

Listen and Watch: The Practice of Lecturing and the Epistemological Status of Sex Education Films* in Germany

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Summary

This article takes as its starting point *Frauennot-Frauenglück* (*Women's Misery – Women's Happiness*), a film representative of health education films on sex hygiene in Weimar Germany. This paper opens by situating the film in the landscape of German health education films from World War I to the Weimar era. I document the evolution of interest in sexual health education films in the early decades of the twentieth century and show how their narratives changed as a result of the increasing popularity of feature films in the Weimar period.

The article then focuses on the lectures which accompanied health education films. I argue that an analysis of these under-investigated lectures can raise new stimulating epistemological questions on the historical status of health education films, as these lectures changed the filmic dispositive. I show how this common practice served as a technique of rhetorical reworking in efforts to adjust or orient the visuality of what was shown to the public. Drawing on two very different lectures which accompanied *Frauennot-Frauenglück*, the article identifies two approaches to lecturing. While one consisted in enabling controversial films to be screened to the public, the other (socialist) approach transforms initial censorial intentions, allowing the speaker stress his personal or new positions.

Keywords: Sex education, lecture, (filmic) dispositive, censorship, abortion, (film) versions, Germany, Weimar period

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