress or hormonal imbalances linked to the intake of the pill are viewed as plausible.<sup>1116</sup>

On another note, after establishing itself as a champion of laconically effective publicity –in line with the simplicity of its traditional *Nivea Crème*– *Nivea* inaugurates a novel strategy, that of emotional advertising, a phenomenon that will gather impetus well into the next century. A famous ad for its cream shows a little girl hugging her mother and the photograph is stamped with a huge caption that states “*Mother*” in a massive font and “*Love*” in a much lighter and rounder font. At the bottom of the ad, one can read the usual caption “*Essential for the skin*” alongside a tin of cream.<sup>1117</sup> As in ads for other, non-body oriented technologies, this type of ad suggests that technology is just an empty vehicle if it is not powered by the force of positive (and, in this case, nurturing) emotion.<sup>1118</sup>

Many of the findings that have emerged in the course of my analysis of publicity are reflected in the feature articles of the time, most prominently in a recapitulative article in *Brigitte* entitled “*Skincare report: This is new*”. The article sums up “novelties” such as the renewed focus on vitamins, especially vitamin C, which poses a particular challenge because it is difficult to stabilise. Companies seem to have elaborated various solutions: from a last minute blending of powdered vitamin with gel, to other forms of extraction or preservation with alcohol. But all vitamins are recommended since they help combat free radicals, balance skin moisture levels as well as encourage the skin’s self-regeneration: “*Thus vitamins are a cosmetic evergreen and especially when combined, they are unbeatable: be it against wrinkles, dryness or irritation*”. The article also notes the emergence of ads for “mature” skin and reports the hullabaloo set off by *Clinique* when it first advertised that “*Beautiful does not mean young*”, before other companies jumped onto the bandwagon: “*according to statistics every other woman who regularly uses cream is over 50. The cosmetics industry has adapted to this fact and no longer perceives mature skin as a problem*”. Which means that a series of products have been launched that are “*no longer abashedly presented as ‘creams for stressed, damaged or very dry skin’*”. Instead simple, straightforward care is the new motto: “*Women who are at peace with their age have a realistic outlook and do not expect miracles. They need a cream that primarily helps with dryness without unnecessarily irritating the skin*”.<sup>1119</sup>

<sup>1116</sup> Helfrich, Diana, „Pflaster drauf! Volle Kraft gegen unreine Haut: Kosmetik-Wissenschaftler und Ärzte entdecken neue Behandlungs-Methoden und Wirkstoffe“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 17, 1998, pp. 105-106); Ads for Elizabeth Arden’s Visible Difference Pore-Fix C (*Brigitte*, Heft 12, 1998) and Nivea Visage kao bioré® Clear-Up Strip (*Brigitte*, Heft 19, 1998).

<sup>1117</sup> Ad for Nivea Creme (*stern*, Heft 28, 1997): „Mutter“; „Liebe“.

<sup>1118</sup> A prime example of “emotional advertising” were the “Reach out and touch someone” ad series for AT&T in the 1980s. Cf. e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0210yPrQF54>. [website accessed April 2011]

<sup>1119</sup> Möller, Christa, “Hautpflege Report: Das ist neu” (*Brigitte*, Heft 23, 1995, pp. 64-70): „Vitamine sind also ein kosmetischer Dauerbrenner und besonders als Kombi-Pack unschlagbar: gegen Falten, gegen Trockenheit und gegen Reizungen.“; „Schön sein heißt nicht jung aussehen“; „laut Statistik ist jede zweite Frau, die sich regelmäßig eincremt, über 50. Die Kosmetikindustrie hat sich darauf eingestellt und sieht reife Haut nicht länger nur als Problemfall an.“; „nicht verschämt als ‘Cremes für gestreßte, strapazierte oder sehr trockene Haut’

The next section of the article highlights the popularity of natural ingredients such as evening primrose oil containing “*gamma linolenate*”, which is particularly welcomed by very dry or sensitive skins, or oil extracted from the hip of an Andean wild rose, the so-called “*Rosa Mosqueta*”, which is rich in unsaturated fats and vitamin A acid, and has been successfully tested by dermatologists as a means to attenuate superficial wrinkles or pigmentation marks.<sup>1120</sup> If these ingredients are mainly the hallmark of outspokenly “natural” cosmetics, an increasing proportion of mainstream cosmetics also incorporate them into their products. The fourth and final section of the feature reports on the somewhat confusing situation regarding animal testing. Attempts to introduce a rapid animal-testing standstill failed in 1993 but a law is planned for the future: “*All animal-testing will be banned as of 1998 but only if until then, acceptable alternatives are found*”.<sup>1121</sup> And that is precisely the crux of the debate, because if in- vitro testing and skin modelling using cell-cultures are increasingly becoming the norm, and if animal-testing is no longer carried out for a number of regular products such as shampoo or straightforward creams, experts are divided about the necessity to carry on with animal-testing in order to chart the long-term genetic impact of specific substances. The article closes with the mention of the “*produced without animal testing*” seal, which remains controversial since most substances have originally been tested on animals.<sup>1122</sup>

Besides also mentioning animal-testing regulations, a 1997 article in *Focus* reports on the impending European laws pertaining to the cosmetic market: “*In future, the effectiveness of a product must be proven. Moreover, what should have been the norm a long time ago, will at last become a law: cosmetics, when used appropriately should not harm anyone, the ingredients should be stated and the use-by date provided*”. Thus the burden of proof rests with the producers instead of the consumers. But many voices –especially from the ecological faction– have raised concerns about the opacity of some chemical jargon that may mask potentially harmful substances such as carcinogenic preservatives. Other voices criticise the fact that some umbrella terms such as “fragrance” may mask dangerous substances such as “*nerve-damaging nitromusk compounds*”. For anxious or simply health-

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verklaussuliert.“, „Frauen die zu ihrem Alter stehen, denken realistisch und erwarten keine Wunder. Sie brauchen eine Creme, die vor allem die Trockenheit ausgleicht und nicht unnötig reizt.“

<sup>1120</sup> These claims seem to be supported by the following short referenced online article: Ferlow, Klaus, “Rosa Mosqueta Seed Oil From Chile - A Gift From Mother Nature”, available here: <http://stason.org/articles/wellbeing/health/Rosa-Mosqueta-Seed-Oil-Gift-From-Mother-Nature.html> [website accessed Aug. 2011].

<sup>1121</sup> Apparently, this has taken much longer to implement, cf. European Commission of Consumer Affairs, “Ban on animal testing”, [http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/animal-testing/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/animal-testing/index_en.htm), especially: “*The **testing ban** on finished cosmetic products applies since 11 September 2004; the testing ban on ingredients or combination of ingredients applies since 11 March 2009.*” And: “*The **marketing ban** applies since 11 March 2009 for all human health effects with the exception of repeated-dose toxicity, reproductive toxicity and toxicokinetics. For these specific health effects the marketing ban will apply step by step as soon as alternative methods are validated and adopted in EU legislation with due regard to the OECD validation process, but with a maximum cut-off date of 10 years after entry into force of the Directive, i.e., 11 March 2013, irrespective of the availability of alternative non-animal tests.*” [website accessed Aug. 2011; emphasis in original]

<sup>1122</sup> Möller, Christa, “Hautpflege Report: Das ist neu”, op. cit.: „*Gamma Linolensäure*“; „*Alle Tierversuche werden ab 1998 eingestellt. Allerdings nur dann, wenn es bis dahin auch anerkannte Alternativen gibt.*“

conscious consumers it implies that *“Those who wish to protect themselves, buy organic. And even if the “nature” label is often deceptive, the organic trend for skin and hair lives on.”*<sup>1123</sup>

An article in *Brigitte* entitled *“It is possible: less chemicals in creams and lotions”* reinforces this perception. It describes voluntary efforts by a number of companies –both natural and mainstream– to limit the number of ingredients (hence potential allergens) in some of their products and it details packaging strategies to limit or avoid preservatives.<sup>1124</sup> A later feature in the same magazine is designed to help women with very sensitive skins find appropriate products. There again, shorter ingredient lists, avoiding certain colours, fragrances and preservatives are presented as sensible strategies to limit allergic reactions. However, the article warns readers that the lack of homogenous testing regulations is a major hurdle, since some products are tested on large samples of women, whilst others only on small samples of particularly sensitive women. In sum, the article recommends that women with sensitive skins go to their dermatologist (or allergologist) for a check-up. There, they can obtain an allergy pass which they should always have about them when purchasing new cosmetics since, as from July 1999, a so-called INCI list will have become compulsory for all cosmetic products.<sup>1125</sup>

Otherwise, anti-ageing cosmetics are still the focus of a lot of attention and energy. For instance, a feature containing only letters to the editor displays a broad spectrum of reactions to an article published in *Brigitte* earlier in 1985 on yet another brave or insane (depending on the viewpoint) attempt by one of its beauty editors to test a form of chemical peeling based on concentrated fruit acids. In the process, the editor suffered severe burns and would have incurred scars had it not been for emergency cortisone treatment. Readers’ reactions then range from outrage:

I was terribly upset by the horror trip article in your magazine. Should one now label this self-experiment (by our editorial journalist Christa Möller, editor’s note) as heroic? I find this endeavour stupid and insane. I just cannot comprehend why a BRIGITTE journalist is prepared to endanger her health in order to produce an article on “beauty”. [Wiebe Köster, Hamburg]

To bafflement: *“Are we no longer able to accept the effects of time on us? Is ageing really such a disgrace? No line on my face would lead me to undergo such a procedure. [Christiane Henck-Lecke, Calden]”*. In parallel, other readers share their positive personal experiences with the treatment: *“If I were able to afford it, I would risk this venture again. [Angelika Meiners, Moers]”* or *“I prefer this solution to wrinkles galore. [Marion S., Haan]”*. While a number express their disappointment: *“Four months have elapsed since this procedure but nothing has changed. [Dagmar W., Bonn]”* Or more radically state: *“I would never do it again. [Renate Gesner, Stadtbergen]”*. Professionals also express their viewpoints, from

<sup>1123</sup> Leudesdorff, Claudia, „Die Lack ist ab: Die EU regelt künftig die Wirksamkeit von Schönheitsmitteln“ (*Focus*, Heft 25, 16.10.1997): „*Die Wirksamkeit eines Produkts muß sich künftig nachweisen lassen. Außerdem wird Gesetz, was längst selbstverständlich sein sollte: Kosmetika dürfen bei sachgemäßer Anwendung – niemanden schädigen, die Inhaltsstoffe müssen deklariert, das Verfallsdatum angegeben sein.*“; „*nervenschädigende Nitromoschusverbindungen*“; „*Wer sich davor schützen will, greift ins Bio-Regal. Und auch wenn lange nicht alles “Natur” ist, was sich so nennt: der Bio-Trend für Haut und Haar hält an.*“

<sup>1124</sup> [NO AUTHOR??], „Es geht doch: Weniger Chemie in Cremes und Lotions“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 1998, p. 78).

<sup>1125</sup> Helfrich, Diana, „Was heißt überhaupt ‘hypoallergen’?“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 21, 1998, pp. 88-90). The INCI question was already discussed earlier.

dermatologists who strongly condemn the practice to others who find that the article does not do justice to a treatment that can be very effective and helpful, not to mention conscientious beauticians who work with much less concentrated products.<sup>1126</sup>

In contrast, a few years later an article in *Brigitte* by the aforementioned Christa Möller focuses on less controversial concentrated substances that are packaged as ampoules, capsules or fluids and marketed by a number of cosmetic firms. These are highly extolled: *“Active ingredient concentrates are really effective! They contain natural oils, fruit acids, vitamins, enzymes, proteins, minerals or highly-dosed flower or herbal essences.”* There again, one notices a co-existence or blending of various “natural” ingredients –e.g. *“ampoules with marigold, rose hip and witch hazel soothe irritated skin”*– with “high-tech” instrumentation and procedures, –e.g. *“The most modern technology, from magnetic resonance imaging to skin scanning, was harnessed to prove the effectiveness of their serum”*.<sup>1127</sup>

At the end of the decade, natural cosmetics remain popular and incorporate a range of fashionable substances such as e.g. algae, green tea or a great hit: essential oils. The vocabulary of natural care focuses on pampering or flattering the skin with precious natural substances, for example *Apotheker Scheller’s “Nothing pampers sensitive skin better than extremely well tolerated natural ingredients”*<sup>1128</sup> or *“Aok pampers your skin with precious natural ingredients”*. The ad for Aok’s Aroma line even goes a step further in its claims since the product *“stimulates the senses and with its natural essential oils it makes for a velvety soft complexion, in perfect harmony”*.<sup>1129</sup> Meanwhile, sensuous stimulation and harmonisation have become two hallmark functions of wellness cosmetics (and indeed wellness care in general) in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mainstream products are articulated around a number of more or less dominant trends. The most significant one centres on retinol –from *Louis Widmer*, which boasts a particularly high dosage (6000E/g; together with so-called *“biostimulators”* as well as vitamin E and

<sup>1126</sup> „Leserbriefe zum chemischen Peeling: Horrortrip oder Wundermittel gegen Falten?“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 24, 1995, pp. 80-82): *„Ich habe mich fürchterlich geärgert über den Horror-Trip-Artikel in Ihrer Zeitschrift. Soll frau jetzt diesen Selbstversuch (unserer Redakteurin Christa Möller, Anm. d. Red.) als heldinnenhaft einordnen? Ich halte diesen Vorfall für dumm und bescheuert. Ich kann’s einfach nicht nachvollziehen, daß eine BRIGITTE-Redakteurin ihre Gesundheit gefährdet um einen Artikel zum Thema “Schönheit” zu liefern. [Wiebe Köster, Hamburg]“; „Sind wir nicht mehr in der Lage, den Wandel der Zeit an uns zu akzeptieren? Ist Alterwerden wirklich so eine Schmach? Mich würde kein einziges Fältchen in meinem Gesicht dazu bringen, mich so einer Prozedur zu unterziehen. [Christiane Henck-Lecke, Calden]“; „Könnte ich es finanzieren, so würde ich diesen Schritt noch einmal wagen. [Angelika Meiners, Moers]“; „Diese Lösung ist mir lieber als die himmelsvielen Falten. [Marion S., Haan]“; „Seit diesem Eingriff sind vier Monate vergangen, und es hat sich nichts geändert. [Dagmar W., Bonn]“; „Ich würde es nie wieder tun. [Renate Gesner, Stadtbergen]“.*

<sup>1127</sup> Möller, Christa, „Volle Konzentration! Oft reicht schon ein Tropfen: Ampullen, Kapseln oder Fluids – die neuen Intensivkuren für schöne Haut straffen, glätten und entspannen“ (*Brigitte*, Heft 2, 1998, pp. 52-53): *„Wirkstoff-Konzentrate haben es wirklich in sich! Sie enthalten natürliche Öle, Fruchtsäuren, Vitamine, Enzyme, Proteine, Mineralstoffe oder hoch dosierte Blüten- und Kräuter-Essenzen.“; „Ampullen mit Ringelblume, Hagebutte und Hamamelis entspannen gereizte Haut“; „Um die Wirkung ihres Serums zu beweisen, wurde modernste Technologie von der Kernspintomografie bis hin zum Hautscanner, eingesetzt.“*

<sup>1128</sup> Ad for Apotheker Scheller’s Mineralpflege (Für Sie, Heft 12, 1999): *„Nichts schmeichelt der Haut mehr als die wertvollen Wirkstoffe der Natur“.*

<sup>1129</sup> Ad for Aok Gesichtspflege mit Aromaölen (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 2000): *„Aok verwöhnt Ihre Haut mit wertvollen Wirkstoffe aus der Natur“; „stimuliert die Sinne und sorgt mit ihren natürlichen Aroma-Ölen für einen samtig zarten Teint, rundum in Harmonie.“*

panthenol) to *Helena Rubinstein* with its Power A that is supposedly based on pure, 100% fresh retinol that provides a “*pure retinol repair therapy*”.<sup>1130</sup> Some companies even claim that their retinol product is the equivalent of a facelift, such as *Lancaster* whose ad for *Suractif Retinol “Deep Lift”* boasts that “*The double retinol [is] stronger than the signs of time*”.<sup>1131</sup> Even more striking is a *Vichy* ad that shows a young woman’s face shrouded in a rather sinister post-facelift bandage alongside the following caption: “*The new operation against the ageing of the skin is a face cream*” –another significant tribute to the trivialisation of facelifts, even if they are still perceived as threatening. This last ad goes on to state that the cream is “*The breakthrough against the ageing of the skin, proven under medical control\*: radiant complexion: +29% after 15 days, wrinkle depth: -25% after 3 months. Hypoallergenic. With Vichy thermal water.*”<sup>1132</sup> Even if to lay readers, it may appear far-fetched to measure radiance –which is usually perceived as rather subjective compared to wrinkle depth, it is indeed theoretically possible to quantify the so-called “albedo” of the skin.<sup>1133</sup>

Another substance praised as magic is the so-called “skin’s own” co-enzyme Q10<sup>1134</sup> promoted by e.g. *Nivea* or *Eucerin*.<sup>1135</sup> But even more mysterious if not plainly mystifying

<sup>1130</sup> Ads for Louis Widmer Crème Vitalisante (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999): „*Biostimulatoren*“ & Helena Rubinstein Power A (*Brigitte*, Heft 8, 2000).

<sup>1131</sup> Ad for Lancaster Suractif Retinol „Deep Lift“ Advanced Skin Retexturizer & Advanced Rich Facial Treatment [Mit der neuen exklusiven Lancaster Retinol Double-Transport-Technology] (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999): „*Das doppelte Retinol starker als die Zeichen der Zeit*“.

<sup>1132</sup> Ad for Vichy Réti•C [Reines Rétinol + Reines Vitamin C] (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1999): „*Der neue Eingriff bei Hautalterung ist eine Pflegecreme*“; „*Der Durchbruch gegen Hautalterung, bewiesen unter ärztlicher Kontrolle\*: Strahlender Teint: +29% nach 15 Tagen, Faltentiefe: –25% nach 3 Monaten. Hypoallergen. Mit Thermalwasser von Vichy.*“

<sup>1133</sup> However, it does raise methodological challenges as well as potentially ethical issues since radiance or skin-reflectance seems to vary according to a number of parameters such as age, gender, skin type, race as well as external factors. Cf. e.g. Korol, Bernard, Bergfeld, Gary R., Goldman, Herbert, McLaughlin, Lynn J., “Use of the pigmentometer, a new device for measuring skin albedo: Relating skin color with a series of physiological measures”, *Integrative physiological and Behavioral Science*, Vol. 12, No 1, 1977, pp. 19-31; Angelopoulou, Elli, “The Reflectance Spectrum of Human Skin”, *Technical Reports (CIS)*, Department of Computer & Information Science, University of Pennsylvania, 1999, available online here: [http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1616&context=cis\\_reports&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dskin%2Balbedo%2Brace%26ie%3Dutf-8%26oe%3Dutf-8%26aq%3Dt%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla%3Ade%3Aofficial%26client%3Dfirefox-a#search=%22skin%20albedo%20race%22](http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1616&context=cis_reports&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dskin%2Balbedo%2Brace%26ie%3Dutf-8%26oe%3Dutf-8%26aq%3Dt%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla%3Ade%3Aofficial%26client%3Dfirefox-a#search=%22skin%20albedo%20race%22). For more recent research: cf. Weyrich, Tim & al., “Analysis of Human Faces using a Measurement-Based Skin Reflectance Model”, *ACM Transactions on Graphics (Proc. SIGGRAPH 2006)*, Boston, MA, July 2006, pp. 1013–1024, available online here: <http://web4.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/t.weyrich/projects/facescan/weyrich06analysis.pdf>; Petitjean, Adeline, Sainthillier, Jean-Marie, Mac-Mary, Sophie, Muret, Patrice, Closs, Brigitte, Gharbi, Tijani & Humbert, Philippe, “Skin radiance: how to quantify? Validation of an optical method”, *Skin Research and Technology*, Vol. 13, Issue 1, Feb. 2007, pp. 2-8; Dickens, M.P., Smith, W.A.P., Ragheb, H. & Hancock, E.R. “Measuring Skin Reflectance Parameters”, 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Pattern Recognition 2008, available online: <http://figment.cse.usf.edu/~sfefilat/data/papers/WeBCT9.48.pdf>. [websites accessed Oct. 2011].

<sup>1134</sup> Here again, because this entry is extremely well-referenced, I will dare to quote *Wikipedia*: “*Coenzyme Q<sub>10</sub>, also known as ubiquinone, ubidecarenone, coenzyme Q, and abbreviated at times to CoQ<sub>10</sub> /ˌkoʊ ˈkjuː ˈtɛn/, CoQ, Q10, or Q, is a 1,4-benzoquinone, where Q refers to the quinone chemical group, and 10 refers to the number of isoprenyl chemical subunits in its tail. This oil-soluble, vitamin-like substance is present in most eukaryotic cells, primarily in the mitochondria. It is a component of the electron transport chain and participates in aerobic cellular respiration, generating energy in the form of ATP [adenosine triphosphate]. Ninety-five percent of the human body’s energy is generated this way. Therefore, those organs with the highest energy requirements—such as the heart, liver and kidney —have the highest CoQ<sub>10</sub> concentrations.*”

substances remain the staples of mainstream products, from the so-called “hydro-parts” in *frei öl’s* moisturising cream<sup>1136</sup> to *Eubos’s* so called “active-multi-protection-system (AMPS)” or “hydro-regulating-factor”,<sup>1137</sup> or *Shiseido’s* rather menacing “Plant Bio-Exfoliant”<sup>1138</sup> (which, by the way, should not be a distant cousin of the Agent Orange defoliant, since an exfoliant is simply a peeling cream). Otherwise, plant and mineral extracts are heartily embraced in a number of mainstream products, for example *Biotherm’s* *D-Stress* line with its magnesium, vitamin and trace element cocktail that is supposed to bring “turbo-energy” to extremely tired skin.<sup>1139</sup> *Elizabeth Arden’s* *Ceramide Herbal 12 Capsules* is celebrated as “The innovative high-tech care” with extracts of among others ginkgo or echinacea, two plants long incorporated into the OTC herbal pharmacopeia for their capacity to respectively foster neurological regeneration or strengthen immunity.<sup>1140</sup> The ad also stresses that “All plant extracts are absolutely pure and have been incorporated into the capsules without conservation”.<sup>1141</sup> The *Matte Moisture Lotion* from the same company<sup>1142</sup> boasts guggul<sup>1143</sup> extracts that are the object of a patent application. This is the first example I have accessed of an attempt to patent a natural substance instead of a synthetic molecule.

Feature articles during these years focus on cosmetic education as in a pharmacists’ supplement included in *Für Sie* where a dermatologist, Dr Harald Gerny, is interviewed about the future of cosmetics. After an etymological analysis of the term “cosmeceutical”, he goes on to describe the hybridisation of cosmetics and medicine: “The combination of cosmetics and medicine is characterised by the fact that an increasing number of medically active ingredients are incorporated into cosmetics that provide optimal conditions and application systems”. He also mentions that the main principle in cosmetology is substitution, i.e.

the supply of metabolism-activating substances such as hormones, vitamins, collagen, elastin, minerals from both outside and inside. This enables one to counter the aspect of skin

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coenzyme\\_Q10](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coenzyme_Q10). Cf. also: <http://www.cosmeticscop.com/cosmetic-ingredient-dictionary/definition/393/coenzyme-q10.aspx>. [websites accessed April 2011]

<sup>1135</sup> E.g. ads for Nivea Anti-Falten Q10 Nachtcreme (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999) or Eucerin Q10 Active (*Für Sie*, Heft 17, 1999).

<sup>1136</sup> Ad for frei öl Feuchtigkeitscreme (*Brigitte*, Heft 12, 2000): „Hydro-Parts“.

<sup>1137</sup> Ad for Eubos Med Sensitive Tages und Nachtpflege (*Für Sie*, Heft 21, 1999): „Aktiv-Multi-Schutz-System (AMSS); Hydro-Regulativ-Faktor“.

<sup>1138</sup> Ad for Shiseido Bio-Performance Intensive Clarifying Essence (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1999).

<sup>1139</sup> Ad for Biotherm D-Stress Serum & Tagespflege (*Brigitte*, Heft 9, 2000): “Turbo-Energie”.

<sup>1140</sup> For ginkgo: cf. e.g. MedlinePlus, U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/natural/333.html> or University of Maryland Medical Center: <http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/ginkgo-biloba-000247.htm>. And for echinacea: Herbs at a glance, National for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Center: <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/echinacea/ataglance.htm> or University of Maryland Medical Center: <http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/echinacea-000239.htm>. [websites accessed April 2011]

<sup>1141</sup> Ad for Elizabeth Arden Ceramide Herbal 12 Capsules (*Brigitte*, Heft 7, 2000): “Die innovative High Tech-Pflege”; „Alle Pflanzenextrakte sind vollkommen rein ohne Konservierung in den Kapseln eingeschlossen.“.

<sup>1142</sup> Ad for Elizabeth Arden Visible Difference Matte Moisture Lotion (*Für Sie*, Heft 12, 1999).

<sup>1143</sup> Guggul, guggal or guggulu is a plant that has been extensively used in Ayurvedic treatments against a number of ailments before being rediscovered by western allopathic medicine and pharmacology, cf. e.g. <http://www.toddcaldecott.com/index.php/herbs/learning-herbs/363-guggulu> for a good Ayurveda-oriented description or “Ancient Indian remedy ‘lowers cholesterol’”, *CNN.com./WORLD*, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002: [http://articles.cnn.com/2002-05-03/world/india.ayurveda\\_1\\_lower-cholesterol-cholesterol-patients-cholesterol-levels?\\_s=PM:asiapcf](http://articles.cnn.com/2002-05-03/world/india.ayurveda_1_lower-cholesterol-cholesterol-patients-cholesterol-levels?_s=PM:asiapcf) for a western perspective. According to the first source, guggulu seems to also be effective against acne or more generally oily skin, which would explain its inclusion into Elizabeth Arden’s Matte Moisture Lotion. [websites accessed April 2011]

and body ageing that is caused by the decrease of hormone production as well as vitamin and mineral absorption.<sup>1144</sup>

This process is similar to the one underlying gynaecological-endocrinological therapies such as so-called HRT (hormone replacement therapy) used to combat menopausal symptoms.<sup>1145</sup> Interestingly, the article also contains a glossary of so-called “*high-tech active ingredients*” that unsurprisingly includes retinol, ascorbic acid or vitamin C and vitamin E but more puzzlingly mentions thermal water –thus displaying the breadth of what is subsumed under the “high-tech” label.<sup>1146</sup>

Another article in *Für Sie* entitled “*Stress – when the skin goes crazy*” describes the particular status of the skin as a faithful revealer (or betrayer) of individuals’ health and soul, making it into the most holistically sensitive organ in the human body “*since the most important ‘news stock market’ for the nervous, hormonal and immune systems is also a senses and soul organ*”. Hence: “*It should come as no surprise if the skin loses its balance when there is too much stress. Problems at work, in the family, too little sleep – the skin does not become sick itself, it only reflects the mental and organic circumstances of the individual.*” The article then states that an increasing proportion of individuals describe their skin as overreactive or sensitive. Researchers define three causes that trigger this sensitivity: “*the skin’s diminished barrier function*” which means that poisons can penetrate more easily, “*a heightened neuro-sensory activity*” since nerve endings can be found even in the most superficial layers of the skin and are thus more prone to irritation, and “*an increased immunological responsiveness*”, whereby the body produces antibodies against substances that are a priori harmless for the skin, thus triggering allergies. The article includes a test to determine the state of the skin.<sup>1147</sup>

## Conclusion

These last two articles provide a good basis to start outlining the conclusion of this case-study, since they foreground the medicalisation of cosmetics as well as the unique status of the skin. To begin with the latter, the central and ambivalent status of the skin is perhaps the most striking aspect that transpires from the ads and articles of the two decades under consideration. Indeed, the skin, as the largest, most peripheral and ubiquitous organ of the

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<sup>1144</sup> „Der Winterfahrplan für gesunde Haut“ in „Schön&gesund“ supplement (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1999, pp. 8-12, p. 10): „Die Kombination von Kosmetik und Medizin zeigt sich darin, daß immer mehr active Wirkstoffe von der Medizin in die Kosmetik gelangen, die hierfür die optimalen Grundlagen und Anwendungssysteme zur Verfügung stellt.“; „die Zuführung stoffwechselaktivierender Substanzen wie Hormone, Vitamine, Kollagen, Elastin, Mineralien, und zwar von außen und innen. Damit kann man dem Teil der Haut- und Körperalterung entgegenwirken, der durch das Nachlassen der Hormonproduktion sowie der Vitamin- und Mineralienaufnahme verursacht wird.“

<sup>1145</sup> For information on HRT, cf. e.g. the following NHS (National Health Service, UK) website: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Hormone-replacement-therapy/Pages/Introduction.aspx>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1146</sup> „Der Winterfahrplan für gesunde Haut“, op. cit., p. 12: „High-Tech-Wirkstoffe“.

<sup>1147</sup> „Stress – wenn die Haut verrückt spielt“ in „Schön&gesund“ supplement (*Für Sie*, Heft 19, 1999, pp. 14-16): „Denn die wichtigste ‘Nachrichtenbörse’ für Nerven-, hormone- und Immunsystem ist zugleich Sinnes- und Seelenorgan.“; „Kein Wunder, daß die Haut plötzlich aus dem Gleichgewicht gerät, wenn der Streß zu groß wird. Ärger im Beruf, in der Familie, mit dem Partner, zu wenig Schlaf – die Haut wird von sich aus nicht krank, sie spiegelt nur die seelischen und organischen Zustände des Menschen wieder.“; „Eine verminderte Barrierefunktion der Haut“; „Eine erhöhte neuro-sensorische Aktivität“; „Eine gesteigerte immunologische Reaktionsbereitschaft“.

body, has unique liminal functions and attributes. It contains the body in the sense that it is its most obvious receptacle while circumscribing the body's space since it effectively draws a limit between inside and out. Its barrier function, protecting the body against a variety of pathogens, excess fluid loss or loss of essential nutrients through exposure to a variety of environmental influences, is enhanced by an excretory function (sweating) that enables the body to regulate its temperature. The skin's sensory properties are crucial to human (and animal) survival –from the perception of temperatures, textures, pressure or vibration to the mediation of pain through its numerous nerve endings. As the seat of the sense of touch –a sense that is often downplayed in contrast with e.g. sight or audition– it represents babies' first gateway to the world and throughout human life, it remains the prime medium of intimacy. Moreover, it represents an important marker of well-being –be it physiological, mental or emotional– betraying e.g. liver problems, a junk food diet, the hormonal storm raging inside teenagers or a variety of existential problems expressed through pallor, rashes or dark circles. Finally, it is considered a crucial ingredient of youthful beauty, hence perforce the most merciless indicator of age. These last “mirror” functions point towards the crucial social role of the skin: a person's skin is one of the first aspects apprehended upon encounter. It functions like a barometer since it helps us guess people's ages, diets or sleeping patterns as well as their overall health and happiness, while determining to a large extent their potential attractiveness.

This then explains why so much hope and hard work is invested in the cosmetic domain –be it from the producer or the consumer side– and why the search for natural, technological or hybrid solutions to counter the effects of time, ill health, unhealthy lifestyles or emotional crises will no doubt remain an ongoing enterprise. The most challenging aspect in this quest is the one mentioned in an article we already discussed, namely:

The aim now is to outsmart the skin by smuggling from outside the active ingredients and cellular building blocks that over time are no longer so abundantly produced by the body. The biggest challenge here is transporting these substances into the subcutaneous tissue where new cells are formed. Indeed this is not a path foreseen by nature since the skin is an excretory organ.<sup>1148</sup>

This explains a fundamental “philosophical” tension that can be witnessed again and again in the analysis of product ads, a tension between a technological “fix-it” mentality and a more holistically or naturally “supportive” attitude.<sup>1149</sup> The first strategy is eminently positivist and progressivist in its approach. It is postulated on the observation that the skin's metabolic design is flawed or at least that its successful functioning is extremely short-lived, thus justifying a scientifically-based interventionism. Indeed, upon reading the ads, one gets the

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<sup>1148</sup> „Anti-Falten-Kosmetik: Was ist wirklich dran?“ (*prima*, Heft 7, 1988, p. 122)

<sup>1149</sup> One explanation for these contrasting mentalities reflected in discourse is the actual economic orientation of the manufacturers. Geoffrey Jones sees the beauty industry as structured in three main types of firms: large consumer products companies, pharmaceutical companies and specialty firms focusing on a particular type or range of products. Cf. Jones, Geoffrey, “Blonde and blue-eyed? Globalizing beauty, c. 1945-c. 1980”, *op. cit.*, p. 129. Empirically considered, one does notice a tendency towards more scientifically- or medically-oriented discourse for products emanating from pharmaceutical and large consumer products companies. In this respect, one obvious reason may also be a financial one: these companies are the ones that boast the best endowed and most sophisticated research laboratories. However, over time, neat distinctions between the various companies tend to blur; witness e.g. the scientisation of natural cosmetics or the naturalisation of mainstream cosmetics.

impression that the skin ages so quickly that it requires permanent stimulation or even resuscitation. Consequently, cosmetics are designed in medically-equipped laboratories by highly-trained specialists who usually stem from the biochemical, pharmacological or dermatological fields. Their aim is two-fold. First, they have to find, extract, develop or synthesise the most effective substances to stimulate or regenerate the skin's metabolism. And second, they must search for optimal vehicles –from liposomes to nanosomes or so-called “ultraparts”– to effectively transport these substances to the deeper layers of the skin, thus going against its natural excretory function. Once developed, the cosmetic products are tested using extremely sophisticated instrumentation in collaboration with varying numbers of test-persons either recruited by the company itself or through a dermatological clinic, before being mass-manufactured in meticulously clean and sterile environments.

In this context, as noted by Dr Harald Gerny, interviewed in the penultimate article I discussed, cosmetology can hardly be distinguished from pharmacology or dermatology – hence his recourse to the term “cosmeceuticals” to describe contemporary cosmetic developments. Prospective consumers are then relentlessly reminded that the effects of these products are “scientifically proven” and “guaranteed” by prominent health “authorities”, provided the cosmetics are applied correctly within often complexly-structured cosmetic programmes. In this case, consumers are viewed as rather passive and compliant recipients of an active cream. They should be fittingly awed by cosmetological prowess and grateful for these impressive scientific innovations. An exacerbation of this scientific “fix-it” trend are the repeated attempts to publicize extreme peeling or dermabrasive interventions that border on plastic surgery, using potentially dangerous techniques and substances. The more or less overt justification for these invasive methods is a refusal to let natural ageing processes codetermine consumers' self-perceived age. Consumers' readiness to embrace the hazards characterising these procedures often overlooks the reservations voiced by some dermatologists while ignoring the dubious credentials of other practitioners. Nevertheless, the feature articles discussing these trends still do convey a sense of their controversiality: despite the perceivedly legitimate desirability of pursuing a youthful appearance, the authors usually emphasise the high risks and costs involved in these “Dorian Gray” enterprises. When reader reactions are available, predictably enough, they appear to span a broad spectrum: from outraged rejection to unreserved enthusiasm through cautious interest.

The second, more “natural” or holistic product strategy implicitly or explicitly acknowledges the validity of the skin's natural metabolism, professing to respect it while providing adequate support. In contrast with the more hardline “scientific” perception described above, the skin here is viewed as a living organ that has significant resources to regenerate itself but may require occasional encouragement. Hence, the motto in this context is “helping the skin to help itself”. In this context, nature represents a very malleable cipher that assumes a variety of authentic or more superficial roles: from cornucopia to pedigree, from relaxing retreat to energising (re)source, from strong ally to more vulnerable and precious entity, or from a symbol of simplicity and purity to an emblem of sophistication and complexity. A number of ads thus evoke human beings' estrangement from a generous and protective nature –as emblematised by *Aok's* injunctions to go count the trees instead of kilometres– while enjoining consumers to trust nature's wisdom and enjoy her bounty. Furthermore, the discourse surrounding naturally-oriented products usually identifies multi-

factorial influences on the skin's health since the skin is recognised as a "mirror" organ. It therefore preaches a holistic approach to skincare, emphasising the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including diet, sleep, exercise and emotional equilibrium. Consumers in this realm are perceived as proactive agents who are assigned increased responsibility in the management of their personal skin ecology. Indeed, the ads in this stream clearly prescribe lifestyle changes –from the duty to eat fruit and vegetables or to jog regularly to the mission of relaxing. This discourse on appropriate lifestyle provides a rather thought-provoking projection of (mainly) women's routines during these two decades. Their increasing professionalisation outside the home has visibly added an extra burden on their shoulders, since the extant duty to remain youthful and attractive is now coupled with the imperative of being ever more productive, resistant and flexible –a dimension I have already discussed in previous chapters.

If the two trends I have just described seem so polarised as to appear irreconcilable, over the two decades examined, I have also noted increasing efforts to bypass or reconcile ostensible contradictions. The first very enduring tactic is to offer "no-frills" products that simply elude the nature-technology dichotomy, such as the original *Nivea* cream. Often, they are traditional products that have been tried and tested over the years, thus no longer requiring an extensive introduction. Some of them have also been marketed as baby products, such as e.g. *Penaten*. The implication in this case is that a product designed for ultra-sensitive infant skin is naturally suited to all other (more mature) skin types. Therefore, the appeal of these creams resides in their "all-in-one" simplicity: more or less explicitly, they are presented as an effective weapon to counter the complexity and stress involved in late-modern routines. Typically, slogans used to market them emphasise emotionality and spontaneity.

But a more decisive element that increasingly bridges the gap between the "scientific" and the "holistic" realms, is the perception and articulation of increasing environmental threats. From our contemporary perspective though, the use of the term "environment" in these ads may appear somewhat confusing since they usually refer to human surroundings in general rather than to the natural ecosystem. In this acception, the environment encompasses natural threats (such as wind, dust, weather –hence varying temperatures– and, from the early 1990s, light) as well as man-made menaces (especially air-conditioning, pollution and the arch-enemy stress). This makes for an increasingly paranoid rhetoric that presents the skin as extremely reactive, vulnerable and in need of protection, thus paving the way for a new generation of "sensitive" products. These products are designed to be as neutral or "-free" as possible (avoiding the excesses of both nature and technology), culminating in a form of "supernature", as in *Payot's Amniotique*, a womb-like cream to protect the skin from "the harshness of life".<sup>1150</sup>

Over time however, the collocation of nature and technology in the same product no longer seems to require elaborate justifications, indeed it even becomes a trump because the hybrid commodity thus obtained can claim the best of both worlds. A number of products emblematised this trend, such as *Monteil's ICE* or a number of *Biotherm* creams: they boast natural extracts and a respect for natural processes while guaranteeing industrial control in terms of purity and effectiveness. Implicitly, these products may represent the recognition that there is no way back to an unadulterated nature or a surefire technology. Indeed,

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<sup>1150</sup> Cf. the previously discussed ad for *Payot Amniotique* (*Für Sie*, Heft 20, 1983).

cosmetics have always been the fruit of a more or less harmonious compromise between nature and technology –from traditional applications of flowers, leaves, roots, vegetables, fruit, mud, honey or dairy products to lethally leaded or bleaching cosmetics (still en vogue in some parts of the world) and more contemporary liposome emulsions or organic creams. Concretely, this means that even the most primitive natural cosmetics involve technological know-how in terms of extraction, blending, etc. while mainstream industrial cosmetics ultimately derive from a natural source however estranged, be it coconut, soy, potash, petrolatum, mink oil, whale blubber or calf embryos. Moreover, as far as industrial processing and conditioning are concerned, so-called “natural” products can hardly be distinguished from “high-tech” ones.

Thus what seems to be at play here is a question of degree, i.e. the type of chemical, physical or bio-technological refinement (e.g. isolation, extraction, cultivation, distillation, homogenisation, hydrogenation, etc.). Hence cosmetics can cover the spectrum from a simple face mask involving cucumber and yogurt blended in a private kitchen to laboratory designed “nano-parts” for the facilitated transportation of e.g. hyaluronic acid, collagen or ginkgo extracts between epithelium cells. Typically, the first will most likely be labelled natural while the second will be considered high-tech. However, in view of the previous argument, I would like to argue that the essential naturalness or artificiality of a cosmetic ingredient or product can hardly be convincingly and definitively decided. Indeed, the ads considered clearly show that it is mainly a hermeneutic-ideological question. Both the denotations and connotations of “natural” and “artificial” (or “technical”) labels vary widely across time and space. For instance connotations such as gentleness, safety and efficacy on the one hand or aggressiveness, allergenicity and inappropriateness, on the other can be and are attributed to both “natural” and “high-tech” products.

Moreover, these considerations extend well beyond the product to the perception of the body as well as lifestyle and environmental issues. Throughout the period under consideration, these realms are intensively negotiated and “baddie” and “goodie” roles regularly re-distributed. One moment, the ageing body, stressed modern routines and a polluted environment are the ultimate enemies and the next, the self-regenerating body, an active modern lifestyle and a precious eco-system are the most valuable allies. In parallel, nature and technology alternately foster freeing and clearing versus controlling and regulating; opening and peeling versus protecting and insulating; soothing and relaxing versus stimulating and activating, softening versus toning; sensitising versus strengthening; cooling versus warming; nourishing, comforting, balancing and harmonising versus cleansing, purifying and detoxifying.

The last noteworthy dimension is a gradual “emotionalisation” of the skin, especially towards the end of the period considered. This step seems to go beyond acknowledging the skin as a holistic mirror to personalise or anthropomorphise it. Linked to the discourse on stress and allergies, the skin becomes an entity in and of itself with human needs and feelings: it can glow, radiate, and relax or it can sulk, overreact, break out and revenge, thus implying that, just as a child, it requires care, pampering and protection as well as surveillance and subtle control or disciplining. In this context, consumers are assigned the role of benevolently responsible parents, whose duty is to bring out the best from their offspring.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

#### ON THE CHALLENGES OF CATERING TO FITNESS FREAKS, WELLNESS GURUS AND THE REST OF US...

*White people need organic food to survive, and where they purchase this food is as important as what they purchase. In modern white person culture, Whole Foods has replaces [sic] churches and cathedrals as the most important and relevant buildings in the community. [...] Many white people consider shopping at Whole Foods to be a religious experience, allowing them feel [sic] good about their consumption. The use of paper bags, biodegradable packaging, and the numerous pamphlets outlining the company's police [sic] on hormones, genetically modified food and energy savings.<sup>1151</sup>*

*Christian Lander, Stuff White People Like*

*Trish Wiener believes Dannon misled her, and she wants to milk it for all it's worth. In a lawsuit filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, she accuses the yogurt maker of a "massive and comprehensive" false advertising campaign for its Activia, Activia Light and DanActive products. Dannon promotes them as clinically proven to help regulate digestion and boost immunity because they contain bacteria that Wiener's suit says aren't so special. "You're hearing these scientific terms and you're thinking that they have come up with something," said the Northridge resident, who owns a catering company. "But the only effect that it had on me was that it tasted poorly".<sup>1152</sup>*

*Alana Semuels, LA Times*

This study is nearing its conclusion but a nagging question remains: how does one cater to fitness freaks, wellness gurus and the rest of us?

I have chosen two emblematic examples that highlight the ends of a broad consumer spectrum –from the quasi-religious practice of commodified healthy living to a much more sceptical stance towards the market's healthful offerings. Admittedly, the first depiction is rather satirical while the second may appear far-fetched –at least from a European perspective. But Americanisation, especially as it transpires from Hollywood celebrities and the lifestyles they promote, is an influence to reckon with in the German-speaking world (and more broadly in Europe), even if the American way of life is selectively understood and incorporated. Thus, German parallels abound<sup>1153</sup> and these "melodramatic" American

<sup>1151</sup> Christian Lander, "# 48 Whole Foods and Grocery Co-ops", *Stuff White People Like*, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008: <http://stuffwhitepeoplelike.com/2008/02/03/48-whole-foods-and-grocery-co-ops/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1152</sup> Cf. Semuels, Alana, "Yogurt maker sued for claims: The suit contends Dannon's ads for some products were false", *Los Angeles Times*, 24.01.2008, online article: <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/24/business/food-yogurt24>. For the outcome of this lawsuit cf. McMullen, Troy, "Dannon to Pay \$45M to Settle Yogurt Lawsuit", *ABC News/Money*, 26.02.2010, online article: <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/dannon-settles-lawsuit/story?id=9950269> [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1153</sup> Witness e.g. the successful philosophies of organic supermarket chains such as *alnatutura* (<http://www.alnatutura.de/de/nachhaltigkeit>) or *basic* (cf. <http://www.basic-bio-genuss-fuer-alle.de/wir/philosophie.html>) that boast similar values to *Wholefoods*. Similarly, the European subsidiary of *Dannon*, i.e. *Danone*, has also faced some consumer resistance linked to deceitful advertising, albeit more on

archetypes do a really good job of encapsulating the seeming contradictions in the field of healthy lifestyle technologies (HLTs). Indeed, at face-value, *Wholefoods* promotes socio-ecologically correct living in most of its aspects<sup>1154</sup> and may appear locally-rooted whereas *Dannon* (or *Danone* as is it called outside of the U.S.), as a heavyweight food multinational, may seem more ruthlessly global in its approach to marketing.<sup>1155</sup> However a closer look reveals more similarities than expected: *Wholefoods*, if it does not yet boast *Danone's* global clout, can still be considered a multinational since it already owns more than 300 stores in the U.S., Canada and the U.K.<sup>1156</sup> and just as *Danone* is a world yogurt leader, *Wholefoods* is the biggest retailer of natural and organic foods worldwide.<sup>1157</sup> Furthermore, even if it may be tempting to dismiss its sustainable development initiatives as “green-”, “social-” or “health-washing”, *Danone* appears intent on promoting a health-conscious as well as ecologically and socially sustainable image.<sup>1158</sup>

Similarly, the two consumer extremes portrayed here –from the seemingly left-leaning, predominantly white and often well-heeled “eco-conscious” or “moral hedonist” shopper<sup>1159</sup> to the perhaps more pragmatically conservative and wary customer– may not strike one as sharing much common ideological ground. However, the rather monolithic impression conveyed by the above consumer impersonations obscures the fact that most consumer attitudes are rarely as clear-cut or at odds with each other and that rationales for indulging in particular HLTs or not may often appear quite intriguing if not downright irrational when viewed from an external perspective. This represents one of the biggest challenges for historians of consumption, who wish to reconstrue the motivations of consumers leading to particular purchase and use decisions, since they rarely get the opportunity to engage live consumers in conversation about their choices and, when they do, it is usually so late after the fact that the echo obtained is bound to be very selective or distorted. In that respect, the ethnographer Roberta Sassatelli tauntingly reminds us of the advantages of her disciplinary perspective in her analysis of fitness studio consumption:

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the public image level than on the legal front, cf. [http://foodwatch.de/kampagnen\\_themen/ampelkennzeichnung/ampeltest/wellness\\_enttarnt/index\\_ger.htm](http://foodwatch.de/kampagnen_themen/ampelkennzeichnung/ampeltest/wellness_enttarnt/index_ger.htm)

[http://foodwatch.de/presse/pressearchiv/2011/etikettenschwindel\\_mit\\_probiotischem\\_joghurt/index\\_ger.html](http://foodwatch.de/presse/pressearchiv/2011/etikettenschwindel_mit_probiotischem_joghurt/index_ger.html), [http://foodwatch.de/presse/pressearchiv/2009/goldener\\_windbeutel\\_aktion/index\\_ger.html](http://foodwatch.de/presse/pressearchiv/2009/goldener_windbeutel_aktion/index_ger.html) & [http://www.abgespeist.de/activia/index\\_ger.html](http://www.abgespeist.de/activia/index_ger.html). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1154</sup> Cf. <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/values/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1155</sup> Cf. [http://www.dannon.com/about\\_company.aspx](http://www.dannon.com/about_company.aspx). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1156</sup> Cf. <http://www.wholefoodsmarket.com/company/index.php>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1157</sup> Moreover, *Wholefoods* ranks 284 in the Fortune 500 list. Cf. <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2010/companies/W.html>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1158</sup> Cf. e.g. [http://www.dannon.com/healthy\\_lifestyles.aspx](http://www.dannon.com/healthy_lifestyles.aspx), <http://www.dannon.com/dannoncares.aspx>, <http://www.danone.com/en/sustainable-development.html> & <http://www.danone.de/danone-media/docs/pdfs/Danone-2010-Sustainability-Report.pdf>. Interestingly, these examples highlights different preoccupations according to national context: whereas the main emphasis in the U.S. is on health and local community, the European perspective strongly focuses on issues of local and global ecological sustainability. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1159</sup> Anja Kirig and Eike Wenzel in their book on LOHAS (lifestyles of health and sustainability) use the term “Neo-Ökos”, “idealistische Pragmatiker” or “moralische Hedonisten” to describe this new generation of consumers. Personally, I find the latter term particularly fitting... Cf. Kirig, Anja & Wenzel, Eike, *Lohas. Bewusst grün – Alles über die neuen Lebenswelten*, München: Redline Verlag, 2009.

Seen from the ethnographic close-up, choice is revealed as a process, rather than a cost-benefit decision. A transformative, ongoing practice rather than an accomplished, rational calculation. Instead of revealed preferences, we get a rather hybrid mix of decisions, constraints, habits, contingencies, aspirations, interactions, relations – each of which may be more or less satisfying, and may or may not lead to further consumption. The notion of rational choice – operationalised in mainstream economics through the cunning conflation of “revealed preferences” – obliges us to either imagine a sovereign consumer, or to reject it altogether opting for notions such as “induced needs” and “false consciousness”. Ethnography has offered a third, less dramatic, but more daring picture. In such a picture, the boundaries between production and consumption seem to be shifting and, to an extent, blurred. Consumption is revealed as an ambivalent practice, with consumers increasingly asked to be active producers of cultural forms that are nevertheless largely circulated and managed by producers who need to consume much of the very same sort they produce.<sup>1160</sup>

This late modern co-production (or co-consumption) phenomenon means that the rules of the consumption game have changed: if indeed consumers are to become “*active producers of cultural forms that are nevertheless largely circulated and managed by producers who need to consume much of the very same sort they produce*”, they require a number of options that –at least superficially– provide them with a sense of agency. To my mind, these options are conditioned by a number of marketing strategies based on particular values that have been historically and situatively negotiated between producers, mediators and consumers in order to ensure a successful transformation of generic products into HLTs.<sup>1161</sup>

We have seen numerous examples of these strategies in Chapters 5 (*Food case-study*) and 6 (*Cosmetics case-study*). However, I would like to now clarify their specific characteristics. Indeed, I contend that the commodification of health and well-being is streamlined along specific channels all flavoured by the *recombinance* ethic discussed in the “Commodification” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*) –especially since they are often used in combination. The first five strategies are those that are the most tangibly linked to the genetic metaphor: i.e. *isolation* (the singling out and development of health products and practices from extant realms), *multiplication* (the cultivation of diversification in the health offer), *hybridisation* (the splicing of healthy elements that are not traditionally associated), *creolisation* (the intensification of health hybridisation involving transcultural admixture), and *semiotisation* linked to its correlate *resemiotisation*.

The first recombinant strategy I want to address is *isolation* and its correlate *simplification*. Just as in genetics, where particular genes have to be identified and singled out before being cut and spliced into the DNA of a recipient cell, a similar process is at work in the commodification of health. Concretely, this strategy implies that particular products, services and practices are isolated from extant constellations. They can then be grafted onto new constellations but are often re-designed and launched as separate novel products, disciplines or practices. The realms of movement or alternative therapies are particularly

<sup>1160</sup> Sassatelli, Roberta, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

<sup>1161</sup> Cf. Shove, Elizabeth, op. cit., p. 94: “*Although I argue that peoples’ routines are shaped and moulded by the collective conventions of the day, I do not suppose that conventions simply mirror theories of disease, new systems of social discrimination or the restructuring of institutions and infrastructures. Without reaching for a functional account of action and purpose, I suggest that private habits are constructed as people steer their own course through culturally and temporally specific landscapes of legitimating discourse and classifications of ordinary and extraordinary behaviour.*”

emblematic of this process. Particularly striking examples are the “creation” of jogging (through isolation from athletic running),<sup>1162</sup> stretching (through isolation from yoga and other traditional disciplines), or western acupuncture and reflexology (through isolation and/or simplification from Traditional Chinese Medicine).<sup>1163</sup> The establishment of these independent disciplines is often premised upon the claim that they are easier to master and to market for practitioners, while being more accessible and less “esoterically foreign” for consumers. In turn, this development leads to the creation of specific gear (e.g. special shorts, leotards, T-shirts, headbands, etc.), appliances (e.g. pulse monitors, steppers, etc.), spaces (e.g. the fitness studio or naturopathic practice), practices (e.g. jogging or training during the lunch break or after work, attending weekend seminars and workshops), professions (expert trainers and practitioners) as well as information (books, videos etc.) detailing the specificities of the “new” disciplines.

As hinted at when discussing commodification in Chapter 3 (*Theory*) –I then mentioned the example of soap– industrialisation has also permitted an unprecedented *multiplication*<sup>1164</sup> of almost negligibly differentiated goods in all the domains of everyday life in order to cater to the needs and/or wants of new target groups or segments –which were discovered (or created) in parallel. The cosmetic realm is particularly emblematic of these transformations: for example, the “Nivea” all-purpose family cream I grew up with in the 1970s is now completely overshadowed by a range of products for babies, teenagers, middle-aged and elderly customers who may “suffer” from rough, dry, oily, mixed, sensitive or allergic skins.<sup>1165</sup> Developments are especially spectacular in the field of men’s cosmetics: the erstwhile winning combination –i.e. soap, shaving soap and after-shave– for the smart man

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<sup>1162</sup> I should sound a caveat here: whilst a majority of commodification strategies are the fruit of conscious and deliberate planning, many major historical developments associated with these strategies, such as the “birth” of jogging, are the mixed offspring of purpose and situative contingencies. But as George Sage contends: “So aggressive is the capitalist fitness industry that many informal, anonymous, unorganized fitness activities have been incorporated into the market. The running boom provides a good example. It began with the desire of individuals who had been excluded from high performance, elitist sport to enjoy a simple form of exercise on their own terms for their own health. Within a few years a massive commercial ‘running industry,’ with multinational firms merchandising running shoes and other accessories, was created. Moreover, running for fun became overshadowed by marathon races, triathlons, and ‘ironman’ competitions, many sponsored by large corporations and winners of these events paid for this labor. Thus individual and group fitness activities have become incorporated into dominant commercial structures and meanings.” Cf. Sage, George H., “The Political Economy of Fitness in the United States”, *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>1163</sup> Claudia Freidl provides very convincing descriptions of how Tai Ji Quan, Yoga, Feng Shui and oriental hammam rituals were simplified from their original roots for a western audience. Cf. Freidl, Claudia, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

<sup>1164</sup> One could argue here for “cloning” as a more “genetically-appropriate” term but because it focuses on exact replication, it misses out on the diversification typical of HLTs. Otherwise, Freidl also correlates my analysis: „Gerade die Steigerung der Optionen trifft auf einen Trend wie Wellness besonders zu. Tagtäglich landen mehr Wellnessprodukte auf dem Markt und die Menschen selbst streben nach mehr Gesundheit und mehr Wohlbefinden.“ Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>1165</sup> Cf. <http://www.nivea.de/Produkte>. Cf. see also the rationales invoked for this diversification in the historical overview of the company’s development, accessible here: <http://www.nivea.de/NIVEA-Beratung/100years#!stories/story02>. Typically, the narrative states: „Etwa zur gleichen Zeit gelangen wichtige Durchbrüche in der Produktentwicklung, die uns halfen, der Individualität der menschlichen Haut Rechnung zu tragen. Engagierte NIVEA Forscher befassten sich eingehend mit dieser Individualität, und dank ihrer Entdeckungen konnten Menschen weltweit eine Antwort auf den Pflegebedarf ihrer Haut je nach ihrer Kultur, ihrem Geschlecht und ihrem Alter finden. [...] NIVEA bietet für jedes Alter, jeden Hauttyp, jede Kultur und jeden Standort die passende Pflege.“ [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

has been gradually dwarfed by an impressive array of face and body creams, shaving foams and gels, deodorants, eaux de toilette, perfumes, etc.<sup>1166</sup>

The recombinance ethic also promotes a widespread *hybridisation* in retail health offers. Products and services from apparently heterogeneous realms are increasingly offered in interdependent constellations or kits that could be described as new “commodity networks” or “ecologies of goods”.<sup>1167</sup> The rationale underlying these assemblages is that the body is a holistic entity the maintenance of which requires holistic strategies: i.e. nutrition, sport or cosmetics are only partial solutions when their use is dissociated. Therefore, many supermarkets but also service providers (such as fitness clubs or beauty institutes) will often sell products or services (or their communal use) alongside with other products or services. A good example of this phenomenon can be found in e.g. mail-order catalogues. For instance, one of the offers under the “*Slim & Energetic*” heading in the Neckermann catalogue of 1999, simultaneously advertised cling film, a massage cream, a diet drink and scales –in short a type of “slimming kit”.<sup>1168</sup> Similarly, Barry Glassner, after stating that “*A hybridization of potentially independent matters also can be found in many of the most successful commercial programs in the body improvement industry*”, goes on to provide telling American examples such as *Weight Watchers’* policy to include exercise into its diet plan, *Nautilus* (an exercise machines manufacturer) marketing *Nautilus* workouts combined with a low-cal diet to health clubs; or *Nabisco* (a breakfast cereals manufacturer) including a mail-in coupon for a Jane Fonda exercise video.<sup>1169</sup> This type of offer implicitly states that interested consumers should buy (and believe in) the whole package because it “*increases the likelihood that the promised effect will set in*”.<sup>1170</sup> Moreover, the producer can disclaim any responsibility if consumers fail to do so. Potentially, this represents a very clever strategy: indeed, producers or mediators can always defer responsibility for unsatisfactory results to the fact that consumers have not purchased or correctly used a particular product, process or service included in the original constellation. Ultimately then, consumers can always be accused of not investing enough money, time, effort, etc. into their holistic body maintenance.

Beyond the *creolisation* –i.e. the transcultural admixture<sup>1171</sup> to be found in health products (such as the *Ananda* tea example) or services (e.g. the comparison between wellness

<sup>1166</sup> Cf. e.g. the development of face cream use in „Der Markt der Herrenkosmetik und Duftwässer: Daten, Fakten, Trends“, *Focus Medialine*, May 2003 online edition, p. 18 [originally downloaded from: [www.medialine.focus.de](http://www.medialine.focus.de), now no longer available there] : „So verwendeten 1999 in Deutschland nur knapp 9,4 Mio. Männer Gesichtscreme, 2002 waren es bereits 13 Millionen.“; *ibid.*, p. 21: „Doch schon im Jahr 2001 legten Männerfeuchtigkeitscremes um stattliche 18% zu.“ & *ibid.* p. 21: „Noch vergreifen sich manche Männer lieber an den Cremetöpfchen der Frau als sich um eigene Produkte zu bemühen.“ Cf. also Peiss, Kathy, *op. cit.*, Chapter 8 (“Identity and the Market”), pp. 238-270, esp. pp. 264-265.

<sup>1167</sup> The term was coined by Mika Pantzar to describe how the meanings and functions of individual products are influenced by the environment they are placed in. Cf. Pantzar, Mika, “Domestication of Everyday Life Technology: Dynamic Views on the Social Histories of Artifacts”, *Design Issues*, 13, 1997, pp. 52-65.

<sup>1168</sup> Schlank und Vital, *Neckermann*, 1999, p. 904.

<sup>1169</sup> Cf. Glassner, Barry, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>1170</sup> Cf. Schulze, Gerhard, “Zeit der Wunder: auch der neue Modetrend Wellness ist Teil des Erlebnismarktes”, *op. cit.*

<sup>1171</sup> This aspect is correlated by Claudia Freidl who ascribes it to two phenomena, the loss of traditions and multiculturalism: „Der Verlust der Traditionen ist ein weiteres Kennzeichen der Multioptionsgesellschaft. Diverse Wellnessprodukte und –anwendungen konnten erst durch Enttraditionalisierung vermarktet werden. Dafür gelangten alte Traditionen aus China, Japan oder dem arabischen Raum in abgewandelter Form in die westliche

treatments in Germany and wellness in India) which I have already discussed in the “Commodification” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*), I now want to broach a closely linked phenomenon, i.e. the creolisation of health spaces and professions.<sup>1172</sup> An increasing trend in north-western Europe<sup>1173</sup> is to provide consumers with transcultural health spaces. Concretely, an increasing number of allopathic physicians share premises with colleagues practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda or holistic traditions from other cultural spaces. Moreover, many mainstream MDs themselves have garnered or are garnering diplomas in (foreign) alternative medical practices<sup>1174</sup> –some variants of which are being institutionalised in western university settings.<sup>1175</sup> For consumers, this entails an exposure to “exotic” and alternative treatments that they may otherwise never get unless they travel extensively or have an inherent interest in these practices. In terms of further commodification, it means that a potentially very profitable niche market will probably open up for special plant and mineral preparations that were previously confined to foreign or very marginal markets. For the time being, traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic medication can only be restrictively imported into Germany since drugs from both traditions are still stumbling against the hurdle of scientific efficacy proof.<sup>1176</sup> Moreover, it is still cheaper for many companies to sell their Asian products as food supplements, since the only requirement in this field is to prove that they are not harmful.<sup>1177</sup> Nevertheless, considering the thriving tradition of homeopathic and naturopathic preparations in Germany,<sup>1178</sup> one can

*Gesellschaft. [...] Die Multikulturalität stellt ein weiteres Kennzeichen der Multioptionsgesellschaft dar und den Mix von Kulturen und Traditionen findet man in ausprägter Weise im Wellness-Phänomen wieder. Alte, zum Teil antike Traditionen werden in Vital- und Wellnessoasen angeboten.*“ Cf. Freidl, Claudia, op. cit., pp. 103-104. [emphasis in original]

<sup>1172</sup> Freidl mentions another interesting development that of creolised martial arts such as so-called SenFi (Sensual Fighting) that is supposedly based on Kung-Fu, Qi Gong, Tai Chi and Karate and practised against a Polynesian musical background. Cf. Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>1173</sup> Here, I can only refer to regions I know first hand, but I would assume that this is also the case in other “post-industrial” economies.

<sup>1174</sup> Cf. e.g. the German Physicians Association for Acupuncture [*Deutsche Ärztegesellschaft für Akupunktur e.V. (DÄGfA)*] that boasts a membership of 12.000: [http://www.daegfa.de/Daegfa.Ueber\\_Uns.aspx](http://www.daegfa.de/Daegfa.Ueber_Uns.aspx). This may obscure the fact that there are many different professional associations and a large number of practicing naturopaths or acupuncturists that do not hold an official medical title, cf. e.g. also [http://www.tcm.edu/patienteninformationen/de\\_Aerzte\\_Therapeutenliste.aspx](http://www.tcm.edu/patienteninformationen/de_Aerzte_Therapeutenliste.aspx) & <http://www.agtcm.de/therapeuten-suche.php>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1175</sup> For the time being in the German speaking-world, this integration is more timid and experimental than truly curricular. Cf. e.g. the website hosted by by the Technical University in Munich: <http://www.muemo.med.tu-muenchen.de/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1176</sup> Concerns have also focused on potential toxicity (especially heavy metal contamination), the use of certain rare and/or forbidden animal products, the lack of hygienic standards, incomplete knowledge of potential side-effects and interactions, etc. For an overview of the current situation involving TCM herbal drugs, cf. [http://german.china.org.cn/culture/txt/2010-12/08/content\\_21500381.htm](http://german.china.org.cn/culture/txt/2010-12/08/content_21500381.htm) and the discussed European legal directive <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0024:EN:NOT>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1177</sup> Indeed, explicit medical indications are still forbidden in this field, cf. e.g.: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahrungserg%C3%A4nzungsmittel#Indikation.2FWirksamkeit> [website accessed Oct. 2011]

<sup>1178</sup> To name but a few companies: <http://www.salus.de/>, <http://www.dhu.de/> or <http://www.staufen-pharma.de/>. Most homeo- or naturopathic preparations are sold OTC but some are also prescribed by corresponding practitioners or strongly recommended when patients’ insurances do not cover these remedies. This trend thus has a further consolidating ramification since a number of health insurances now cover a few alternative treatments, usually if patients are willing to afford private insurance coverage or to pay an extra fee on top of compulsory coverage. Cf. e.g. <http://www.test.de/themen/versicherung-vorsorge/meldung/Alternative-Behandlungsverfahren-Sanfte-Medizin-von-der-Kasse-1336445-1342776/> &

imagine that, once Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine have overcome the obstacles just mentioned, they will probably follow similar paths.<sup>1179</sup>

The four strategies analysed until now heavily rely on *semiotisation* and *resemiotisation* as processes of meaning ascription and meaning change. I have already indirectly alluded to *semiotisation* when describing the “semiotic work” necessary to transform ordinary tea into an HLT. But now I would like to actually coin and present the concepts of *semiotisation* (from the German “Semiotisierung”) and *resemiotisation* (from the German “Umsemiotisierung”) because the processes of meaning ascription and (re-)encoding have become so ubiquitous and self-conscious as to warrant specific termini. *Semiotisation* is a process that can be detected in all the realms of consumption and it actively contributes to the process of commodification –especially as it pertains to immaterial realms. In the health arena, we noted that apparently simple signifiers such as “aloe vera” or “ginseng” betrayed a shift from denotative to connotative signifiers. The latter can be multiplied almost ad libitum to include a multiplicity of realms and references (dreams, emotions, sensations or gender, race, values, etc.). However, I would argue that, within the HLT realm, a tenuous hint of the “health” signified remains, a form of “original ghost” that shadows the term, lending ginseng its “healthy Asian” reputation or aloe vera its “purifying, hydrating” aura, even if all precise denotation has been lost.<sup>1180</sup> This ghostly semantics thus has a binding effect, reuniting a number of apparently unrelated terms under the umbrella of “health” or “well-being”.

In sum then, *semiotisation* allows for a setting free from strict, literal acceptations. However, the moorings are not entirely severed as Jean Baudrillard contended with his “hyperreality”<sup>1181</sup> concept, i.e. signs (and the commodities they refer to) are not cut off from a wider referential system, hence purely self-referential. Of course objectively, notions such as “health-enhancing”, “wholesome” or “nutritious” may seem self-referential or simply ideological but subjectively, they may be revived as defensible in a primarily experiential economy. However, if the use of most signs, products, processes etc. within a subjective realm can be justified through a healthy *intent*, it does not mean that the individual subject is an island. Like the “transvaluation” process<sup>1182</sup> that can be detected at the product or macro-level (whereby many products have been endowed with a “healthy” connotation in the last decades), *semiotisation* at the semantic or micro-level (whereby a “healthy” connotation is attached to specific signs) is also the fruit of a societal consensus –however temporary or superficial. Hence, if *semiotisation* results from a more or less conscious social agreement, it can also be reversed (just as commodification). In the course of time, signifiers may lose (some of) their connotative signifieds or acquire new ones.

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<http://www.test.de/themen/gesundheit-kosmetik/meldung/Alternative-Therapien-Kassen-muessen-zahlen-1335192-2335192/>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1179</sup> Especially in view of the array of exotically inspired “health supplements” that are already sold OTC in a number of pharmacies and drugstores (e.g. cumin or neem oil, ginkgo capsules, etc.), not to mention the bitter legal battles generated by so-called “bioprospecting” or “biopiracy”. For once, Wikipedia provides a pretty good overview of the phenomenon including a variety of sources, cf.: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercialization\\_of\\_traditional\\_medicines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commercialization_of_traditional_medicines). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1180</sup> Indeed, many individuals may be unaware that ginseng is a root or aloe vera a cactus and most people would probably be unable to quote any of the biochemical properties, let alone physiological effects of these plants.

<sup>1181</sup> Cf. Baudrillard, Jean, *Pour une économie politique du signe*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972.

<sup>1182</sup> A phenomenon described by Mike Featherstone (op. cit., 1991), and discussed in Chapter 1 (*Introduction*).

This phenomenon is particularly evident from the gender perspective, where *resemiotisation* affects both signifiers on a micro-level and products and processes on a macro-level. I define *resemiotisation* as a two way semiotic gender shift that enables the ascription of masculine connotations to signifiers and products initially coded as feminine and vice versa. This shift is particularly obvious in the realms of nutrition, cosmetics and movement. For example, the first two domains have long been coded as feminine especially in terms of “health-conscious” nutrition and skin-care. Thus, in primarily “western” societies and until relatively recently, skincare and healthfoods, as well as popular education about their proper implementation, have been targeted mainly at women. But in the last couple of decades, signs and products have been gradually re-engineered to appeal to a masculine audience. Terms such as “collagen”, “sensitive”, “light” or “dietary fibres” are losing their feminine connotation just like products such as face cream, body lotion, diet drinks and meals, or health supplements have been made more acceptable for a masculine target group. Alternately, the same can be said about women and certain movement practices: the mainly masculine connotation of terms such as “performance”, “power” “body-building” and “toning” as well as practices such as weight-lifting, martial arts or boxing has been watered down. Packaging, illustrations and positive role models have reinforced these linguistic and transvaluation processes and the media, especially men’s and women’s magazines, have played a non-negligible educational role in this arena –as can be witnessed in a number of articles or websites on e.g. healthy diets for men or women practicing extreme sports.<sup>1183</sup>

A good example of education towards resemiotisation can be found in a *Men’s Health* issue published in 2001.<sup>1184</sup> An entire article is devoted to the subject of face cream. The first part sketches two “horror scenarios” (spots/rash and skin irritation) and points towards the solution: face creams. It then provides a basic description of their effects as well as a comparison between male and female skin structure and it emphasises the importance of vitamins, etc. The second part dwells on pharmaceutical aspects (laboratory responsibility, tests, main ingredients, product development, etc.) including a modelisation of the skin structure. Finally, the third part is a DIY-test designed to help the reader define the nature of his skin type (oily, dry, mixed, etc.). Most of these features are typical of the strategies used to push face cream for women in the last decades, while other features emphasise the specificities of masculine needs. However, the general style of the article is carefully crafted to appeal to what is construed as men’s specific interests: the tone, references and illustrations are very technical and purely aesthetic considerations extremely limited. Similarly, an ad for *Labello Active* lipsalve pictures a dashing middle-aged man dressed in a wetsuit against a turbulent aquatic background. He is dangerously leaning out of what looks like a surfboard or a catamaran whilst gazing in the distance. His right hand tightly grips a metallic rod while his left hand reaches half-way towards his lips with a *Labello Active* stick. The heading bluntly states: “*For rough male lips: Labello Active. •one-hand-mechanics •no shine.*”<sup>1185</sup> At least three aspects code the product as masculine: the cultural landscape of extreme watersports, the absence of gloss, and the technical gimmick –whereby instead of a

<sup>1183</sup> Cf. e.g. [http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/diet/healthy\\_diet/diet\\_for\\_men.htm](http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/diet/healthy_diet/diet_for_men.htm) & <http://www.mensfitness.com/nutrition/abs-health>; or <http://www.sun-wellness.com/articles/061feat3.html>, <http://www.xgirlsport.com/> or <http://www.theelitephysique.com/>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1184</sup> German edition: Witt, Ute, „Volltreffer in der Tube“, *Men’s Health*, Nov. 2001, pp. 208-213.

<sup>1185</sup> Ad for *Labello Active*, 2003, in various German lifestyle magazines: “Für raue Männerlippen: Labello Active. •Ein-Hand-Mechanik •Kein Glanz”. Cf. an interesting product test report (dated 21.01.2006) by what appears to be a man here: [http://www.ciao.de/Labello\\_Active\\_Test\\_3048832](http://www.ciao.de/Labello_Active_Test_3048832). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

traditional cap usually requiring the use of two hands, the lipsalve boasts a sliding trigger mechanism that uncovers the stick and makes it protrude as required.<sup>1186</sup>

The next three commodification strategies I want to describe specifically pertain to the technological aspects of consumption: these are *techno-naturalisation* (the more or less rhetorical and more or less comfortable convergence of technological and natural aspects), *discriminative trivialisation* (a modality used to simplify or blackbox the more complex aspects of technology while still ascribing a “connoisseur” status to consumers) and *rationality constructs* (the development of simplified rationalising strategies to justify consumer choice). I have already alluded to the *techno-naturalisation* phenomenon in the “Technology” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*), and more indirectly in the “Ananda tea” example discussed in the “Commodification” section of the same chapter as well as a leitmotiv recurring throughout Chapter 6 (*Cosmetics case-study*). What is at stake here is in fact a two way process: the naturalisation of technology and the technologisation of nature. This strategy aims at dissolving all tensions from what was long considered as an artificial but unavoidable marriage. And it functions rather simply: nature and technology are presented as two indispensable poles in the description and composition of products and they are often perceived as complementary motors of innovation and/or guarantors of health. Even when nature is foregrounded at the expense of technology, technology often reappears in covert ways, e.g. in the small print about a product’s effects, in the ingredient list, in indications about how the product is manufactured, etc. And when technology is emphasised, it is frequently styled as contributing to a form of super-nature. This strategy is illustrated in the following three examples.

Besides its alarm clock function, *Remington’s “Nature’s clock”*, a gadget that was available in the early to mid-2000s, combined an impressive array of techno-natural features, to wit:

Start and end your day naturally with light, sound, and Aromatherapy. Nature's Clock, from Remington's Nature Therapy Collection awakens your senses and soothes you to sleep. Here's how Nature's Clock light, sound, and Aromatherapy wakes you gently and peacefully: 30 minutes before the alarm is set to chime, light that simulates sunrise gradually intensifies (a buzzer alarm sounds at the end of the 30-minute cycle. Fifteen minutes after "the sun begins to rise," the sounds of songbirds or ocean surf fills your room. As the light becomes brighter, it releases the aroma of "Energy" or "Morning Cafe" to awaken your senses. At night, light, sound, and Aromatherapy diminish, then disappear, to lull you to sleep as the light grows dim 30 minutes before bedtime. As the room darkens, peaceful sounds of a mountain stream or nightfall disappear. The relaxing aroma of "Stress Relief" or "Calming Lavender" slowly fades.<sup>1187</sup>

The clock is thus designed to imitate the natural break of day or nightfall –including sounds and smells– while still providing a chime or the disputably “natural” aroma of morning coffee. Even the name “Nature’s Clock” represents a sort of late modern oxymoron or at

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<sup>1186</sup> Interestingly, this ad also blurs the distinction between work and leisure since water sports are high-tech, high-risk and high-performance pursuits -a fact reinforced by the subtle mechanism of the stick. It suggests that a person indulging in this type of demanding sport most probably displays competences which are highly valued in a corporate environment.

<sup>1187</sup> As described on [www.amazon.com: http://www.amazon.com/Remington-337676-NC100-Natures-Clock/dp/B000061V3Q](http://www.amazon.com/Remington-337676-NC100-Natures-Clock/dp/B000061V3Q). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

least a clever subterfuge: indeed, the modern technological imperative of waking up on time is disguised into a cosy compliance with pseudo-natural rhythms.

Otherwise, ever heard of “natural hi-tech”? You may be thinking of eco-architecture, wind turbines or bio-diesel motors... But, in this case, “natural hi-tech” is the clever slogan coined by cosmetics giant *Garnier* to condense a creed that seeks to actively endorse the blending of nature with science and technology, as exemplified by a contemporary ad for a sun cream that combines cactus nutriflavones with a “*highly effective*” UVA/UVB filter.<sup>1188</sup> Science and technology’s takeover of nature is emblematised by the strange ice-cubes featured at the base of the sun cream bottle: bits of cactus have been captured in the ice like the berry or citrus studded cubes occasionally used as a decorative touch in party refreshments. Beyond the cooling promise suggestive of a summer cocktail for the skin, this layout also symbolises the role of R&D which isolates or freezes “Nature’s Best” in order to create hybrid techno-natural products. This impression is also reinforced by the visual logo of the brand –a microscopic close-up of a leaf that suggests that the secrets of nature have been penetrated and appropriated by the scanning gaze of science and technology. The following statement seems to endorse this perception: “*Garnier believes in nature as a true source of inspiration and care. That’s why, using BIOSCREENING, an evaluation technique used by the pharmaceutical industry, we screen natural ingredients, selecting only those proven to be the most effective.*” What seems to not only enable but indeed legitimise this strategy is consumer subjectivity (at least as it is perceived by the company!): “*With its extensive experience in skincare, Garnier understands that women want skin care products that stimulate their skin without irritating it. That’s why our products combine effectiveness with pleasurable textures and delicate aromas to ensure a complete feeling of well-being.*”<sup>1189</sup>

Even in the organic food realm, where the goodness of nature is usually extolled, it is also consistently sustained and controlled by technology –as in two instances drawn from health food magazines. In my first source, *Zwergenswiese*’s “Mandel Schmelz”, a savoury almond spread, stars in the interaction between a dotting archetypal German granny and her young grandson. The caption states “*As delicious as in grandmother’s days with roasted almonds. Vegetarian, vegan, animal protein and cholesterol free*”<sup>1190</sup> The second source is a feature article on the *Zwergenswiese* company, illustrated with a number of pictures mostly highlighting the industrial production setting. Gone is the traditional granny figure: she has been replaced by the still smiling portrait of the director –hair covered by a bonnet and towering over a huge steel pot. The photographs displayed on the facing page show hygienically white-clad and bonneted employees serenely manipulating sterilised jars. One of the caption states: “*aseptically sealed: before labelling, they must be sterilised in the autoclave*”.<sup>1191</sup> The layout thus seems designed to reassure the potential consumer that this product has been manufactured with all the state-of-the-art high-tech savoir-faire, thus

<sup>1188</sup> Ad for Garnier Ambre Solaire, 2006, in various German lifestyle magazines: [singled out by “Stiftung Warentest” as “sehr gut”]. The slogan becomes ubiquitous from 2005 onwards. Cf. [http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect\[\]=3074](http://www.slogans.de/slogans.php?BSelect[]=3074). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1189</sup> These quotes were drawn from: [http://skinnaturals.garnier.ca/en/brand\\_presentation.asp](http://skinnaturals.garnier.ca/en/brand_presentation.asp), accessed in May 2007; unfortunately they are no longer accessible.

<sup>1190</sup> Ad for *Zwergenswiese*’s Mandelschmelz, *Schrot & Korn* 4/2003: „So lecker wie zu Grossmutter’s Zeiten, mit gerösteten Mandeln. Vegetarisch, vegan, tiereweissfrei und cholesterinfrei“.

<sup>1191</sup> Egel, Jan R., „Hier kocht die Chefin“, *Eve*, 2/2003, p. 22-24, p. 23: „Keimfrei verschlossen: Vor dem Etikettieren geht’s in den Autoklaven zum Sterilisieren“. Also available online: [http://www.eve-magazin.de/pdf-archiv/2003\\_02\\_zwergenswiese.pdf](http://www.eve-magazin.de/pdf-archiv/2003_02_zwergenswiese.pdf). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

eliminating any risk of bacterial contamination. These sources aptly illustrate a central challenge in the mediation of contemporary organic food: i.e. guaranteeing the best of both worlds. Thanks to a “traditional-natural” *mise en scène* in its advertisements, the organic industry styles itself as the guarantor of nature, emphasising the absence of artificial pesticides or additives in the food it transforms. But, at the same time, it aligns itself with the fears of a society increasingly obsessed with risk, be it the risks of industrial pollution or the risks generated by an unbridled nature teeming with germs.

The second technically oriented commodification strategy that I wish to examine is what I call *discriminating trivialisation*. As the antipole of professionalisation, the trivialisation of technology is aptly described by Peter Weingart:

Amongst professional technologies are a few which become “de-professionalised” through commercial dissemination. As a rule, this is only possible when they become cheaper, smaller and more user-friendly. This hints to the fact that technologies that have everyday potential virtually display a predetermined development, from professional use to everyday use and its trivialisation. Probably the most important aspect of this process is that, during the first phase, the use of these technologies still requires the understanding hence also the knowledge pertaining to the scientific parts that are incorporated in them. But this understanding becomes less and less necessary, and is finally only schematically required for usage.<sup>1192</sup>

By coupling *discriminating* with *trivialisation*, I want to argue that in terms of commodification, trivialisation is a subtle, non-linear negotiation process between producers (or mediators) and consumers over issues of blackboxing and technological expertise. *Trivialisation* on the producer side means that the high-tech features of products and processes<sup>1193</sup> are increasingly black-boxed in the name of user-friendliness (e.g. the sophisticated electronic parts of devices such as the new generation of pulse monitors). On the user side, it implies that these features are increasingly taken for granted and assimilated into everyday life (e.g. lay-consumers wearing pulse monitors during their daily jogging or fitness routines). *Discrimination* points to the fact that producers select some technical features which are supposed to appeal to a demanding consumer (cf. the highlighting of particular health additives in the functional food realm or special features in the fitness appliance field -often extolled in highly specialised and often obscure and/or deceptive terms). Conversely, from the user perspective, consumers make or are construed as making reflexive or “connoisseur” choices between subtly differentiated technical options (e.g. privileging a particular type of yogurt bacteria or a specific Chinese therapeutic treatment). This strategy implies that users are construed as requiring ease and flexibility in

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<sup>1192</sup> Weingart, Peter, op.cit., p. 153: “Unter den professionalisierten Techniken sind einige, die durch kommerzielle Verbreitung “ent-professionalisiert” werden. Das ist in der Regel nur möglich, wenn sie billiger, kleiner und einfacher handhabbar werden. Damit ist schon angedeutet, daß die Techniken, die das Potential von Alltagstechniken besitzen, geradezu eine vorgezeichnete Entwicklung von der professionalisierten Verwendung zur alltäglichen Verwendung und ihrer Trivialisierung durchlaufen. Wahrscheinlich wichtigstes Moment in diesem Prozeß ist, daß die Verwendung dieser Techniken in der ersten Phase noch das Verständnis der und damit das Wissen um die in ihnen inkorporierten Wissenselemente voraussetzt, daß dieses Verständnis dann graduell immer weniger erforderlich ist und schließlich nur noch schematisch für die Bedienung vorausgesetzt wird.”

<sup>1193</sup> which until very recently were confined to highly specialised professional spheres such as medicine, physiotherapy, (bio)chemistry, pharmacology, physics, professional sports and nutrition.

the consumption of technologies but are also considered literate or discerning enough to be sensitive to a certain type of technical or scientific discourse.

There are many examples in the HLT realm that point towards this trend. A good instance is that of functional food bars<sup>1194</sup> that are ubiquitously consumed by both professional and lay sports or fitness practitioners. Functional food bars are the result of a relatively recent trivialisation process. One of the forerunners is no doubt the *Ovaltine* snack bar, the so-called “Ovo-Sport”, first launched in Switzerland in 1937,<sup>1195</sup> however most functional bars were launched much later in Europe, i.e. in the course of the 1980s. Before sports bars became ubiquitous, most sportspeople in need of a quick and handy energy boost had to make do with chocolate bars or (dried) fruit. Some (mainly professionals) also resorted to specially designed food supplements that were usually sold as powders to be diluted. This was obviously less practical and entailed reliance on professional knowledge embodied by the medical and pharmaceutical establishment or professional trainers and nutritionists –thus more pointedly raising the question of doping. Therefore, on the one hand, the advent of the standardised functional bar meant that the product was no longer specifically tailored to the individual needs of a particular sports person and, on the other, it meant that its use was no longer professionally “controlled”. Sport-specific functional ingredients were thus trivialised into functional bars and most (even very moderately) sporty individuals have now integrated them into their everyday lives without any second thoughts as to appropriate dosage of nutrients, timing or regularity of intake, etc.

But this is where the discrimination part plays into this development. A host of functional food bars advertise relatively mainstream ingredients such as protein (usually without further explanations) or additives like fructose, magnesium or various vitamins and thus do not require extremely specialised knowledge from the average user. However, the diversification of the offer means that many of these bars highlight more complex supplements or unusual ingredients. A good example was the so-called “*Champ Energy Power RX-Biker Bar*”,<sup>1196</sup> marketed around the mid-2000s. Both the name and the design of the wrapper made it clear that the biking community was the prime audience. But even more striking in terms of discrimination, was the fact that it highlighted a particular additive, L-carnitine, which is an amino-acid that supports muscle-building. This was not the only functional additive included in the bar: the list of ingredients revealed e.g. magnesium hydroxide, pantothenic acid or vitamin B12. But it was this rather obscure additive that was highlighted, without any biochemical or physiological explanations being provided on the pack. It thus hinted to the fact that bikers, as a particular target group, were either in the know<sup>1197</sup> or at least wished to be discriminately addressed as connoisseurs –even if they might not (yet) have internalised the knowledge thus displayed. Ultimately though, it was

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<sup>1194</sup> I am not referring here to a wide range of so-called “snack bars” such as chocolate, biscuit, muesli or fruit bars that are simply designed and marketed as carbohydrate snacks to combat low blood sugar during work or leisure, but to bars that contain specific additives that are supposed to sustain more specific, usually sport-related, metabolic processes.

<sup>1195</sup> Cf. [http://www.wander.ch/ueber\\_wander/geschichte\\_in\\_kuerze/die\\_wander\\_produkte.htm](http://www.wander.ch/ueber_wander/geschichte_in_kuerze/die_wander_produkte.htm) & <http://www.wander.ch/ovomaltineDetail?catId=116&prodId=42>. [accessed in Aug. 2006]

<sup>1196</sup> “*Champ Energie Power RX-Biker Riegel*”, manufactured by Aktivkost GmbH.

<sup>1197</sup> i.e. they were constructed as having access to e.g. magazines, internet forums, formal and informal contacts in the community, etc. who would have circulated the information that L-carnitine was a desirable ingredient to support muscle-building whilst pedalling away...

probably the binding effect of peer group jargon that dominated the symbolic transaction.<sup>1198</sup>

The third technically-oriented strategy is *rationality constructs*, a concept coined by the German sociologist Uwe Schimank in the context of a society he perceived as increasingly plagued by complex decisional dilemmas:<sup>1199</sup> “I define rationality constructs as representations of knowledge, linked to the successful processing of more or less narrowly circumscribed action problems that are shared and recognised by a collectivity of actors.”<sup>1200</sup> Adapting this definition to the technological realm means that in a world increasingly driven by the consumption of extremely complex, increasingly black-boxed (and potentially risky) technologies, actors (i.e. producers, mediators and consumers) have to negotiate the development of simplified rationalising strategies to justify both marketing and consumption decisions. For instance, in order to facilitate the choice process for consumers, the descriptions of artefacts highlight some technical features –such as HP [horsepower] for motors or W [watts] for amplifiers– as particularly relevant while others are left in the dark.

Consumers, who are neither technical experts nor gullible fools, thus navigate between the wish to positively experience technology (whether individually or collectively) while still needing rational-sounding tools to guide appropriate choice. Indeed, the subjectively experiential economy still displays its limits in overtly technical realms. Social pressure is such that “rational-technical” criteria must still be invoked to justify consumption choices. Hence consumers have to craft their own rationales based on a body (both literal and metaphorical!) of knowledge and experience that is constantly negotiated with other actors (i.e. fellow consumers, producers and mediators). Ulrich Wengenroth describes this process as the central challenge in societies where consumers (but often also mediators) can no

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<sup>1198</sup> This impression was reinforced through the use of the obscure “RX” reference: Rx can be used as e.g. an abbreviation for “receive” in radio jargon or for “rallycross” in the field of auto-racing or as a symbol for prescription drugs . Cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rx> & <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rx>. In this context, the “rallycross” reference seems to be the most plausible in order to add a “sporty touch” but it may also just be empty techno-talk, i.e. a so-called “floating signifier” (a term originally coined by Lévi Strauss, Claude [in “Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss” in Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968] but taken up by a number of language theorists, Jean Baudrillard included). [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1199</sup> Schimank actually uses the term “decision society” [Entscheidungsgesellschaft], echoing in that a German sociological trend launched by Ulrich Beck with his “risk society” [Risikogesellschaft], and taken up e.g. by Gerhard Schulze with his “experience society” [Erlebnisgesellschaft], etc. Cf. Schimank, Uwe, *Die Entscheidungsgesellschaft: Komplexität und Realität der Moderne*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH, 2005.

<sup>1200</sup> Cf. Schimank, Uwe, „Rationalitätsfiktionen in der Entscheidungsgesellschaft“, *Zur Kritik der Wissensgesellschaft*, Eds Dirk Tänzler, Hubert Knoblauch & Hans-Georg Soeffner, Konstanz: UVK, 2006, pp. 57-81, p. 57. also available online here: <http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/ESGW/SOZ/weiteres/preprints/ratfikt.pdf>, p. 1: “Unter Rationalitätsfiktionen verstehe ich dabei Wissensvorstellungen, die sich auf die erfolgrichtige Bearbeitung mehr oder weniger eng umschriebener Handlungsprobleme beziehen und innerhalb einer bestimmten Kollektivität von Akteuren geteilt und anerkannt sind.“ In the previously mentioned text, Schimank refines the perspective by adding the following: „Rationalitätsfiktionen sind vielmehr unmittelbar preskriptiv. Sie empfehlen für bestimmte Entscheidungsprobleme bestimmte Entscheidungen oder zumindest deutlich eingegrenzte Richtungen des Entscheidens; und diese Empfehlung tritt so suggestiv auf, dass der Akteur sich das, was eigentlich eine Entscheidung ausmacht, subjektiv guten Gewissens sparen kann.“ [emphasis in original] Cf. Schimank, Uwe, *Die Entscheidungsgesellschaft: Komplexität und Realität der Moderne*, op. cit., p. 373. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

longer hope to fully understand the functioning of the technical goods they covet (or market) but nevertheless have to develop functional choice (or marketing) criteria:

Rationality constructs provide technology-intensive societies with a means to avoid sacrificing the requirement of comprehensible decision processes. Our “good reasons” for or against particular consumer goods are neither subjective nor objective, they are both, since they must be *perceived* as objective. The historical process of rapid technologisation is escorted by a process of “adapted rationality”.<sup>1201</sup>

It is this tightrope act between subjective and objective criteria that enables HLT consumers to compromise between a vision of health that requires a “rational” investment in a body envisaged as a “*bio-share*”<sup>1202</sup> and a holistic perspective that sees the sensuous, emotional and experiential needs of body as guiding consumer choice.

A product line I discovered at a discounter where I sometimes shopped between 2005 and 2010 provides a convincing example of this strategy. At the time, the new convenience assortment was called “*Viva Vital: eating and drinking with pleasure and reason*” and was described as a programme for “*healthy bon vivants*”<sup>1203</sup> –thus pointedly illustrating the type of “rational hedonism” that permeates the discourse around most HLTs. This product line was based on considerations very similar to the ones I evoked when describing Dr Strunz’s “gospel” in the “Commodification” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*): i.e. the assortment included a lot of “high-quality” protein, mainly lean poultry, ham, salmon and tuna, lean cheese and yogurt specialties,<sup>1204</sup> various blends of deep-frozen vegetables, green and white teas, ready-made soups and TV or work dinners, breakfast cereals, olive oil, etc. While most products could not be labelled as functional (they contained no added vitamins, minerals or other supposedly health-enhancing ingredients), many of them boasted a very detailed *Nutrition Facts* table besides the compulsory ingredients list. The table provided the habitual information on kcal, protein, carbohydrates and fat contents (i.e. 100g contain on average...) but also, whenever appropriate, the percentage of sugar within the carbohydrates, a subdivision between the types of fat (saturated, mono-unsaturated, poly-unsaturated), as

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<sup>1201</sup> Wengenroth, Ulrich, „Gute Gründe: Technisierung und Konsumententscheidungen“, *Technikgeschichte*, Band 71, Heft 1, 2004, pp. 3-18, p. 18. “Mit Rationalitätsfiktionen haben sich hoch-technisierte Gesellschaften das Mittel geschaffen, auf den Anspruch rationaler und zugleich nachvollziehbarer Entscheidungen nicht zu verzichten. Unsere Guten Gründe für oder gegen bestimmte technische Konsumgüter sind weder nur subjektiv, noch sind sie nur objektiv, sie sind beides, da sie als objektiv empfunden werden müssen. Der historische Prozess rapider Technisierung wird von einem Prozess „angepasster Rationalität“ begleitet.“

<sup>1202</sup> The expression was coined by Sabine Maasen in her discussion of cosmetic surgery: “Schönheitschirurgie: Schnittflächen flexiblen Selbstmanagements”, *Artifizielle Körper – Lebendige Technik: Technische Modellierungen des Körpers in historischer Perspektive*, op.cit., pp. 239-260, p. 245: „Der Körper wird zur Bioaktie.“ Maguire also stresses this economic view of the body: “In this regard the middle-class body is best understood as an enterprise, and fitness as a mode of investment in the corporation.” Cf. Maguire, Jennifer Smith, op. cit., p. 54

<sup>1203</sup> „VIVA VITAL: ESSEN MIT GENUSS UND VERSTAND; das Vitalschlemmer-Programm von Plus“ was a product line exclusively launched by the *Plus* supermarket chain in Germany in January 2006. In 2009, *Plus* supermarkets were renamed *Netto* after being taken over by *Netto Marken-Discount* (cf. [http://www.netto-online.de/unternehmen/wir\\_ueber\\_uns.php](http://www.netto-online.de/unternehmen/wir_ueber_uns.php)) but the product line seems to still exist, cf. <http://netto-online.de/eigenmarken/eigenmarken.php?sparte=VivaVital>. [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1204</sup> Beef and other pork cuts were conspicuously absent; even convenience meat specialties such as hamburgers and sausages were made of poultry and –believe it or not– yogurt...

well as indications about cholesterol, fibre, natrium and other micronutrients such as vitamins or minerals, including RDA [Recommended Daily Amount] percentages.<sup>1205</sup>

But what made this product line a prime example of rationality constructs were the small blurbs to be found on every package below the primary product description: for example, eating *“Refined and juicy deep-frozen catfish fillets”* was recommended because *“The easy to digest fish protein and the beneficial blend of fatty acids are what make catfish so essential for a healthy diet”*<sup>1206</sup>; *“Light Mediterranean cheese slices with olives, max. 17% fat”* was praised since *“Sliced cheese is an important source of calcium and contains precious milk protein. When lean, it represents an important contribution to a contemporary diet”*<sup>1207</sup>; the rationale for eating *“deep frozen soft peas”* was that *“Peas naturally contain a lot of vitamin C, vitamin B1 and folic acid”*<sup>1208</sup>; it also made sense to grab a *“Fresh & spicy Thai soup with chicken”* because *“Fat-reduced Thai soup is an ideal quick meal in the context of a modern diet”*<sup>1209</sup>; finally *“Light fruit yogurt – strawberry & lime”* could not be dispensed with since *“yogurt exclusively sweetened with fructose is recommended for a conscious management of carbohydrates”*.<sup>1210</sup>

These five examples should have made it clear that there is an implicit consensus between producers and consumers about certain “technical” references and values that should enable consumers to embrace a more healthful diet. The blurbs pre-suppose that consumers are aware of “good” and “bad” proteins, carbohydrates and fats as well as of the need for certain vitamins and minerals. But the information remains anecdotic, anchored to a few signifieds that are more connotative than denotative. Indeed, average consumers are seldom aware of the exact effect of mono- and poly-unsaturated fats on their coronary metabolism. However, for health-obsessed customers, who might be tempted to scan the

<sup>1205</sup> RDA stands for “Recommended Dietary/Daily Allowance” and was introduced in the U.S. in 1941. Similar standards were introduced in most European countries before being harmonised under European legislation in 1990 (before that Germany used the “Empfohlener Tagesbedarf” [recommended daily requirement] from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung). Sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recommended\\_Dietary\\_Allowance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recommended_Dietary_Allowance);

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recommended\\_Daily\\_Allowance](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recommended_Daily_Allowance).

However, the habit of charting RDA in a “Nutrition Facts” table on most foodstuffs is distinctly North American and was introduced in the U.S. in three phases (1990, 1993 and 2000). Cf. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition\\_Facts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition_Facts) & “Guidance for Industry: Nutrition Labeling Manual - A Guide for Developing and Using Data Bases, U.S. Food and Drug Administration”,

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/FoodLabelingNutrition/ucm063113.htm>. It is now slowly conquering Europe, especially on some imported products as well as health and functional foods, but as yet, there is no unified legislation or practice in terms of layout, designation, etc. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition\\_Facts#European\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrition_Facts#European_Union) & “Commission Directive 2008/100/EC”

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:285:0009:0012:EN:PDF>. [websites accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1206</sup> From the pack: *“Fein-saftige Pangasiusfilets Tiefgefroren”* & *“Das leicht verdauliche Fischeiweiß und die günstige Fettsäuren-Zusammensetzung machen Pangasius so wertvoll für die gesunde Ernährung”*.

<sup>1207</sup> From the pack: *“Mediterran-leichter Schnittkäse Olives 17% Fett absolute”*; *“Schnittkäse ist ein wichtiger Calciumlieferant und enthält hochwertiges Milcheiweiß. Fettreduziert leistet er einen wichtigen Beitrag zur zeitgemäßen Ernährung”*.

<sup>1208</sup> From the pack: *“Zarte Erbsen tiefgefroren”*; *“Erbsen enthalten natürlicherweise viel Vitamin C, Vitamin B1 und Folsäure”*.

<sup>1209</sup> From the pack: *“Frisch-pikante Thaisuppe mit Hühnerfleisch”*; *“Thaisuppe mit wenig Fett ist eine ideale, schnelle Mahlzeit im Rahmen moderner Ernährung”*.

<sup>1210</sup> From the pack: *“Fettarmer Fruchtojoghurt mild Erdbeer-Limette”*; *“Joghurt mit ausschließlich natürlicher Fruchtsüße gesüßt empfiehlt sich für den bewußten Umgang mit Kohlenhydraten”*.

packs more attentively, there usually was a second longer blurb that provided slightly more substantial explanations than the initial description. For instance, on the side of the strawberry-lime yogurt pot, one could read: *“Fruit yogurt: yogurt provides the body with high-quality protein. By replacing traditional white sugar with fructose obtained from apples, the metabolism is less affected by carbohydrates that influence blood sugar. The intestinal flora is positively influenced by dietary fibre in the shape of oligofructose.”*<sup>1211</sup> Nevertheless, even this additional information focused on limited, rather basic common references: i.e. blood sugar = bad (diabetes connotation), fibre = good (prevents constipation). And there were no explanations about what makes protein high-quality or about the exact nature of oligofructose and its action in the intestine.

Thus, discriminating trivialisation and rationality constructs have much in common and can be seen as complementary strategies (and interpretative tools) for the actors involved in marketing and consumption. They both presuppose that, in the case of specific technological investments, the experiential dimension is not the only determinant of choice but that there is a strong societal pressure to purchase appliances and services with a certain amount of “rational” discernment. Furthermore, they both presuppose that there is a negotiation process between the various actors on the market: indeed if a technology is to have selling potential, there must be criteria upon which the various parties can agree. However, in the case of *rationality constructs*, I would argue that the aim is mainly to level the playing field between actors: i.e. an agreement is reached as to what are the significant characteristics/criteria that make a “rational” comparison possible. In contrast, *discriminating trivialisation* seems to imply that beyond user-friendliness and easy domestication, the user’s “specialised” knowledge base is being specifically courted by producers (or mediators). Implicitly, the latter are flattering “clever” consumers by telling them *“we know that you know what we’re talking about...”*, even if both parties may be perfectly aware of the limits of this type of technospeak.

Finally, the last commodification strategy I want to discuss is *individual consumer empowerment*, a strategy that transcends all the previous ones in that its aim is to encourage consumer initiative and responsibility. It is typified by a new generation of advertising slogans (and more generally discourse) that emphasise consumers’ sovereignty, self-worth, intelligence, discernment, creativity, decisional power, etc. –in short, it caters to a host of emotional “reinforcement” needs. This type of strategy is not found solely in the HLT realm but is disseminated alongside a wide range of products and services. They embody a shift from an *object* (product) to a *subject* (consumer) orientation, i.e. it is no longer the virtues of the product that are cast centre-stage but those of the consumer. Therefore, two modes dominate: either an affirmation in the first person such as L’Oréal’s famous *“Because I’m worth it”*<sup>1212</sup> (mirrored by the German slogans of *Media Markt*: *“Hey, I’m not an idiot”*, *Visa*: *“I’ll take the liberty”* or *SAT.1*: *“I watch what I want”*).<sup>1213</sup> The second mode –often an imperative– seeks to admonish, encourage or “give permission”. Prime instance are *Garnier’s “Take Care”* or *Viva Vital’s* more emphatic *“Take good care of yourself”*. Other examples include Nike’s famous *“Just do it”* and Apple’s no less famous

<sup>1211</sup> From the yogurt carton: *„Fruchtjoghurt: Joghurt versorgt den Körper mit hochwertigem Eiweiß. Durch den Austausch von Haushaltszucker gegen Fruchtsüße aus Äpfeln, gelangen weniger blutzucker wirksame Kohlenhydrate in den Stoffwechsel. Mit dem Ballaststoff Oligofruktose wird die Darmflora positiv beeinflusst.“*

<sup>1212</sup> In German *“weil ich es mir wert bin”* from the original French *“parce que je le vaud bien”*.

<sup>1213</sup> *Media Markt*: *„Ich bin doch nicht blöd!“*, *Visa*: *„Die Freiheit nehm' ich mir!“*, *Sat.1*: *“Ich sehe was ich will”*.

“Think different”; in the past years, on the German scene, *Saab*, *Siemens*, *Skoda*, or *Fun Factory* (an erotic toys dealer) have respectively dished out the following pep talk: “Move your mind”, “Be inspired”, “Be reasonable –follow your gut too” or more subversively “Love yourself”.<sup>1214</sup> This type of catchphrase sharply contrasts with older generation mottos such as “Drink Coca Cola” or “Guinness is good for you”, which, if they still implied an interaction with the consumer, were still strictly focused on the product. Some products even play on both first and second person registers. *Du Darfst* [you may!], a low-cal food line discussed in Chapter 5 (*Food case-study*), is particularly emblematic since the brand name itself represents a permission. From the 1980s onwards, it was supplemented by slogans such as “I want to stay as I am” or “I don’t want to hesitate for too long” –this in the context of choosing the right foods in the supermarket, thus heralding the rationality constructs discussed above.<sup>1215</sup>

However, these types of affirmations and recommendations remain rather vague about the means to secure or fulfil them. This is because, on the one hand, the consumer is now seen as publicity-literate (or “subtle”) enough to make the link between the slogan and the product, and, on the other hand, these slogans are ultimately “lifestyle rules” that imply a general consciousness shift. Consumers are therefore invited to pay more attention to their needs and emotions as well as to capitalise on their cognitive skills. Even though these slogans encapsulate diverse forms of individual “empowerment”, their gist is that consumers must be reminded that their attitudes ultimately determine the success of the product or service. Thus, to a large extent, contemporary advertising has moved away from modern advertising that sought to make consumers uneasy, inadequate or even emotionally insecure –“constantly monitoring themselves for bodily [or other] imperfections”, as Mike Featherstone puts it.<sup>1216</sup> Instead of a guilt-trip, this new type of publicity offers consumers an ego-trip. This makes sense in an experience economy where, as noted higher, commodification requires consumers’ self-confidence, proactive participation and responsabilisation to actually bring the goods and services alive. Indeed, it is their “engineering” expertise that is needed to seal the success of the recombination ethic. Thus to refine or extend *Bourdieuian* categories,<sup>1217</sup> I would contend that increased commodification meets with a diversification of personal capital types. The original economic, social, cultural, symbolic (and physical)<sup>1218</sup> capitals consumers are supposedly endowed with (or cultivate) are complemented by emotional and experiential capitals that may be reinforced (or diminished) by the original categories but may also develop independently.

<sup>1214</sup> Garnier: „Denk an Dich“; Viva Vital: „Lassen Sie es sich gut gehen“; Skoda: „Seien Sie vernünftig. Hören Sie auch mal auf Ihren Bauch“. The Saab, Siemens and Fun Factory slogans are quoted in the English original.

<sup>1215</sup> Du Darfst: „Ich will so bleiben wie ich bin“ or „Ich will nicht lange überlegen“.

<sup>1216</sup> Mike Featherstone, “The Body in Consumer Culture”, *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, Eds Eds Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner, London: Sage, 1991, p. 175.

<sup>1217</sup> Cf. Bourdieu, Pierre, *La distinction : critique sociale du jugement*, op. cit.

<sup>1218</sup> Personally, at this stage of my study, I would tend to single out and emphasise embodied capital more than Bourdieu who originally subsumed it under “cultural capital”. Indeed, in contemporary westernised society, “bio-cultural” resources located in the body –including health, fitness, beauty and/or sex-appeal– have become almost as influential as e.g. social capital on the habitus of late modern consumers. Cf. Shilling, Chris, *The Body and Social Theory*, op.cit.; Shilling, Chris, “Educating the body: Physical capital and the production of social inequalities”, op. cit. & Shilling, Chris, “The body, class and social inequalities”, *Equality, Education and Physical Education*, Ed. John Evans, London: Falmer Press, 1993.

Through the analysis of the above dimensions, I have thus tried to show how commodification under the guise of recombination has led to a multitude of strategies to fragment, diversify, combine, multiply, hybridise, popularise, specialise, etc. the offer of goods and services in general and of HLTs in particular. The aptness of the recombination metaphor for HLTs is particularly striking because its genetic origins are reflected in more macro body management strategies. Not just genes, but body parts are singled out (*isolation*) for specific treatment: e.g. foot cream and hand cream or butt and belly toning gym routines. Bodies and body parts are also targeted for multiple treatments (*multiplication*): for example, the face is no longer just washed and coated with cream but may be submitted to a programme involving sauna, exfoliation, toning, massage, moisturising etc. Moreover, bodies are the focus of a wide array of hybrid and/or creolised (*hybridisation and creolisation*) practices, such as e.g. Tae Bo<sup>1219</sup> or the Grinberg method.<sup>1220</sup>

Additionally, as we saw in the “Under the sign of the body” section of Chapter 3 (*Theory*), bodies and body parts are also saturated with culturally shaped signs that change cyclically (*semiotisation and resemiotisation*). Indeed, the sizes, textures and shapes of bodies and body parts can spell in turn youth, beauty, fashion and health or ugliness, has-been, pathology and obsolescence. The “Technology” section in the same chapter also uncovered how bodies are more and more consciously shaped through the enrolment of both nature and technology (*techno-naturalisation*). And one can also argue that bodies and their functions are discriminately trivialised and rationally constructed (*discriminating trivialisation and rationality constructs*). To wit, the meaning and significance of particular physiological processes or metabolical markings is regularly (re-)negotiated between health producers and health consumers. For instance, cholesterol, blood sugar, serotonin or intestinal flora –whether in excess or lacking– become graspable emblems of multifarious and multicausal civilisation diseases (such as coronary complaints, diabetes, depression or intestinal malfunction) that warrant particular preventive or healing measures. And just as these processes or markings can build bridges, they can also segregate those consumers who do not have a clue from those who are aware of their photosensitivity, their aerobic and anaerobic capacities or their (auto-)immune reactions. Finally, bodies are increasingly seen as endowed with new cognitive skills, holistic aptitudes and responsibilities (*individual consumer empowerment*) that should enable them to steer their own course into conscious health.

However this embodied empowerment to make the right health choices may prove problematic. Indeed, even if as Frank Furedi writes, “[...] *the self enjoys an important moral status*” and this status is reinforced by the fact that “*popular culture communicates the message that wider external demands are illegitimate if in some sense they thwart individual*

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<sup>1219</sup> Tae Bo [Total Awareness Excellent Body Obedience] is “a form of high impact aerobics that combines the moves of Tae Kwon Do, karate, boxing, ballet, and hip\_hop dancing”, cf. Greer, Natalie, Tae Bo: Fitness Craze or Effective Workout?, online article available here: [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ans/psychology/health\\_psychology/TAEBO.htm](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ans/psychology/health_psychology/TAEBO.htm). [website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1220</sup> In 2006, this alternative health practice launched by Avi Grinberg in the 1980s was still described as freely inspired from the following: “Yoga, Alexander Technique, Feldenkreis Technique, Bio Energetic, Gestalt, Bio Dynamic Psychology, Chinese medicine, Tai Chi, Kong Fu, Chi Kong., R.D. Laing, Bedouin healing, Rolfing, Reflexology, Zen meditation, Sufi dancing, ritualistic healing in South America, healing practices of the religions Judaism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, Tibetan hand analysis”. Unfortunately (one could conjecture that there have been some legal suits), the information on the website has been modified since, cf. <http://www.grinbergmethod.com/about-the-founder.asp>. [website originally accessed Aug. 2006]

*realisation*,<sup>1221</sup> the embodied self, despite increasing individualisation, is still embedded in an influential social order:

It is for profoundly *social* reasons that we've directed so much attention to our bodies in the 1970s and 1980s. The body boom may *look* individualistic, but in this case looks are deceiving. To be sure, the decision to have cosmetic surgery or to lift weights is made by an individual, and some of the pathologies of the age, such as exercise addiction and anorexia, are borne by individuals. But changes in society are very much implicated. As women's roles shifted, eating disorders became more common; as America sought to regain its might after the Vietnam War, the musclebound look grew popular.<sup>1222</sup>

In the new moral economy of health characteristic of westernised societies, pursuing healthy embodied consciousness is an opportunity that is gradually becoming a constraint coded into a new –and yet not so new– moral discourse.<sup>1223</sup> Elisabeth Mixa, in her forthcoming study on wellness, defines it as a neoliberal, hegemonic propriety discourse [*Anstandsdiskurs*] that creates new relations to the self.<sup>1224</sup>

Even if by means of the recombination modality, this moral discourse appears to comfortably absorb and contain a number of “objective” dualities previously perceived as irreconcilable such as nature vs. technology or body vs. mind, it actually reinforces “subjective” dualities such as good vs. bad, healthy vs. sick or decent vs. indecent. Ironically the criteria used to determine between these poles are no longer drawn from religious dogma but cloaked in a mantle of scientific or technological rationales. As Barry Glassner puts it, this development is far from new since:

Nearly a hundred years ago the social theorist Emile Durkheim saw that judgements of right or wrong were coming to be based on the findings of scientists rather than on the teachings of religious leaders or philosophers. He also noted that moral acts were increasingly viewed by people not as dictates from on high but as choices made freely and based on their informed belief that such acts were in their own best interest. Over the course of the twentieth century, a true remoralizing of our culture has taken place in the name of science and personal choice. Ironically, in the process we've reverted to some of the least appealing beliefs found in so-called primitive societies. For example, many Americans now accept the

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<sup>1221</sup> Cf. Furedi, Frank, *Therapy Culture*, London & New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 147.

<sup>1222</sup> Cf. Glassner, Barry, *Bodies: overcoming the tyranny of perfection*, Los Angeles: Lowell House, 1992, p. 173

<sup>1223</sup> Cf. Conrad, Peter, “Wellness as Virtue: Morality and the Pursuit of Health”, op. cit.

<sup>1224</sup> Cf. Mixa, Elisabeth, *Body&Soul. Wellness: Von heilsamer Lustbarkeit und Postsexualität*, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011, forthcoming. Mixa perceives the paradisiacal narratives and images of wellness as participating in a form of post-modern fairy tale promoting an eternally beautiful life. In the wake of clear transformation processes, in which emotions are reshaped and are more strongly therapeutically treated, especially by coaches, she diagnoses that a feminisation of culture runs parallel with a depoliticisation, an erosion of the social, a dissolution into self-referentiality. In her own words, drawn from an abstract she kindly sent to me, she pursues: „*Es kann von Wellness als einem Diskurs gesprochen werden, in welchem ein neu entstehendes Wohlfühl-Dispositiv jenes der Sexualität zu überlagern beginnt. In endlosen Selbst-Geständnissen beichten wir öffentlich oder insgeheim unsere Versäumnisse, uns etwas Gutes getan zu haben. An den Rändern des Wellness-Diskurses finden wir Ausgegrenztes: Stress, emotionale Erschöpfung, Panik und Traurigkeit, auch das Unvermögen, uns wie ein vernünftiger Mensch wellness-konform zu verhalten. Dieser neue Wahnsinn (Greco) besteht vor allem darin, sich eben nicht wohl verhalten verhalten zu haben.*“.

notion that a person becomes ill not because of natural physical processes but because of immoral action.<sup>1225</sup>

Through the lense of medicalisation, Peter Conrad also perceives a long history of morality connected with health. He contends that especially the medicalisation of deviance, such as e.g. alcoholism, has reinforced the secular connection between morality and health, highlighting the transition from sin to disease, via moral weakness, without completely effacing the negative connotation of the condition. And through healthcization, the unwell body moves in the opposite direction –from being just sick to weak-willed before becoming downright indecent or sinful.<sup>1226</sup>

With medicalization, medical definitions and treatments are offered for previous social problems or natural events; with healthcization, behavioral and social definitions are advanced for previously biomedically defined events (e.g. heart disease). Medicalization proposes biomedical causes and interventions; healthcization proposes lifestyle and behavioral causes and interventions. One turns the moral into the medical, the other turns health into the moral.<sup>1227</sup>

This new morality of health draws its power from its inescapability, which functions both at the societal and individual levels. In institutional terms, as Peter Conrad and Diana Walsh contend, health promotion appears unassailable, *“On a deeper level, though, health can be viewed as a moral discourse that reflects particular, deeply ingrained values and consequently can be used as a legitimating vocabulary for instituting changes that might otherwise be resisted.”*<sup>1228</sup> In chapter 4 (*History*), we have witnessed how in the world of work the pursuit of health can be instrumentalised to instigate potentially very far-reaching social controls. In the professional realm though, one can argue that freedom of individual choice is limited: choices are forestructured by the limited offer at hand and the more or less coercive incentives built around them.

Therefore, it is in the individual (or leisure) realm that healthcisation attains its ambivalent potential since health consumption appears truly voluntary and desirable in a sphere characterised by an abundance of choices and accompanying incentives. However, individual healthcisation has become so pervasive that, as a consumer –be it a *Wholefoods* worshipper, a *Danone* sceptic or even an “amoral hedonist” feeding on hamburgers and chocolate– I cannot *avoid* making health-connotated decisions, hence positioning myself in this new moral economy. Furthermore, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating” so to speak since my body is bound to faithfully mirror (or betray) my healthful or not so healthful choices. Indeed, as Gunther Gebauer argues, previously *“Social rank was like a garment tossed over the shoulder; the external disclosed what was inside. But the body’s actual contours were not so important; more important was the spirit who filled it”* but now *“It is not possible for an athletic spirit to sit inside a non-athletic body. Just like a health-conscious attitude and an athletic lifestyle, the spirit assumes a direct physical form; it embodies*

<sup>1225</sup> Cf. Glassner, Barry, *Bodies: overcoming the tyranny of perfection*, op. cit., p. 247. His diagnosis thereby rejoins that of Muriel Gillick –quoted in chapter 4 (*History*)– when discussing jogging and the pursuit of the moral life.

<sup>1226</sup> Cf. Conrad, Peter, “Wellness as Virtue: Morality and the Pursuit of Health”, op. cit.

<sup>1227</sup> Cf. Conrad, Peter, “Medicalization and social control”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18, 1992, pp. 209-232, p. 233.

<sup>1228</sup> Conrad, Peter & Walsh, Diana C., op. cit., p. 107.

*itself*".<sup>1229</sup> In sum, to extrapolate from the famous "one cannot not communicate" axiom, posited by Paul Watzlawick et alii,<sup>1230</sup> one cannot not stage oneself.

It is this last aspect that provides the ultimate constraint in societies fixated on embodied personality rather than moral character. Ironically but significantly, the vocabulary previously used to evaluate moral character has been recuperated to assess embodied personality and behaviour. In their interviews of fitness or wellness participants, Glassner, Conrad and Maguire<sup>1231</sup> were confronted again and again with the discursive embodiments of the new health morality. Participants spoke in quasi-religious terms of their own as well as others' "good" and "bad" behaviours and of the balancing act required to compensate the bad with enough good:

[...] the fitness field reproduces the tension – typical of consumer culture more broadly – between indulgence and restraint. This cultural ambivalence is expressed in the simultaneous increase of consumption of both fatty and diet foods (Nestle 2002), exercise classes and television, miles spent on the treadmill and in the car. The problem with fitness, from the point of view of health, is that the field's prescribed negotiation of denial and pleasure produces not healthy but *consuming* behaviour.<sup>1232</sup>

This tension between consumption-oriented indulgence and restraint is most appropriately illustrated by the psychological concept of "moral licensing", which could be defined as a sort of moral budgeting, in which individuals more or less consciously engage in order to balance their negative intentions and actions with positive counterparts (and vice versa).<sup>1233</sup>

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<sup>1229</sup> Gebauer, Gunther, Gebauer, Gunther, "On the Role of Everyday Physical-Fitness Sports in Our Times", *Fitness as cultural phenomenon*, op. cit., p. 88. Cf. also Möhring, Maren, „Das Müllern. Systematisches Fitness-Training zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts“, *Fitness: Schönheit kommt von aussen*, op. cit., p. 83: „Brachte das Korsett den Körper weitgehend ohne Eigenleistung in Form, so müssen Schönheitsnormen nun am, im und durch den Körper selbst materialisiert werden.“

<sup>1230</sup> Cf. Watzlawick, Paul, Beavin-Bavelas, Janet, Jackson, Donald, *Some Tentative Axioms of Communication. In Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies and Paradoxes*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1967, p. 49.

<sup>1231</sup> Cf. Barry Glassner, *Bodies: overcoming the tyranny of perfection*, op. cit.; Cf. Conrad, Peter, "Wellness as Virtue: Morality and the Pursuit of Health", op. cit. & Maguire, Jennifer S., op. cit.

<sup>1232</sup> Maguire, Jennifer S., op. cit., p. 207. Cf. also Glassner, Barry, *Bodies: overcoming the tyranny of perfection*, Los Angeles: Lowell House, 1992, p. 247: "[...] *the work we do on our bodies affords us something far more valuable than satisfaction when we look in the mirror. Whether or not it actually improves our appearance, body work gives us something we desperately crave [...] It allows us to feel morally pure. Just listen to the language we use. If we eat fattening food or skip our daily workout we tell our friends we've 'been bad'. Certain chocolate desserts we refer to as 'wicked' or 'sinful'. And we believe fat people to be 'weak-willed,' and say they should be 'ashamed of themselves'*. And cf. Conrad, Peter, "Wellness as Virtue: Morality and the Pursuit of Health", op. cit., p. 398: "[...] *the pursuit of wellness is inherently a moral pursuit, the achievement of a sense of virtue. [...] In modern society, where health is such a dominant value, the body provides a forum for moral discourse and wellness-seeking becomes a vehicle for setting oneself among the righteous.*"

<sup>1233</sup> Cf. Mazar, Nina & Zhong, Chen-Bo, "Do Green Products Make Us Better People?", *Psychological Science*, 21(4), 2010, pp. 494-498, p. 495 available online here: [http://pss.sagepub.com/content/21/4/494.full.pdf+html?ikey=NN141YSvYeuC6&keytype=ref&siteid=sppss&utm\\_source=eNewsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=1J22](http://pss.sagepub.com/content/21/4/494.full.pdf+html?ikey=NN141YSvYeuC6&keytype=ref&siteid=sppss&utm_source=eNewsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1J22): "These theories suggest that moral behaviors are figured into an implicit calculation of self-perception such that virtuous behaviors boost moral self-image and transgressions dampen it. The basic assumption is that people prefer to have a positive moral self, but maintaining it often comes at a cost because social and ethical dilemmas usually involve conflicts of interest. Thus, people tend to be strongly motivated to engage in prosocial and ethical behaviours if their moral self is threatened by a recent transgression; they are least likely to scrutinize the moral implications of their behaviors and to regulate their behaviors right after their moral self has experienced a boost from a good deed."

This means that not only is the socio-economic environment a powerful influence on decision-making but also the personal history of consumers: *“People do not make decisions in a vacuum; their decisions are embedded in a history of behaviors.”*<sup>1234</sup> Thus an avowed striving for health is most likely to be regularly undermined by consumers’ moral calculations –along the lines of a pint of ice-cream to reward oneself for a 5-mile jog or a 5-mile jog to punish oneself for guzzling a pint of ice-cream.

To conclude, my study has, I hope, convincingly demonstrated that beyond the almost immeasurable pervasiveness of healthful technologies and the staggering range of their recombined incarnations –indicative of a previously undreamed of feasibility– the highly ambivalent sign of the body remains a truly elusive salvation for consciously embodied consumers.

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*This implies that virtuous acts can license subsequent asocial and unethical behaviors.”* Cf. also Meritt, Anna C., Effron, Daniel A. & Monin, Benoît, “Moral Self-Licensing: When Being Good Frees Us to Be Bad”, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4/5, 2010, pp. 344-357, available online here: <http://www-psych.stanford.edu/~monin/>. [website accessed Aug. 2011] The following article provides a good popular exposé of the concept including a number of arresting examples, cf. Rosenwald, Michael S., “Why going green won't make you better or save you money”, *The Washington Post*, 18.07.2010, online version available here: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/16/AR2010071606839.html?referrer=emailarticle>. [Website accessed Aug. 2011]

<sup>1234</sup> Mazar, Nina & Zhong, Chen-Bo, op. cit., p. 497.

## APPENDIX

### MEDIA PROFILES OF MAGAZINES

**Preliminary comment:** Due to the fact that I was not able to access readership profiles for the decades under consideration in the two case-studies, for each magazine, I initially provide my own impressions as to potential readership and dominant characteristics before providing links to current readership profiles.

#### **Women's magazines**

##### **Generally**

For a nice and compact current overview (with references) of women's magazines in Germany, cf. "Frauenzeitschriften" in Medialexicon, *Focus Medialine*: <http://www.medialine.de/deutsch/wissen/medialexikon.php?snr=2012>. For a more detailed overview and analysis of content and positioning Birgit Lawerenz's study,<sup>1235</sup> where she states that *freundin*, *Brigitte* and *Für Sie* represent 3 of the 4 classical women's magazines in Germany. To differentiate between the current readerships of Brigitte, Freundin and Für Sie, cf. e.g. Grüner & Jahr Verlag, "Women's Magazines in Germany", 2006: [http://194.12.192.101/content/10/00/100047/Womens\\_Magazines\\_1209.pdf](http://194.12.192.101/content/10/00/100047/Womens_Magazines_1209.pdf) [websites accessed October 2011]

##### **Brigitte**

The magazine's readership segment appeared to be young to middle-aged, middle-class and feminine. Feature articles covered a broad range of well-researched and often progressive topics. Otherwise, there were the usual regular "feminine" features on cooking, cosmetics/hygiene, fashion, etc. Overall, it appeared to be the most intellectually and socially ambitious women's magazine.

##### *Current information*

Profile: <http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/brigitte/>

Profile 2010: [http://www.gujmedia.de/content/20/02/200209/BRIGITTE\\_Profil\\_2010.pdf](http://www.gujmedia.de/content/20/02/200209/BRIGITTE_Profil_2010.pdf) (p. 2)

Readership: <http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/brigitte/?card=leserschaft>

Total number of copies/reach: [http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/brigitte/?card=auflage\\_reichweite](http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/brigitte/?card=auflage_reichweite)

##### **Bunte**

The magazine's readership segment appeared to be middle-aged, lower middle-class and predominantly feminine. Feature articles covered a broad range of topics –as emphasised by the name of the magazine which translates as "multicoloured" or "mottled" – but not always very in-depth, thus lending the magazine a tabloid aura.

##### *Current information*

More information on current readership profile: <http://www.bunte-media.de/>.

Profile: [http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/bunte-leidenschaft-fuer-menschen\\_aid\\_2.html](http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/bunte-leidenschaft-fuer-menschen_aid_2.html)

<sup>1235</sup> Lawerenz, Birgit, op. cit., esp. p. 38.

**freundin:**

The magazine's readership segment appeared to be young to middle-aged, middle-class and feminine. Feature articles cover a broad range of topics, relatively in-depth. Otherwise, there were the usual regular "feminine" features on cooking, cosmetics/hygiene, fashion, etc.

*Current information*

Profile: [http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/freundin-leben-sie-ihr-bestes-leben\\_aid\\_23.html](http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/freundin-leben-sie-ihr-bestes-leben_aid_23.html)

**Frau im Spiegel:**

The magazine's readership segment appeared to be middle-aged (and older), lower middle-class and feminine. The articles covered a limited range of traditionally feminine topics with a strong emphasis on health and cooking.

*Current information*

Profile: <http://www.waz-zeitschriften.de/titel-kombinationen/frau-im-spiegel>  
& [http://www.waz-zeitschriften.de/sites/default/files/pdf/Frau\\_im\\_Spiegel\\_2011.pdf](http://www.waz-zeitschriften.de/sites/default/files/pdf/Frau_im_Spiegel_2011.pdf) (p. 2)

**Für Sie**

The magazine's readership segment appeared to be young to middle-aged, middle-class and feminine. The feature articles covered a broad range of topics, relatively in-depth. Otherwise, there were the usual regular "feminine" features on cooking, cosmetics/hygiene, fashion, etc.

*Current information*

Profile: <http://media.fuersie.de/mediadaten>  
Leserschaft: <http://www.jalag.de/228.0.html>

Für Sie Objektprofil 2008:  
[http://www.jalag.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Fuer\\_Sie/FS\\_Objektprofil.pdf](http://www.jalag.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Fuer_Sie/FS_Objektprofil.pdf) (pp. 5-7)

**prima**

To a large extent, my impression of the magazine correlates that of Birgit Lawrenz. *prima* seemed conceived as a clearly modern publication –both in terms of contents and graphic layout. Themes were resolutely contemporary (e.g. appropriate nutrition, fitness, stress management, seasonal advice, etc.), the information neatly laid out and communicated. In my opinion, *Freundin* or *Für Sie* are the two magazines that best compare with *prima* in terms of readership. The emphasis in these magazines was/is mainly on mastering the challenges of everyday life, while including light entertainment. Intellectually, it was more demanding than magazines such as *Bunte* or *Frau im Spiegel* but not as ambitious as *Brigitte*.

*Current information*

The magazine is no longer in print. It has proved very difficult to obtain trustworthy information on the dissemination of the magazine and the profile of its readership, since the Klambt Gruppe has not replied to my query. I have thus had to rely on a lacunar collage of various sources. It seems that it was first launched in 1986 [I do not know when it was discontinued though] maybe by the Gruner & Jahr Verlag [??] before being taken over by the

Verlagsgruppe Klambt [??]. A model for this magazine seems to have been the homonymous French magazine founded by Gruner & Jahr editor Axel Ganz in 1982. Otherwise, I was able to cull the following information from a comparison made between *prima* and *Vogue Business* by Birgit Lawrenz. In March 2003 [date of the comparison], 64,701 issues à 64 pages were printed, the price per issue was €1.65, the magazine was published once every 2 months: *„Die Zeitschrift prima ähnelt den Allgemeinen Zeitschriften hinsichtlich Themenvielfalt und breiter Zielgruppe. Die Besonderheit ist demnach vor allem die zweimonatliche Erscheinungsweise und damit zusammenhängende inhaltliche Konsequenzen. [...] Der Titel prima ist zunächst ungewöhnlich, da er weder die Zielgruppe noch Inhalte näher klärt, wie die meisten Frauentitel. Er symbolisiert eine positive Lebenseinstellung nach dem Motto ‚Frau sein ist prima‘. Laut Selbstdarstellung bietet das Heft eine bunte Mischung aus Unterhaltung, Rat und Information. [...] prima ist teurer als wöchentliche Frauenzeitschriften gleichen Umfangs [...] Prima zielt auf eher jüngere Frauen zwischen 20 und 49 Jahren und beschreibt diese als modern und selbstbewusst. [...] In prima schneiden die vielfältigen Inhalte alle Rubriken an. Viele Texte haben einen Ratgebercharakter. Artikel zu Liebe und Leben nehmen den größten Anteil ein: (22 Liebeskiller; Do’s und dont’s im Liebesleben; die Liebesleben-Fallen; Tipps gegen Liebeskummer; Strategien gegen Schüchternheit) An nächster Stelle kommen Aussehen, Gesundheit, Küche und gleich zwei Horoskope: ein normales und eines für das richtige Urlaubsziel. [...] Bei prima ist der Anteil der Werbung auffällig gering. Eine Seite wirbt für ein Abonnement. Die Promotion beider Titel [prima & Vogue Business] beinhaltet überwiegend Mode und Kosmetikartikel.“*<sup>1236</sup>

### **Weekly news magazines**

#### **Focus**

The magazine’s readership segment initially appeared to be middle-aged, middle-class, predominantly male white collar professionals. Feature articles focused mainly on political and economic issues.

#### *Current information*

[http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/focus-das-nachrichtenmagazin\\_aid\\_58.html](http://www.burda-community-network.com/marken/zeitschriften/focus-das-nachrichtenmagazin_aid_58.html)

#### **stern**

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<sup>1236</sup> Cf. Lawrenz, Birgit, op. cit., pp. 65-67). Other sources Wirtz, Bernd W., *Handbuch Medien- und Multimedia-Management*, Wiesbaden: Gabler, 2003 (pp. 893-894); Chronik Gruner & Jahr: <http://www.guj.de/de/denken/chronik/1973.php4>; On the launching of “prima”, cf. “Ergiebige Masche. Neue Runde im Marktkampf der Pressekonzerne: Fast gleichzeitig werden drei neue Frauenzeitschriften an den Kiosken feilgeboten, Der Spiegel, Nr 4, 20.01.2006, available online here: <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13516984.html>; „Brigitte’: Mit Anne Volk zum Erfolg. Die Frauenzeitschrift ist 50 Jahre alt“, RPonline, 06.05.2004: [http://www.rp-online.de/gesellschaft/medien/Brigitte-Mit-Anne-Volk-zum-Erfolg\\_aid\\_46533.html](http://www.rp-online.de/gesellschaft/medien/Brigitte-Mit-Anne-Volk-zum-Erfolg_aid_46533.html); Siebenhaar, H.-P., „Axel Ganz gibt noch einmal Gas“, Handelsblatt, 06.07.2006, online: <http://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/management/koepfe/axel-ganz-gibt-noch-einmal-gas/2676720.html?p2676720=all>. [websites accessed Oct. 2011]

The magazine's readership segment initially appeared to be middle-aged and middle-class, male and –to a lesser extent– female, seeking a broad coverage of political, economic, social and cultural themes.

*Current information*

Profile: <http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/stern/?card=profil>

Readership: <http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/stern/?card=leserschaft>

Total number of copies/reach:

[http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/stern/?card=auflage\\_reichweite](http://www.gujmedia.de/portfolio/zeitschriften/stern/?card=auflage_reichweite)

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freundin: 1980, 1985, 1988, 1989

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Für Sie: 1979, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1989, 1992, 1996, 1999

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