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## **Balneological discourse in Scandinavian Literature: Pehr Henrik Ling, Henrik Ibsen and Gustav Wied**

**I**n the novel *The Road to Wellville*, by the acclaimed US-American writer Thomas Coraghessan Boyle (born on December 2, 1948 in Peekskill/New York),<sup>1</sup> the following three plot lines describe the events from November 1907 to the end of May 1908 in Battle Creek, Michigan, where John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) runs a sanatorium:

After breakfast, Nurse Graves escorted Will to the Men's Gymnasium for a session of Swedish Manual Movements and laughing exercises, followed by Vibrotherapy and a half-hour immersion in the sinusoidal bath. The Swedish Manual Movements, as developed a hundred years earlier by Ling, of Sweden, after reading an ancient Chinese text in French translation, consisted primarily of jumping and clapping in various contorted and unnatural attitudes, so far as Will could see. A hundred men of all ages and conditions took part en masse, while the chief therapist – a Swede with a prominent forehead and huge lumpish

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<sup>1</sup> US-American screen adaptation 1994 (director: Alan Parker; starring Anthony Hopkins, Matthew Broderick, Bridget Fonda).

bread-loaf muscles – exhorted them.<sup>2</sup>

Until today Kellogg is well-known for having invented the breakfast cereal of the same name, as well as some other food products: “[I]nventor of the corn flake and peanut butter, [...]caramel-cereal coffee, Bromose, Nuttolene and some seventy-five other gastrically correct foods”.<sup>3</sup>

At first the physician from Michigan was active in a clinic in Battle Creek, which he renamed into a sanatorium, of which he eventually also became the head. Dr Kellogg’s behaviour towards his patients was considered controversial, and so were his medical methods. He emphasized the importance of a vegetarian diet, of physical exercise and of enemata.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that Kellogg suffered from klismaphilia, which is a disorder of sexual behaviour. In substitution for sexual intercourse, which he detested, he used to have an enema administered to him every morning.

Eleanor Lightbody is a fan of Kellogg and urges her husband Will to arrange a joint stay at the sanatorium. William Lightbody, who suffers from a gastro-intestinal disorder, agrees for the sake of domestic harmony, but remains sceptical towards the physical and dietary methods of the ‘Temple of Health’<sup>5</sup>, since Kellogg’s sanatorium requires a lifestyle according to strict rules: it is strictly forbidden to consume meat or alcohol, to smoke or to have sexual intercourse. The entertainment and edification program that is held every evening does not provide a proper relief, either:

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<sup>2</sup> T. C. Boyle, *The Road to Wellville*, 1993, Chapter 10, *A thankful Bird*, p. 146; Swedish 1994 “Dr. Kelloggs kuranstalt”[[]]

<sup>3</sup> Boyle, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Kellogg published on his specially developed hygienics: *Plain Facts for Old and Young: Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life* (1877), *Ladies Guide in Health and Disease* (1893), *The Art of Massage* (1895), *Needed – A New Human Race* (1914), *Autointoxination or Intestinal Toxemia* (1922), *Tobaccoism or How Tobacco Kills* (1923).

<sup>5</sup> Boyle, 1993, p. 6.

Next was a square block of a woman, the stone before it's been hewn, [...]. She was a missionary from Iceland, as it turned out, and she recited a Norwegian-dialect poem about stewed prunes and quick cold trips to the outhouse under a starveling moon.<sup>6</sup>

Will is soon due to undergo therapy himself. He is treated with strange machines and receives a yoghurt enema that is supposed to improve his intestinal flora. As opposed to Will, the female patients in the sanatorium are delighted by their doctor; some of them even pass out upon his appearance. Among the ladies, the so-called manual therapy is particularly popular. It is carried out by a doctor named Spitzvogel and it involves the stimulation of the female sexual organs. Eleanor Lightbody is deeply impressed by the method, whereas Will is not, especially when he catches Spitzvogel red-handed during his manual exercises on Mrs Lightbody. On this occasion, Will learns about the true cause of his apparent disorder: his wife has controlled Will's perception, among other things by regularly giving him opium.

Apart from Dr Kellogg's biography and that of the Lightbodys, a third plot evolves around the young businessman Charlie Ossining, who tries to establish himself in the breakfast-cereal market together with a dark character named Goodloe Bender. Ossining is lodging with a Norwegian widow, Mrs Eyvindsdottir, who speaks a peculiar and incomprehensible English. She tries to accustom her "house guests", a colourful flock of adventurers, to polar temperatures by hardly ever switching on the heating. What she offers for lunch depends on the success of her friend, the trapper Bjork Bjorksson. The first part of this essay will now examine the variety of Scandinavian references by means of biographical research.

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<sup>6</sup> Boyle, 1993, p. 151-152.

### The 'Swedish' massage and gymnastics

Pehr Henrik Ling (1776-1839) is regarded as the founder of the so-called Swedish massage. Born on November 15, 1776 in Södra Ljunga (Kronobergs län) in the Swedish province of Småland, he was the youngest of six children. His father, the parish priest of Ljunga, Lars Peter Ling, died when his youngest son was four years old. His mother, Hedvig Maria Molin, died shortly after her wedding to the new priest of Ljunga.

Ling was sent to grammar school in Växjö. Afterwards he studied at the Universities of Uppsala and Lund and worked as a teacher of foreign languages and as an interpreter. A graduation diploma in theology dates back to December 21, 1797. Between 1797 and 1801 he travelled a lot, for example to France, England, Denmark and Germany, where he became acquainted with 'German gymnastics'.

As a student Ling often faced financial distress. His emaciated lifestyle led to the paralysis of his right arm and to rheumatic attacks. In 1804, while he was in Copenhagen, he happened to discover the positive effect of fencing on his health. In 1805 he began to teach fencing at the University of Lund.

Moreover, Ling gave lectures on modern languages and presentations on Scandinavian history and mythology. He also took courses in anatomy and physiology. In addition, he read philosophical works of Montaigne, Rousseau and Pestalozzi. He was familiar with traditional Chinese medicine. According to his theories, the Swedish population was supposed to become healthier by practising what he taught, thereby rediscovering the lost power and glory of the Vikings within themselves.

Together with Esaias Tegnér, Erik Gustav Geijer and Jakob Adlerbeth, Ling was among the founding members of the Götiska Förbundet. This association of Swedish writers was founded in 1811 in Stockholm. Its national-romantic programme was based on the old 'gothic virtues'. The magazine of this association, *Iduna*, of

which Geijer and Tegnér were the main authors, was first published in 1811.

In accordance with the Old-Norse movement, Ling was an active poet. His first 'sorgspel' is called *Eylif den götthiske* (Stockholm 1814).<sup>7</sup> Ling's chef d'œuvre is the epic *Asarne*. It consists of 30 songs (*sånger*) and was published in 1812 in Lund (Stockholm 1816). Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, Ling's successor at the Swedish Academy, commented, "Open whatever page of it, you will always find some beautiful picture of nature, some lyric burst; now a subdued melody, now a wild and dithyrambic strain, beyond all praise".<sup>8</sup>

In 1835 Ling became member of the Svenska Akademien, following the late Anders Fredrik Skjöldebrand (chair no. 18) in his office. He was never able to see a staging of his own work; today the plays are almost unknown outside Sweden; the Gothic League was formally dissolved in 1844, after the death of Adlerbeth.

Soon after that, Pehr Henrik Ling wrote his hygienics. His earlier works had been exclusively about fencing (*Reglemente för bajonett fäktning*, Stockholm 1838). His *Gymnastikens allmänna grunder* deals with the laws of the human organism and with the basics of pedagogical, military, medical and esthetical gymnastics and its methods. It was, however, only finished after his death on May 3, 1839 (Stockholm) by his students and published in Uppsala in 1840.

In this book, Pehr Henrik Ling develops a new system of physical exercises and massage. Gymnastics and massage were primarily regarded as a preventive measure against disorders. Ling's perspective was a philosophical rather than a medical one. He saw the

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<sup>7</sup> Further works: the comedy *Misundelige, Agne* (Lund 1812), published in Copenhagen, a tragedy in 5 acts, the allegory *Gylfe* (Stockholm 1814) or the historical plays *Riksdagen 1527* (Stockholm 1817), *Styrbjörn Starke*, *Blot-Sven* and *Ingjald Illråda och Ivar Widfamne* (all Stockholm 1824). His last work is called *Tirfing*.

<sup>8</sup> Georgii, *A biographical sketch of Peter Henry Ling*, 1895, p. 26.

body as a whole, consisting of three basic forms: the dynamic, the mechanical and the chemical base form, representing the nerve system, the muscle system and the blood circulation, respectively, which all have to function in harmony. Any kind of disharmony would cause illness. Ling suggests the healing of various diseases by medical gymnastics. Among these are, for instance, disorders of the blood-, secretion- and nerve system, scurvy, cardiac diseases, scabies, inflammations, intestinal diseases, but also scoliosis or limb stiffness.<sup>9</sup>

The 'classical' massage is often referred to as the Swedish hand massage. In contrast to many oriental ways of massaging, in Ling's technique only the hands of the doctor / massager are used. There are three types of movement, which are distinguished by the resistance of the patient's body towards the doctor. The movements can thus be passive, semi-passive or active.

The massage according to Ling serves as a model for the five grips of the classical massage today: effleurage (stroking), petrissage (kneading), friction, tapotement (tapping) and vibration. The art of massaging in the correct way arises from "positioning the pressure of the fingers at exactly the point in the pathologically modified tissue where it can exert a healing stimulus."<sup>10</sup>

The basic underlying idea of Western massage is to restore the tissue to a state of total healthiness by the mechanical treatment and destruction of everything that is pathological. In order to achieve that, the massage is supported by gymnastics, which stimulates the functions of the tissue and its adaptation to the movement: "It is necessary for each massage session."<sup>11</sup>

Ling's new methods were debatable until his death, but he also

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<sup>9</sup> The Prussian physician Albert Constantin Neumann treated many other disorders by gymnastics, such as headache, hysteria, hypochondria, melancholy, idiocy or menstrual cramps.

<sup>10</sup> Töpel, *Hände helfen heilen: Massage und Sauna als Soft-Therapie*, 1984, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Port, *Die sog. Schwedische Massage, ihre Anwendung und ihre Erfolge*, 1941, p. 5.

received a number of relevant awards. Among others, he became a member of the Swedish Medical Society, received the title of Swedish Professor and became Knight of the Order of the Northern Star. At the Olympic Games 1912 in Stockholm, Ling's bust was depicted on the reverse of the medals.

#### The Central Institute of Gymnastics and the '*Swedish School*'

In 1813 Ling became gymnastics teacher at the Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics, Carlsberg, and the following year he founded the Gymnastiska centralinstitutet (GCI) in Stockholm. Ling had applied to the Ministry of Defence for financial support, but his application was rejected at first. The institute, however, was continuously gaining in importance, as the new system of exercises quickly became known outside Sweden. Ling's gymnastics propagated in Northern America. Several years later the Dutch physician Metzler and the German Hoffa concentrated on it.

As Lingianism regards the body as a holistic entity, the effect of the exercises had to be operationalized in detail. The exact execution and the preservation of symmetry were considered to be crucial, whereas the pleasure in exercising was dispensable. Any other movement systems were radically rejected. In spite of mass exercises, the Lingian gymnastics is not subject to the principle of competition.

Among the most important colleagues at GCI were Lars Gabriel Branting, Carl August Georgii, Mårten Thure Brandt and Ling's son Hjalmar. All of them made a considerable contribution to the development of Swedish medical gymnastics. After Ling had resigned, Branting took over as the manager of the institute. The GCI was repeatedly renamed and relocated. Today it is called Gymnastik- och idrottshögskolan (GIH) and is considered the longest-lasting sports school in the world.

Hjalmar Ling was born in 1820. In 1842 he finished his studies at GCI, where he became junior teacher in 1843 and senior teacher

in 1858. In 1864 he received the title of a professor. Hjalmar Ling further developed his father's gymnastics by devising daily programmes as well as exercises for all muscle groups and categorizing them into different families of movement. He systemized his ideas and thus constituted Swedish School Gymnastics. The use of long benches and wall bars in physical education, for example, goes back to Hjalmar Ling. Until World War II, his pedagogical gymnastics remained the only coherent system in Sweden according to which physical education was taught in schools. In 1882 Hjalmar Ling resigned from his position in GCI. He died on March 9, 1886 at the age of 65.

Mårten Thure Emil Brandt was born in 1819 in Räfshult, Sweden. He was originally an army officer.<sup>12</sup> In 1842 he became a pupil at GCI, where he worked as a teacher from 1843 to 1844. In 1861 he began to concentrate on gymnastics as a cure against abdominal problems and women's prolapses.<sup>13</sup> Brandt's "gynaecological massage" was regarded as an excellent remedy against pelvicitis and a lowered womb.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the first gynaecological hospital in Germany was named after him. Brandt died on August 5, 1895 in Södertälje.

The Swedish physician Gustav Zander was also a student of Ling. Zander can be seen as one of the founding fathers of today's gyms and wellness-centres. He was born in 1835. After studying medicine he developed the so-called medico-mechanical therapy. He described this as a therapy led by a doctor and conveyed by mechanical devices. He thereby wanted to make Ling's gymnastics

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<sup>12</sup> Major Thure Brandt left the army in 1879.

<sup>13</sup> He published several works on this topic: *Om uterinlidanden och prolapsen* (1864), *Movement as a therapy against female so-called abdominal problems and prolapses* (1877, 1880), *Gymnastiken såsom botemedel mot kvinnliga underlivs sjukdomar* (1884), *Treatment of female venereal diseases* (1891). Cf. Hofberg, *Svenskt Biografiskt Handlexikon*, 1906, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Křížek, *Kulturgeschichte des Heilbades*, 1990, p. 107, 1+2.

applicable to weaker or disabled patients.

For this purpose, from 1850 onwards Zander devised special mechanical apparatuses that had different loading capacities. Thus the patient was able to slowly increase the demands of his physical power under the supervision of the doctor. If necessary, a part of the burden was removed. Zander tried this therapy first with his pupils, achieving very good results within a few weeks.

In the mid-1860s he founded his Medico-Mechanical Institute in Stockholm.<sup>15</sup> Several of these “Zander-halls” emerged in Europe and North America. A few years after the foundation of the first institute another one was opened in London. In 1880 New York got a Zander-hall. In Vichy, France, one of these institutions is actually still in operation. The equipment of the institutes resembles that of modern fitness studios.

Zander's view of medical gymnastics rapidly became well-known; the therapy was popular and well-liked. In Germany the phenomenon coined a new word: “Zanderei” (zandery). In 1877 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala. From 1880 onwards he gave lectures at the Carolinska-Institut Stockholm, in 1896 he was appointed member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.<sup>16</sup>

In the course of World War I and the Depression, Zander's advancement of Lingian Gymnastics sank into oblivion. Already during his lifetime, critics had objected that no machine can replace the hand of a doctor. Gustav Zander died in 1920. His achievements were only rediscovered several decades after World War II. Approximately since the 1980s there has been a boom of the wellness industry, of which Zander's Gymnastics is an important part,

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<sup>15</sup> According to the *Svenskt Biografiskt Handlexikon* from 1906, between 1865 and 1898 the institute in Stockholm was attended by 14.332 men and 5.938 women. This means that on average 596 patients were treated each season.

<sup>16</sup> Křížek, 1990, p. 155, 1+2.

though in a modernized form.

The protagonist in *The Road to Wellville*, Will Lightbody, encounters the technical devices, although they have been “improved” by Dr. Kellogg. In the first place, these devices serve his physical exhaustion and the suppression of his sexual drive, which, in Kellogg’s opinion, lead to the emaciation of the body, just like the consumption of meat, caffeine and tobacco.

### The development of spas

Until the beginning of the modern era, water was considered one of the main causes of the breakout of diseases and epidemics. For this reason, the relationship of mankind to water was primarily characterized by the impurity and pathogenic nature of the latter. Such medical views triggered the decline of the traditional bathing culture, which demonstrably dates back to ancient times.<sup>17</sup>

Only from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a revaluation, both medical and social, of a water bath took place. Some mineral baths and springs began to develop into popular meeting points of upper-class society. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the healing powers of water were propagated more and more. This was the time of the establishment and architectural design of the big baroque spas, which are centred on the spring fountain as a “source of health”. The architectural design is also an indication of an increased focus on aristocratic spa guests.<sup>18</sup>

The medical classification of water, however, would continue to be a mere speculation for a long time. It was not common to examine water scientifically by the chemical analysis of its components. This, coupled with the enormous financial profit of a health spa,

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<sup>17</sup> Eßler & Fuchs, *Bäder und Kuren in der Aufklärung. Medizinaldiskurs und Freizeitvergnügen*, 2003, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Fuhs, *Mondäne Orte einer vornehmen Gesellschaft: Kultur und Geschichte der Kurstädte 1700 – 1900*, 1992, p. 23.

would sometimes lead to questionable conditions regarding water quality, which are subject to ironic and critical discussion, even in literature. Contemporary literature soon discovered the topos of a trip to the spa and the world of health resorts with its specific constellations and unique social rules.<sup>19</sup>

The advances of medicine, attributing, among others, higher importance to bodily hygiene, gave rise to a new development within the health care system. Whereas before the Reformation nursing care and medical science had been for the most part the realm of the clergy and the monasteries, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards the care of the population's health became a national concern, which would serve the land sovereign as a means of representation and strengthening of his sovereignty.<sup>20</sup>

The new construction of a representative spa was also a considerable source of income. Therefore, the absolutist sovereigns became the most important principals of the spas which were often modelled on French pleasure palaces. The baroque architectural design of the spa obtains an important role in the development into aristocratic spas. The establishment of promenades and boulevards, as well as the garden design and incorporation of the environment into the spa complex are typical of the arrangement of European spas in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The construction of social edifices such as parlours, libraries, theatres, ballrooms, arcades and the like, which do not fulfil any medical purpose but rather serve as pleasure grounds and meeting points, was essential.

The aristocratic spa thus basically consisted of two centres: the mineral spring in its representative health function and the ballroom with its representative entertainment function. In this way the spas developed into meeting points of the aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie, made up of the basic domains of public culture.

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<sup>19</sup> Eßler & Fuchs, 2003, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Fuhs, 1992, p. 25.

An important feature of the resorts was the casino-gambling as an essential part of the bathing amusement and also a considerable source of income.<sup>21</sup>

The new forms of entertainment soon emerged on the seacoast as well. A health or bathing sojourn at the sea, which was becoming more and more popular, is modelled on the English examples. Particularly the seaside resort of Brighton is worth mentioning, where the usual spa structures in the interior of the country were actually transferred to the ocean shore. Like the other fashionable spas, seaside resorts have therapy centres, libraries, ballrooms, lounges and casinos.<sup>22</sup>

This model of a coastal resort, originating in England, reached the coasts of the North and the Baltic Sea, as well as the English Channel, with a delay. In 1794 the first large German sea resort was opened in Doberan; others followed in Travemünde, Kolberg, Rügenwalde, Putbus on Rügen, Zoppot in the Gulf of Danzig, Swinemünde and Warnemünde near Doberan, as well as on two beaches of Danish Holstein, in Åbenrå and Kiel. Of the North Sea coasts, Norderney, Wangerooge, Cuxhaven and Wyk on Föhr are worth mentioning.<sup>23</sup>

Such spas were usually designed as closed units and often constructed under the protection of the authorities. Large mundane sea spas were also built in France. This form of bathing culture, however, hardly spans further across the North of Europe, where the spas are constructed on a rather small scale and where the international character caused by the presence of the aristocracy is absent.

The amazing evolution of water in the perception of the people from a place of dismay and danger towards an ideal means of phy-

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Fuhs, 1992, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Corbin, *Das Abendland und die Entdeckung der Küste 1750 – 1840*, 1988. p. 326.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Corbin, 1988. p. 329-330.

sical and emotional cleansing is tied to various innovations in the sphere of consciousness. At the medical level, a re-interpretation of the human body was decisive. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century the human body was regarded as a dirt-producing place, in a state of constant decay. It was to be cleansed of toxic agents by means of laxatives, emetics and bleeding. Water was considered a threat to the human body. It was believed that it could enter the body through the skin, thereby disturbing the balance of the body fluids, which were regarded as essential for the healthy state.

At first, health spas were only meant to be conducive to the detoxication of the body from the inside, and concomitant symptoms such as rash, vomiting and diarrhoea were necessary and desirable. With the emergence of the image of the body as a living organism determined by work, important new developments in the field of therapeutic bathing were introduced. The skin was no longer considered a protective cover, but a membrane through which humidity was also exuded. Sweating was rated as the most important means of transpiring toxic agents. Apart from the intestines, the skin thus became the most important excretory organ of the body. Cleanness of the skin was meant to preserve its detoxicating function.

In all cases, however, the medical or therapeutical function of these institutions is primary – the aim is the preservation or enhancement of the ability to work. In the spa cure or water cure the patient has to drink water from a mineral spring regularly over a certain period of time. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century the water cure was the most frequent form of therapy in Central European spas. In its beginnings this cure was not always salubrious – people drank up to 20 litres of water every day, which led to diarrhoea and other unpleasant side effects, as the water often contained sulphur. The water dosage was lowered considerably, though, within a short time.

The initiation of the drinking therapy was accompanied by the emergence of the aristocratic health spas. With their arrival, the

mere bathing regimen with the exclusive function of healing was turned into a wellness sojourn, which received the additional function of social communication and “leisure” activity.

The common bath did not correspond to the courtly body culture because, for instance, social differences were stressed particularly by the way of clothes. Nakedness therefore cannot be representative. In addition, the aristocratic body was increasingly eroticized and turned into a taboo. Consequently, the mineral water was no longer applied externally by bathing, but rather internally, like medicine. Bathing, however, had not been given up completely. With shortened bathing times, it remained an essential part of the sojourn in a health spa. Even newly built spas in 18<sup>th</sup> century health resorts could not dispense with bath houses. Apart from the water or drinking therapy, a lot of movement is necessary – an important development towards the emergence of drinking houses, lobbies, alleys, spa gardens; i.e. the typical architecture of a health resort, which serves the medically legitimate “sauntering”.<sup>24</sup>

The water from the health springs was also filled into bottles and jars and sent abroad. A popular supplier of mineral water was, for example, Vichy in France. Health resorts like Karlsbad or Baden-Baden kept up with the time and became famous places for drinking therapy. A consequence of the sauntering and promenading alongside the water cure was the designing of the gardens. Open air concerts took place in pavilions or on elevated stages.

Yet, when the foundation and development of health spas was at its peak in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the actual healing powers of the water were often not exactly the most important criterion for the success and the renown of the respective spa. In early modern times the quality of the spring water was far more often ascribed rather than scientifically verified. A number of healing functions were attributed to the water and then propagated by sys-

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<sup>24</sup> Fuhs, 1992, p. 29.

tematic advertising campaigns: firstly, to attract guests, and secondly, to offer them the traditional health functions of a sojourn in a health spa, while at the same time the entertainment function came to the fore.

An oddity that arises from the new fashion of water therapy is the production of artificial mineral water, which was successfully completed in a synthetic process for the first time by the Swedish chemist Jöns Jacob Berzelius (1779-1848).

#### Henrik Ibsen *En Folkefiende* (1882) – biographical references

Henrik Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828 at Stockmanns Gaard in the small town of Skien in Southeastern Norway. Stockmann would later also be the name of the protagonist in his play *En Folkefiende*. After attending the local primary and middle school, Ibsen appears as an apprentice of the pharmacist J. Reimann in Grimstad on January 3, 1844. After his studenteksamen in 1850, Ibsen moved to Kristiania with the intention of taking up the study of medicine. A failed entry exam, however, put a stop to all further ambitions within the natural sciences.<sup>25</sup>

Ibsen spent the years from 1880 to 1885 in Rome, where he wrote his most famous socio-critical plays, among them 1881 *Gengangere*; (premiere May 20, 1882, Chicago), 1882 *En Folkefiende*,<sup>26</sup> and 1884 *Vildanden*; (premiere 1885).<sup>27</sup> In all three plays, the character list includes physicians, who have a decisive role in the course of the play.

In *En Folkefiende* the physician Stockmann is even one of the key players in the plot. Its genesis is well documented due to Ibsen's

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<sup>25</sup> N.B.: One of the reasons for Ibsen's thwarted study attempt may have been his duty to supply his child that was born out of wedlock in 1846.

<sup>26</sup> When the discussion of *Gengangere* had reached its peak, the premiere of *En Folkefiende* took place on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1883 in the Christiania Theatre.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Meyer, *Henrik Ibsen: en biografi*, 1971, p. 523-524.

exchange of letters. After he had written the play in the spring of 1882 in Rome, in a letter to his editor of June 21, he announced to have finished the text the day before. On September 9, Ibsen sent the complete manuscript from Gossensaas to the publishing house and the printed drama was published on November 28 in 10,000 copies.

The play in five acts is set in a coastal town in Southern Norway around 1880. Because some of his spa guests have contracted typhus and gastric fever, the leading doctor (*badelæge*) has the water quality thoroughly examined and chemically analysed. He thus proves to be a responsible balneologist, whose area of competence can be said to embrace balneological or hydrological chemistry, respectively.

The result of the analysis is alarming – the water of the spa is completely contaminated by the waste from the tannery of his father-in-law, Morten Kiil (*garvermester/tanner*), which is located above the bath spa. The water is therefore very hazardous to people's health. The doctor's brother, Peter Stockmann, *byfoged*, *politimester*, *formann i badestyrelsen* (bailiff, police chief and head of the board of the spa), becomes another profit-seeking opponent.

The origins of the play date back to Ibsen's time in Munich. In 1875 he had moved to Germany, where a larger Scandinavian colony had emerged. There Ibsen met the German poet Alfred Mesner. Mesner's father was the medical head of the health spa in Teplitz during the 1830s. An outbreak of cholera, which Mesner had brought before the public, had ruined the spa season of 1831. The citizens of Teplitz therefore threw stones at the doctor's house and forced him to flee – a scene that turns up again in Ibsen's play.<sup>28</sup>

Another model figure for the plot may have been the Norwe-

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<sup>28</sup> Křížek mentions another parallel case to that of Teplitz, though after the publication of Ibsen's play, which took place in Marienbad in 1904. Křížek, 1990, p. 180, 2.

gian chemist Harald Thaulow. Ibsen was attested a certain affinity to this eccentric chemist. For about 10 years Thaulow attacked the soup kitchens of Kristiania, which, in his opinion, did not fulfil their obligations. When he held his famous speech in 1874, Ibsen was on a visit in Norway. On February 23, 1881, 14 days before Thaulow's death, he wanted to speak at the General Assembly but his request was rejected upon public pressure. There is evidence that Ibsen had read a report about this revoked speech in *Aftenposten* of February 24<sup>th</sup> 1881. Thaulow is likely to have been a model for Stockmann's fomenting speech.

When Ibsen returned to Kristiania in 1891, Christian Fredrik Sontum (1858-1902) was among his close personal friends. Furthermore, he was Ibsen's attending physician and a pioneer in the field of balneology, especially cold water therapy.

#### Gustav Wied *Knagsted* (1902) – the view from outside

Danish writer Gustav Wied was born in 1848 in Holmegaard, Nakskov (Lolland) and is best known as a satirist. One of his major works is the Knagsted trilogy: *Livsens Ondskab* (1899), *Knagsted* (1902) and *Pastor Sørensen & Co.* (1913). Wied took his own life in 1914 in Roskilde.

In the novel *Knagsted. Billeder fra Ind- og Udland* the narrator describes and caricatures the mundane world of the Northern Bohemian health resort Karlsbad around the turn of the century. Essentially, though, it is a travel novel, set primarily in Denmark, Berlin and Dresden. The plot contains an episode about Knagsted's stay in Karlsbad with senior teacher Clausen, which was recommend to the protagonist by a doctor:

Nu har en forrykt Læge raadet mig til at frekventere Karlsbad. Min Mave har jo længe, ligesom Agerbruget og Fruentimmerne ikke været, som den burde. [...] Naturligtvis anser jeg en Karls-

baderkur for Humbug.<sup>29</sup>

Gustav Wied had travelled to Karlsbad himself to receive treatment for his “bad stomach”.

During the train ride to Karlsbad, however, a fellow countryman predicts great chances of cure for the two doubtful protagonists. Thus the professional hunter (Jægermesteren) keeps roistering to Knagsted and Clausen about his last stays in the spa:

Saa kan De fandengaleme glæde Dem da! Der er lige til at ta' Præmie for Kedsomhed! Puh, hallo på Klokken fem og i Kasmarokken Klokken ni; og ingen Mad og ingen Sprut! ... Men det hjælper!<sup>30</sup>

Once arrived, the cantankerous pensioner Esau Knagsted is able to get an impression of the international character and popularity of the place:

Men saa sad og stod der trindt omkring den virkelig grebne Hr. Clausen en ti-tolv-fjorten-tyve Kvinder: fede Fruer og magre Frøkner; syv Englænderinder med Stanglorgnetter, fire tyske Pensionatsdamer med astronomiske Kikkerter, fem smaa, vævre, sortlokkede franske Mademoiseller og seks korthaarede, lavstammede, næsebeklemede (rimeligvis danske) Almuejærn. – Og alle Nationaliteter stønnede og dampede de af Begejstring.<sup>31</sup>

The non-topos – a synthesis

The analysed texts show a concentration of esthetical methods for the following localization:

Der Ab-Ort: diese *unvirtlichen* Orte lassen sich zu Aborten stilisieren, die Enklave wird zum bloßen Abtritt, zur Toilette, zum

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<sup>29</sup> Wied, *Knagsted*, 1920, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Wied, *Knagsted*, 1920, p. 100.

<sup>31</sup> Wied, *Knagsted*, 1920, p. 114.

Wasser-Closett [...]; auch die zweite Bedeutung des Wortes Abort – im Sinne von Abtreibung – kann geltend gemacht werden.

[...]

Auf dieser Basis lässt sich feststellen, dass diese *Verortungen* zunächst außersprachlich funktionieren (müssen), da sie einerseits von *Sprachlosigkeit* (Redeverbot) [...], vom *Ausschlussprinzip* (Enklave) andererseits geprägt sind.

Die abschließende Frage stellt sich nun den *ästhetischen Verfahren* in nordischen Texten, diese Orte in die Sprache zurückzuholen, sie zu versprachlichen oder zu verorten.<sup>32</sup>

In *Knagsted* we “discreetly” encounter such a silent place that is never directly named or mentioned:

Bag Hotel Pupp [...] ligger et stort og meget søgt Etablissement, som Knagsted diskret havde givet Navnet Central-Trykkeriet, eller forkortet: Centralen. Det er vel ogsaa nok det største in sin Slags i Karlsbad, hvor slige Anstalter, paa Grund af Vandets vel-signelserige Virkning, spiller en særdeles fremtrædende og vel af de fleste Kurgæster stærkt paaskønnet Rolle. [...] ... o v e r a l t, hvor Mennesker færdes, har Karlsbads forstandige og forudseende vise Mænd ladet anbringe disse større eller mindre fikse, men altid nyttige Smaapavilloner.<sup>33</sup>

Whereas the high content of Glauber salt in the Karlsbad mineral water is related to the described laxative effect, an improvement of his stomach disorder after the therapy comes as a surprise to the former customs controller Esau Knagsted. It is only now that Knagsted establishes a connection between his misanthropy and

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<sup>32</sup> Langheiter-Tutschek, ‘Sauna/Bastu/Banja - Ein erotischer Topos in der nordischen Literatur?’, 2007, p. 223-224.

<sup>33</sup> Wied, *Knagsted*, 1920, p. 156.

the stomach ache.<sup>34</sup> The living situation of the rentier, who takes abode at the old Misses Paludan's, daughters of a provost, may not exactly have contributed to his well-being:

'Villa Rørholm' ligger ude paa en af de frederiksbergske Sideveje, godt gemt i en stor gammel Have med et mudret og slimet Vandhul i Midten. / I Vandhullet gror der i gode Somre foruden Rølliker og Andemad en lille, nydelig Skov paa tre-fireogtyve lange, blegstotige Rørplanter (heraf vel Villaens Navn), samt fem Aakander og en Svane. Baade Svanen og Aakanderne er af Blik og males hvert Foraar omkring Pinse.<sup>35</sup>

The polluted and silty water comes up in the Ibsen text again. In the play it says:

Doktor Stockmann: Hele badeanstalten er en kalket forgiftig grav, sier jeg. Sunnhetsfarlig i aller høyeste grad! Alle disse uhumskhetene oppe i Mølledal, – alt detter her, som lukter så fælt, – det infiserer vannet i spisningsrørene til brønnhuset; og dette samme fordømte giftige smuss siver også ut i stranden –

Horster: Der hvor sjøbadene ligger?

Doktor Stockmann: Nettopp der.

[...] I fjor inntraff her en del påfallende sykdomstilfeller blant badegjestene, – både tyføse og gastriske tilfeller –

[...] Der er påvist tilstedeværelsen av forråtnede organiske stoffer i vannet, – infusorier i mengdevis. Det er absolutt skadelig for sunnheten enten det nu brukes innvortes eller utvortes.<sup>36</sup>

Slowly it begins to dawn on the scientist which balneotechnical measures are necessary to avoid an epidemic: the water pipes have to be relocated and the catchment basin has to be elevated (Act I).

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<sup>34</sup> By all means reminiscent of the ancient teachings of body liquids of Aristotle or Gelenos.

<sup>35</sup> Wied, *Knagsted*, 1920, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibsen, *En Folkefiende*, 1882, Act I.

In the second act there is already the thought of building a drainage pit to catch the waste from the mill ground. Finally, Stockmann insists on closing the bath spa for two years (Act II + III), which eventually brings the opponents to the scene. Stockmann's concern gets a personal touch and he requests to eliminate the direct originator: the tannery (Act IV). But in a conversation with the foster father of his wife, the latter appears noncompliant:

Morten Kiil: [...] Jeg holder på mitt gode navn og rykte. Folk kaller meg for "grevlingen", her jeg hørt si. En grevling, det er jo en slags gris, det; men det skal de aldri i verden få rett i. Jeg vil eve og dø som et renslig menneske.<sup>37</sup>

Kiil has difficulties getting used to the idea that bacteria – i.e. animals that cannot be seen with the naked eye – contaminate the water in the well; yet he cannot stand the dingy proximity to the "impure" pig in any way, although animals not only form the basis of his own profession, the tanner's guild, but were even used in balneological therapy:

Nicht nur in der Volksmedizin auf dem Lande, sondern auch unter ärztlicher Aufsicht in den Städten verwendete man die Eingeweide frisch geschlachteter Tiere, um darin Gliedmaßen von Gelähmten einzupacken; man bereitete einen Sud aus Därmen und anderen Innereien und erwartete von der aufströmenden Wärme Heilungserfolge.<sup>38</sup>

Silt and animals were among the usual therapy practices in the North. In Norway, for instance, peripheral symptoms of paralysis from irritations of the skin were treated with mineral silt from the sea and with Lion's Mane jellyfish. The mineral silt of the Blue Lagoon in Reykjavík is applied in body peelings, especially for acne

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<sup>37</sup> Ibsen, *En folkefiende*, Act V.

<sup>38</sup> Křížek, 1990; p. 104, 2; for Vienna, there is evidence dating back to ca. 1859 from the Gumpendorf slaughterhouse.

and atopic dermatitis.

The consumption of slaughterhouse wastes, the incorporation of animal parts as a carnival inversion of existing power structures, has been subject to scholarly examination since Michail Bachtin. According to him, on the day of slaughtering, the intestines were washed, salted and stewed. Despite most thorough cleansing, this soup contained at least 10% remnants of excrement.<sup>39</sup> It is not only in folk medicine that animal excrement is said to have healing powers:

Zu den etwas merkwürdigen Formen von Peloidstherapie muß man wohl die im vorigen Jahrhundert in Paris aufgekommene Anwendung von Straßenkot rechnen, die damit begründet wurde, daß sich von den Hufeisen (!) der Pferde gelöstes Metall günstig auf die Zusammensetzung des Kotes auswirkte [...].<sup>40</sup>

According to the belief, animal faeces – just like bathing water – bind other substances such as metals or salts. In ‘The language of the marketplace’ Bachtin associates the spattering with faeces and urine with the fixed rituals of the carnival season, during which the existing order is reversed for a short time. Excrements thus obtain the impetus of belonging to a carnival world order. This connection becomes very obvious in François Rabelais’ *Gargantua et Pantagruel* (1532), where it is said that all the hot mineral springs in France and Italy originate from the hot urine of the sick giant Pantagruel.

The non-topos, however, is therefore not only the place of filth, which serves the discharge of excrement. It also encompasses the image of an inhospitable, disconcerting place, where there is room for human abysses. When Morten Kiil becomes aware of the hope-

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<sup>39</sup> Bachtin, *Rabelais und seine Welt. Volkskultur als Gegenkultur*, Chapter 2, ‘Die Sprache des Markplatzes’.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Křížek, 1990; p. 104, 2.

lessness of the situation, he buys up the entire shares of the health spa, thereby binding the heritage that Stockmann's children can expect:

MORTEN KIIL: Ja, de pengene står nu i badet alle sammen. [...] Lar De ennå komme dyr og slikt stygt noe fra mitt garveri, så er det akkurat det samme som å skjære brede remmer av Katrines hud, og av Petras også, og av småguttenes [...].<sup>41</sup>

The image of a tannery master who produces leather straps from the skin of his children and grandchildren can also be localized in the balneological discourse. Physical violence and health spa business go hand in hand. Flagellation has been a substitute for the former ritual massage since medieval times. Gargantua, the giant of the renaissance poet, is the first to be allowed to begin his day with a massage. In contrast to the Swedish massage, the *tellak* (bath attendant) in an Ottoman hammam treats his customers with fulling and kneading, often by applying his entire body (weight). In Finland and Russia a *wenik* (a bundle of birch brushwood) is used for lashing the bath guests during their sauna sessions. Up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century bath servants in the European spas were sometimes equipped with whips in order to supervise the bath regulations:

Manche Dame, die nicht vorsorglich Bleistücke in den Saum ihres Badehemdes genäht hatte, wurde vom Aufseher gezüchtigt, wenn ihr beim Schwimmen die Kleidung über den Kopf schlug.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibsen, *En folkefiende*, Act V.

<sup>42</sup> Křížek, 1990; p. 175; p. 2.

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