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### Gerhard Lamprecht's Berlin: Physiognomy of a City

It was once observed that “[t]here is no city in the world so restless as Berlin. ... [It is all] movement and frankness. ... Berlin stimulates like arsenic. ...”<sup>1</sup> If twentieth century Berlin has a historically complicated profile, a “face,” it also possesses metaphorically suggestive specifications – the face of human experience – in which guilt and innocence uneasily co-exist within a narrative space. Two film stills (illustrations 1 and 2) from German filmmaker Gerhard Lamprecht's *Die Verrufenen* [*The Slums of Berlin*] (1925)<sup>2</sup> portray a face of Berlin, a model of septic despair, portraiture of defeat set in historical space and time in the Weimar era (1919-1933). These portraits in close-up of ex-convict Robert Kraemer (Bernhard Goetzke) reveal the strong, chiseled face of a man as he first stares off into space past the camera.<sup>3</sup> At this moment, Goetzke's performance may be described as “inner-reflective”<sup>4</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Nicholson, “The Charm of Berlin,” *Der Querschnitt* 9, no.5 (1932): 345-346; rpt. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1995), p. 425.

<sup>2</sup> National-Film. We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Holger Theuerkauf at the Deutsche Kinemathek for granting us access to Lamprecht's films, particularly to *Die Verrufenen*.

<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Goetzke was a well-known German actor who previously starred in a major film by Fritz Lang *Der Müde Tod* (*Destiny*, 1921), in which he played the allegorical incarnation of death decades before Bergman's *Seventh Seal*. Goetzke acted until the early 1960s.

<sup>4</sup> In “Reflections on the Face in Film,” *Film Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Winter 1977-1978), Lawrence Shaffer distinguishes between the inner-directed film face, Brando, Bogart, and others, who “seem to be doing a good deal of thinking” and those which are “too much outer-directed,” Cliff Robertson in *Charly* (6). Clearly Goetzke's face in *Die Verrufenen* belongs to the former classification.

his unfixed gaze has contextual origins, but upon what space does it settle? In the second shot, his eyes sink, as his head descends to his chest, responding to something ineffably dispiriting. Suggestively weary and appearing as if “broken,” this unknown face communicates and represents the physiognomy of the individual yet intimates a more collective expression of urban anxiety, a compelling, historical synecdoche.



Illustration 1 – *Die Verrufenen*



Illustration 2 – *Die Verrufenen*

In her critical analysis of film theoretician, director, and scenarist Béla Balázs, Sabine Hake notes the significance of the facial image for Balázs: “In contrast to theater ... the actor in a film creates meaning; his or her facial expressions do not merely add form, but are its very content.”<sup>5</sup> Lamprecht’s close-up shots of this troubled man, separated by seconds, engage the spectator in the movement from exterior, surface causalities to reveal in narrative space and time what Balázs refers to as the interior, foundational *microphysiognomy*. For Balázs, “In the silent film facial expression, isolated from its surroundings, seemed to penetrate to a strange new dimension of the soul. It revealed to us a new world – the world of microphysiognomy which could not otherwise be seen with the naked eye or in everyday life.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sabine Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany, 1907-1933* (Lincoln and London: U. of Nebraska, 1993), p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> Hake, p. 65.

The question of whether the individual's face may be read like a formula, suggesting indicators of behavior, invoked specious applications of physiognomy theory as a bodily-based indicator of the criminal personality or undesirable social type during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Popularized by criminologist Cesare Lombroso and other phrenologists, this false science of facial semiotics, linking the patently observable details of the human face with the aura of scientific knowledge, was revived during the Weimar era of Kraemer's narrative with the emerging fascist culture. The faces of men, women, children, the elderly, the evil, and the insane, among others, possessed a near totemic level as a signifying system in many early twentieth century Western cultures. The face of any individual potentially meant something more than just a face, but what?

However problematic the history and "science" of physiognomy as an applied social-anthropological mechanism would prove to be in the racial discourse of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as reflected in Balázs' use of racially insensitive linguistic classifications, for Balázs, so much of the art of silent cinema was located in the compositional mastery of the close-up shot and its aesthetic linkage with a connotative physiognomy. Unlike photographs such as the forty thousand "mug shots" proudly displayed in a 1929 Berlin police album<sup>7</sup>, which historically function as spectatorial markers, their subjects posed in fixed gazes that theoretically reveal the outwardly observable physiognomy of social-otherness, the film stills depicting Robert Kraemer lead to the interior, Balázs realm of microphysiognomy.

For Balázs, however, the locus of this visual experience/essence in film narrative is the single shot. "Meaning, for him [Balázs], Hake concludes, "arises from the still image, and from movements within the frame; there is little room for the tensions created in the encounter of two adjacent shots."<sup>8</sup> Although film is a series of single shots composed within a structured, coherent, and cohesive consistency, shots, rather than a shot, produce the totalizing affect of narrative.

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<sup>7</sup> Artur Landsberger, "The Berlin Underworld," *Die Unterwelt von Berlin* (Berlin: Paul Stegemann, 1929); rpt. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, p. 732.

<sup>8</sup> Hake, p. 233.

The two film stills of Robert Kraemer may be read as individual units of visual composition, but they are not photographs in the traditional sense; they are stills excerpted from a whole, a presence with its own internalized, historical “logic.” For Balázs, the interpretive emphasis is on the formalist-aesthetic, less so on the generative process of a more ideological causality. In this sense, for Balázs, meaning is located within the frame. However, the juxtaposition of the two shots of one seemingly lost man in Lamprecht’s *Die Verrufenen* establishes the tension, the encounter, a causal linkage, creating a composite narrative of naturalist implications, in which the face, the body, and the city signify both *Milljöh* and moment.<sup>9</sup> This study will explore the ways in which the metaphorical face of Berlin in Lamprecht’s *Die Verrufenen* may be read as a dynamic intertext of a literary tradition launched decades earlier by French novelist Émile Zola and his German counterparts. It examines the interdisciplinary “evolution” of the German naturalist aesthetic as it is experienced in the faces, the bodies, and the lives of the naturalist subject.

The two film stills depicting Kraemer’s outward expression of anxiety attest to the metonymical role of the “historical face.” A middle class malfunction, Kraemer has a face unlikely to be confused with Weimar’s classificatory marginalized men and women. This face suggests a wanted/unwanted poster of a man. The film chronologically documents the social ostracism of Kraemer, a man guilty of no longer being innocent. In Lamprecht’s film, the audience witnesses the symbolic unraveling of an individual, Kraemer’s sense of shame, and the public spectacle of an unwanted, unemployable man with no place to go but downward upon his release from prison after serving a term for perjury. In Kraemer’s former life, he was an engineer, but his former self has been lost in time. Kraemer is now an ex-convict in a city full of active convicts and social others, one more case of ambulating human debris in search of purpose.

A narrative of psychological loss and social displacement, *Die Verrufenen* also demonstrates how the other half lives as Kraemer experiences what Berlin between the world wars may offer in its

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<sup>9</sup> *Milljöh* is Berliner dialect for milieu.

unfamiliar places and venues. The film traces the social degeneration of one man in a movement from a higher to a lower, working class life, as the setting moves from the bourgeois, sunlit home of his past to dark streets, back alleys, beer halls and homeless shelters, where he is surrounded by the unemployed, prostitutes, criminals, the destitute, and occasionally children at play. The children humanize and reproach levels of tolerated class driven poverty. These are the soiled “faces” of Berlin’s future.

### **Lamprecht’s Berlin and Naturalist Tradition**

From his early years as a filmmaker, Lamprecht was praised for his portrayal of milieu.<sup>10</sup> His adaptation of *Buddenbrooks* in 1923, despite Mann’s disparaging assessment,<sup>11</sup> won critical recognition for its “genaue Milieuschilderung, realistische Wiedergabe des Alltags, die gegenseitige Beeinflussung und Abhängigkeit von Personen und Milieu” [“detailed depiction of milieu, realistic rendering of everyday life, and reciprocal influence and dependency of character and milieu”].<sup>12</sup> This approach, which would play a pivotal role in *Die Verrufenen*, reflects his appropriation of the milieu theory that had made Berlin a Naturalist city in the literature of the previous century.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, French novelist Émile Zola brought literary Naturalism, and with it the impact of milieu as a defining force on the lives of the urban masses, to the attention of an international audience. Using science and its experimental methodology as his rallying cry, Zola broke from sentimentalized portrayals of the working class, declaring *L’Assommoir* (1877), which depicts the

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<sup>10</sup> *The BFI Companion to German Cinema*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel (London, 1999), p.157.

<sup>11</sup> Mann labeled the film a “gleichgültiges Kaufmannsdrama” [“inconsequential commercial drama”], having little in common with his novel beyond the characters’ names, qtd. “Gerhard Lamprecht-Regisseur, Autor, Filmhistoriker,” *CineGraph: Lexikon zum deutschsprachigen Film*, vol. 4, no. 39 (1984): B2.

<sup>12</sup> “Gerhard Lamprecht-Regisseur, Autor, Filmhistoriker,” p. B2.

struggles of a Parisian laundress in an environment of poverty and alcoholism, to be “le premier roman sur le peuple, qui ne mente pas et qui ait l’odeur du peuple.”<sup>13</sup>

The controversial reception of Zola’s literary Naturalism in Germany divided along party lines. Conservative critics, raising the banner of German idealism with Goethe and Schiller, denounced the new literature for what they perceived as its depravity, immorality and seditious leanings, while liberals endorsed it as a form of “Zeitliteratur” dealing with contemporary social problems. The ranks of the SPD were split in their reception of Naturalism, many of its critics such as Karl Kautsky and Franz Mehring voicing concern over its emphasis on want and misery rather than the fighting spirit of the proletariat.<sup>14</sup> However, critical reaction to Zola’s fiction did not diminish its enormous impact on young German writers of the period. Convinced that in “die bisher verpönte Welt der Industrieanlagen und des grossstädtischen Proletariats” [“the formerly taboo world of industrial plants and the urban proletariat”], “die wahren Zeitprobleme” [“the true problems of the era”] were manifest,<sup>15</sup> these writers rejected both the cult of the hero and emphasis on historical and mythological subjects characteristic of fiction of the Gründerjahre<sup>16</sup> and the “poetic” realism of writers like

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<sup>13</sup> Émile Zola, Preface to *L’Assommoir* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1969), pp. 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the political debate over Naturalism in Germany, England and other parts of Europe, see Diane Smith’s “Confronting Socialism: The Naturalist Novel and Its Reception in Europe,” *Works and Days* 14 (1989): 81-90. The critical reception of Lamprecht’s neo-naturalist narrative *Die Verrufenen* years later would also include negative reviews, notably from leftist critics. In their “campaign against bourgeois films,” Hake writes, they targeted not only “obvious examples of reactionary ideology... [but also] melodramas with a contemporary setting.” Films such as *Die Verrufenen* were viewed as too-personalized, reactionary stories of “social decline ...linked to personal failure,” which did not incorporate an elevated level of social analysis. Hake includes Lamprecht among “progressive filmmakers [attempting] to create films of universal human appeal” and describes *Die Verrufenen* as a “drama of human suffering” (p. 197).

<sup>15</sup> Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Naturalismus. Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart*, bd. 2 (1959; rpt. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1977), p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Hamann and Hermand, p. 14.

Gottfried Keller that was firmly anchored in the non-industrial middle class, thus bearing for them “das Stigma des Provinziellen [the stigma of provincialism]”.<sup>17</sup> In an open letter to Zola following publication of *L'Assommoir*, Berlin author Arno Holz declared, “vous prépariez la besogne de vos fils. Et ces fils... c'est nous.”<sup>18</sup> Holz became one of the leading theoreticians of German Naturalism and sought to outdo Zola in his demand for objectivity, but it was Berlin novelist Max Kretzer, who was christened the “ebenbürtige Jünger Zolas” [“the disciple and equal of Zola”]<sup>19</sup> in *Revolution der Literatur*, an early manifesto for das jüngste Deutschland, as the German Naturalists called themselves. Kretzer's Berlin novels of the 1880's, chief among them *Die Verkommenen* [*The Corrupted*] (1883), earned him comparison to Zola. Through these novels, Kretzer succeeded in positioning Berlin at the center of a Naturalist narrative of the city's under class that would influence both graphic artists and filmmakers into the next century.

In *Die Verkommenen*, Kretzer, like Lamprecht, portrays a displaced man, an iron worker named Richard Merk. After losing his job at the Borsig, a well known iron factory in Berlin, Merk is forced to move his family into a tenement in a crime-ridden area and reduced to spending his afternoons carving wooden figures that he sells for a few pennies in the bitter cold on street corners, in taverns, and in the shopping arcade. While much of the novel suffers from Kretzer's cliché ridden rhetoric and creation of stereotypes, some of these virulently anti-Semitic, his scenes depicting Berlin's unemployed, like Lamprecht's, are forceful. During the Christmas season, for example, Merk joins “die hunderte von fröstelnden und schmalwangig dreinschauenden Gestalten” [“hundreds of frozen and hollow-cheeked figures”]<sup>20</sup> crowding in front of a newspaper printing office in hopes of finding a job announcement. Unsuccessful, Merk returns to a cold home, which he attempts to warm

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<sup>17</sup> Gerhard Schulz, *Prosa des Naturalismus* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 1973), p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Arno Holz, “Der Kunst. Ihr Wesen und Ihre Gesetze,” *Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus 1880-1892*, ed. Erich Ruprecht (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche, 1962), p. 216.

<sup>19</sup> Schulz, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Max Kretzer, *Die Verkommenen* (1883; rpt. Leipzig: B. Elischer, 1908), p. 409.

by burning dilapidated household furnishings such as an old wash tub and shaky chair, all the while hoping for a snow heavy enough to enable him to earn a few cents shoveling. Merk's face, like Kraemer's, reflects his growing spiritlessness; once a proud man, he now scarcely dares to look others in the eye, "gleich einem Hunde, daran gewöhnt hat, sich auf das erste Wort still zu bescheiden" ["resembling a dog that has grown accustomed to being silenced by the first word"].<sup>21</sup> He eventually succumbs to drink, a Naturalist debilitating staple, and petty crime.

Although Merk's downfall is attributed to "die modernen Zustände" ["modern conditions"],<sup>22</sup> unemployment assuming the role of "der Teufel... der uns am Ende gegen alles abstupfen kann und zum bösen treibt..." ["the devil... that in the end can make us indifferent to everything and pushes us toward evil..."],<sup>23</sup> this naturalist reading is compromised later in the novel, as Norbert Bachleitner observes in his analysis of a pivotal scene. When Merk, desperate to provide for his family on a snowy Christmas Eve, is tempted to become a thief, his conflict, Bachleitner notes, is dramatized by the contrasting voices of an angel, "Bleibe ehrlich" ["Remain honest"] and a devil, "Du wirst stehlen" ["You shall steal"].<sup>24</sup> Merk chooses to commit theft. Here is evidence, Bachleitner aptly argues, that "La théorie du milieu... est minée par le concept du libre arbitre et du caractère fort qui domine le milieu. ...C'est ainsi que Kretzer s'aligne sur la critique allemande du naturalisme, qui réclame la responsabilité individuelle."<sup>25</sup>

There is no such dichotomy, however, in Kretzer's portrayal of the working class youth of Berlin who are described in terms borrowed from natural science as "Blumen... die man in schlechte Erde pflanzt..." ["flowers... planted in bad soil"].<sup>26</sup> The image of soiled children that one sees in Lamprecht's courtyard shots pervades Kretzer's novel, particularly the scenes set in the courtyard of the tenement, a makeshift playground

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<sup>21</sup> Kretzer, p. 276.

<sup>22</sup> Kretzer, p. 139.

<sup>23</sup> Kretzer, p. 140.

<sup>24</sup> Kretzer, p. 417.

<sup>25</sup> Norbert Bachleitner, "Un 'Zola allemand'? Les romans sociaux de Max Kretzer et le naturalisme français," *Les Cahiers naturalistes* 70 (1996): 129-130.

<sup>26</sup> Kretzer, p. 237.



where the children play all day long in the mud, “um sich frühzeitig und unbewusst an den Schlamm des Lebens zu gewöhnen...” [“in order to prematurely and unconsciously grow accustomed to the mire of life”].<sup>27</sup> Robert McFarland describes the courtyard as “the space of Kretzer’s narrative experiment... the place where children, as the untouched phenomena, are subjected to the deterministic forces of the milieu. ...As the children play, grow and learn they are constantly subjected to the influences of the different people in the building whose apartment windows open into the courtyard where the children are playing.” The courtyard, he concludes, becomes “a reverse panopticon, where the children’s interactions with their milieu is [sic] rendered completely visible.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike the carnival which spawns social intermingling, the courtyard is space confined for the *déclassé*. The process begun in the courtyard continues in the factory, where young working class girls, whether it be Merk’s daughter Magda or Jenny Hoff from Kretzer’s earlier novel *Die Betrogenen* [*The Deceived*] (1882), literally inhale depravity, anticipating their downward path toward prostitution: “selbst die Luft, die man atmete, das zersetzende Gift fruhreifer Gemeinheit barg” [“even the air that one breathed contained the destructive poison of precocious vulgarity”].<sup>29</sup>

The embrace of Naturalist milieu theory that Kretzer reveals in his characterization of the moral corruption of the young, as noted earlier, is tempered in other instances by his blending of Naturalist causality with German tradition emphasizing moral imperatives issuing from a spiritual battle between good and evil, as in the case of Merk. This ambivalence toward Naturalist theory, resulting in a tendency to view contemporary social issues from an ethical perspective, would re-emerge during the Weimar era in *Die Verrufenen*. The face of Berlin

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<sup>27</sup> Kretzer, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> Robert McFarland, “From Zola’s Milieu to Zille’s Milljöh; Berlin and the Visual Practices of Naturalism,” *Excavatio* XIII (2000):154.

<sup>29</sup> Kretzer, p. 221. Bachleitner underscores the fact that Kretzer advances the milieu theory to explain the degradation of working class girls, but not the behavior of men from more privileged classes who seduce them: “il rejette toute excuse quand il s’agit du séducteur, qui plaide sa cause en se référant à son éducation et au ‘code’ de sa propre classe...” (p. 126).

in the film visually reflects this dichotomy by simultaneously drawing upon two distinct and divergent artistic traditions stemming from the Naturalist aesthetic: the Berlin Milljöh of graphic artist Heinrich Zille and the more historical images of the New Objectivity movement found in the work of Cologne photographer August Sander.

### **The Impact of Heinrich Zille: Naturalism’s “Cheerful Curve”**

The influence of the graphic arts is openly acknowledged by Lamprecht at the beginning of *Die Verrufenen* when Heinrich Zille (1858-1929), “der deutsche Daumier,”<sup>30</sup> literally appears on screen, demonstrating his art and technique by illustrating a bar scene that transforms into the cinematic world of Berlin’s social underbelly, the romanticized lumpenproletariat. In fact, *Die Verrufenen* has been categorized as a “Zille film,” a genre of social problem films set in a working class milieu, which became popular in Germany in the mid 1920s. Bruce Murray explains the rationale for the use of the Zille trademark:

The producers of such films drew on the success of Heinrich Zille, an extremely popular Berlin artist whose close contact with the working class enhanced the image of his work as the most trustworthy artistic expression of the working-class environment. To attract audiences, producers used various methods to associate their films directly with Zille and to claim a degree of authenticity equal to that of the artist’s work.<sup>31</sup>

In its publicity for *Die Verrufenen*, Nationalfilm included not only Zille’s name but also a self-portrait of the artist, promising in bold

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<sup>30</sup> “Heinrich Zille im Senderaum [Broadcasting Studio],” *Film Kurier* 201 (27.8.1925).

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Murray, *Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic* (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1990), p. 82. Murray has translated the title of Lamprecht’s *Die Verrufenen* as *The Notorious* as opposed to *The Slums of Berlin*, by which it is more commonly known.

print, “12 Zille-Zeichnungen mit ihren schlagkräftigen Zille-Witzen” [“12 Zille sketches with their hard-hitting Zille-witticisms”] (illustration 3). The plot of the film was purportedly based upon Zille’s own experiences.



**12 Zille-Zeichnungen**  
mit ihren schlagkräftigen Zille-Witzen als Zwischen-  
titeln bringt der Zille-Großfilm der Nationalfilm A.-G.

**DIE VERRUFENEN**

**(Der fünfte Stand)**

Regie: Gerhard Lamprecht    Manuskript: L. Heilborn-Kübitz

In den Hauptrollen:  
Aud Egede Nissen - Bernhard Goetzke - Mady Christians

**Uraufführung:**  
Freitag, den 28. d. M., 7 Uhr abends

**Ufa-Theater Turmstraße**  
und  
**Ufa-Theater Taentzienpalast**

**NATIONALFILM A.-G.**  
BERLIN SW 48

Illustration 3 – Nationalfilm, *Film Kurier* 199 (25.8.1925).

“Meine erste eigene Wohnung war im Osten Berlins im Keller, nun sitze ich schon im Berliner Westen, vier Treppen hoch...” [“My first apartment was a cellar in East Berlin, now I sit on the fourth floor in West Berlin”],<sup>32</sup> remarked Zille, who exceeded his parents’ expectations when, instead of earning a livelihood as a butcher, he rose from poverty to professorship. In his most well known volume of photographs entitled *My Milljöh* (1913), Zille returned to the surroundings of his childhood and youth in the working class corners and courtyards of Berlin at a time when the debate over Naturalism among Berlin’s literary and artistic

<sup>32</sup> Qtd. Winfried Ranke, ed., *Heinrich Zille, Photographien Berlin 1890-1910* (München: Schirmer/Mosel, 1985), p. 10.

circles brought renewed attention to the milieu theory that served as a cornerstone of the movement.<sup>33</sup> Ranke explains the lasting impact of Naturalist theory on Zille's art:

Für ihn enthielt der von den Naturalisten propagierte Kunstbegriff mehr als nur die Rechtfertigung einer vorübergehend eingenommenen Protesthaltung. Ihm hatte er die Möglichkeit eröffnet, eigene Vergangenheit und Erfahrung zum Gegenstand künstlerischer Arbeit zu machen. . . . Er hielt seitdem an der Darstellungswürdigkeit seines Milljöh's fest und widmete sich zeitlebens seiner minutiösen Erforschung.

[For him [Zille] the view of art propagated by the Naturalists offered more than a justification of a transitory predilection for social protest. It opened up to him the possibility of using his own past and experiences as the foundation for his artistic work. From that time on, he held fast to the belief that his 'milljöh' was worthy of portrayal and dedicated his life to its painstaking exploration].<sup>34</sup>

Above all, it was Zille's drawings of children that established his reputation as an artist of the people. Zille's portrayal of street children, Werner Schumann attests, reveals an "untrüglichen Blick" ["unfailing eye"] for physiognomy, and a determination to represent these children "ohne alle Umstände, ungewaschen und ungekämmt, im Schmutz der Strasse und mit laufenden Nasen" ["without standing on ceremony, unwashed and uncombed, in the dirt of the streets and with runny noses"].<sup>35</sup> Zille's artistry, Schumann acknowledges, drew attention away from "die düsteren Umstände. ... Mit wenigen Strichen hellt er auf. Er beherrscht die Kunst der heiteren Kurve, der freundlich entschärfenden

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<sup>33</sup> Ranke, pp. 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> For further discussion of the influence of the milieu theory and literary Naturalism on Zille, see Ranke, pp. 12-18. Robert McFarland's "From Zola's Milieu to Zille's Milljöh; Berlin and the Visual Practices of Naturalism," cited earlier, also provides an excellent discussion of Zille's work in the context of literary Naturalism. McFarland argues that "Zille appropriates the concept of the milieu from naturalism and empties it of its scientific visual practices" (p. 165), thereby producing his "urban spectacles" (p. 158).

<sup>35</sup> Werner Schumann, ed. and text, *Zille sein Milljöh* (Hannover: Fackelträger-Verlag, 1953), n.p.

Rundung. ...und tatsächlich sind fast alle seine Kinderfiguren von einem unsichtbaren Spielraum umgeben, den sie beim nächsten Schritt und Griff erfüllen könnten” [“the dismal conditions. With a few strokes he brightens the scene. He has mastered the art of the cheerful curve, the affably softening roundness... and, in fact, almost all his figures of children are surrounded by invisible elbow-room, that promises to materialize with their next step and grasp”].<sup>36</sup> Zille’s technique is evident in one of his courtyard scenes (illustration 4) showing children caught in the act of disturbing flowers by a woman who appears at her doorway and commands that they play with the garbage cans instead. Laundry billows from open windows above the heads of children who stand at attention or hide. A potentially Naturalist indictment of social conditions is transformed by Zille’s artistry into a scene of childhood mischief, a mood reinforced rather than dispelled by the figure of the crying child seated in the foreground.



Illustration 4 – Heinrich Zille, courtyard “Milljöh”

<sup>36</sup> Schumann, n.p.

This drawing is reproduced in the courtyard scene of *Die Verrufenen*, along with its humorous caption as inter-title, as promised in the publicity for the film.<sup>37</sup>

The Zille paternity of *Die Verrufenen* was repeatedly cited in critical notices from various Berlin papers. The following excerpts, among others, were reproduced in Berlin's *Film Kurier* on September 3, 1925 as part of the studio's efforts to promote the film:

Mit seltener Hingabe hat sich Lamprecht diese Welt der Hinterhöfe, der Keller, der Kaschemmen und der Obdachlosenasylo versenkt – ...Mit derselbe Liebe, die Heinrich Zille erfüllt, wenn er 'sein Milljöh' schildert... [With exceptional devotion, Lamprecht has immersed himself in this world of backyards, cellars, taverns and homeless shelters – ...with the same love that Heinrich Zille felt when he portrayed 'his Milljöh'...] *Berliner Zeitung* (31.8.1925)

[Screenwriter] Luise Heilborn-Körbitz hat sich aber auch so sehr in Zillesches Denken und Fühlen eingelebt, dass sein Geist, auch ohne dass er selbst mit Hand an das Manuscript gelegt hat, daraus überall hervorstrahlt [Luise Heilborn-Körbitz has penetrated Zille's thoughts and feelings so well that his spirit shines forth, without his even having laid his hand on the manuscript]. *Licht-Bild-Bühne* (31.8.1925)

Zille's trademark ability to make his audience “zugleich lächeln und weinen machen” [“smile and cry at the same time”] (*Berliner Zeitung*), to brighten his portrayal of the life of the masses “plötzlich durch einen Witz” [“suddenly through a joke”] (*8 Uhr Abendblatt*), delighted critics.

Zille's portraiture of the slum and slum life was most effectively rendered by Lamprecht in both wide and close-up shots of Berlin's courtyard people: playful, dirty children, mothers framed in windows or deep in gossip, drunkards, and even criminals. These shots literally and symbolically indicate the naturalist physiognomy of the urban under-class, but they lack the recriminating tone of a penetrating socio-

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<sup>37</sup> The drawing appears in Schumann's *Zille sein Milljöh*, n.p., and is reprinted with the permission of Fackelträger Verlag.

political indictment.<sup>38</sup> The children, often wearing worn out clothing, are unsupervised; one even plays with a dead rat. Lamprecht's aesthetic association with Zille staples is evident in the film; there are multiple, celebratory shots of children at play in sequences that are overtly class conscious. However, in one remarkably suggestive later shot sequence in the film, Lamprecht's association with Zille's somewhat sentimentalized yet unceremonious representation of childhood, takes a serious, naturalist turn, as the children play like little harnessed pack mules moving forward as they are driven (illustration 5). This is witnessed by the artist-photographer, the Zille figure, who halts the processional and goes to buy the children some candy, as if to restore the sweetness to their lives and the overall narrative.



Illustration 5 – Children as pack mules in *Die Verrufenen*

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<sup>38</sup> Hake has commented on the critical reception of Phil Jutzi's *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück*, a contemporary Weimar-era film production credited, as in the case of

## Historical Images of the Weimar Era: A “New Naturalism” in Photography and Film

Alongside Zille’s Dickensian images of Berlin’s poor, the acknowledged source for Lamprecht’s *Die Verrufenen*, appear the more sober and sobering photographs of Cologne artist August Sander. In contrast to Zille’s children, who are captured in a momentary slice of childhood on the quasi-playgrounds of Berlin’s streets and courtyards, Sander’s *Kinder in der Schemmergasse in Köln* [*Children in the Schemmergasse in Cologne*], 1930 (illustration 6), pose in a group surrounded by the brick, barbed wire, concrete and cobblestones of the city, a localized vision of the naturalist urban milieu. The narrowing perspective of the street behind the children ends in intersecting lines of walls and rooftops, above which only a small patch of skyline is visible. There are no billowing curtains or flowers, no scene of play interrupted and about to be resumed. Instead, the children are framed by and part of the impersonal architecture of the city.<sup>39</sup>

Christoph Schreier has aptly compared Sander’s photographs to film stills; they “work in a way antithetical to the snapshot, he explains, “condensing time rather than visualizing moments in time... his photographs are thus less like spontaneous flukes than concentrations of social reality.”<sup>40</sup> Schreier’s comment elucidates the essential movement in Sander’s photographs and in Lamprecht’s film away from the spontaneity and sentimentality of Zille’s art toward a Naturalist

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*Die Verrufenen*, for its realistic depiction of milieu and “moments of working class solidarity.” However, other reviewers were dissatisfied with the film’s “depressing ending.” Hake notes, following “the logic of compensation according to which entertainment had to make up for deprivations in real life” by “forcing” a more positive ending, thereby compromising the inherent naturalist presence and vitiating the narrative (p. 199).

<sup>39</sup> Special thanks to Rajka Knipper at the Sander Archive in Köln for her gracious assistance with this study.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Schreier, Introduction, *August Sander; ‘In photography there are no unexplained shadows!’*, exhibition catalogue, The National Portrait Gallery, London, 1997, p. 2.





Illustration 6 – August Sander, *Kinder in der Schemmergasse in Köln* (1930), © Die Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur, August Sander Archiv, Köln/SPA, Lisboa, 2009

rendering of the city and its inhabitants. Sander's art is much more aligned with Balázs's conceptual, internal processing of the external physiognomy of streets, buildings, and the overall urban experience; the dirt and barbed wire contain and control much like a genetic code.

Sander, who set out to record the physiognomy of the Weimar era in his ambitious and lifelong project bearing the title *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts* [*People of the Twentieth Century*], became one of the leading exponents in photography of New Objectivity.<sup>41</sup> In 1931, in a series of six radio lectures entitled “The Nature and Development of

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<sup>41</sup> This new mode of expression was viewed by some as a reconfiguration of the Naturalist aesthetic. In 1922, one Berlin magazine, surveying its readership for a label for the emerging style, posed the question: “ein neuer Naturalismus?” [“a new Naturalism?”] (qtd. Michelski 17). Additional evidence of the reawakening of an

Photography,” Sander explains his view of the historical significance of physiognomy, making it the basis of his sociological experiment:

The individual does not make the history of his time, he both impresses himself on it and expresses its meaning. It is possible to record the historical physiognomic image of a whole generation and, with enough knowledge of physiognomy, to make that image speak in photographs. This historical image will become even clearer if we juxtapose pictures typical of the many different groups that make up human society, which together would carry the expression of the time and the sentiments of their group.<sup>42</sup>

A preliminary volume, *Antlitz der Zeit (Face of Our Time)*, consisting of 60 photographs, was published in 1929 with a foreword by Alfred Döblin, who credits Sander with portraying the great “leveling” force of human society, social class.<sup>43</sup> This volume contained a prospectus outlining Sander’s cyclical design for the entire project:

The complete work consists of seven groups, which correspond to the existing social order, and is to be published in about 45 portfolios, each containing 12 pictures. Sander begins with the farmer, the earthbound man [whom, in the manner of Tolstoy, he conceived of as the prototype for humanity], and leads the viewer through all levels and types of occupations, up to representatives of the highest civilization, and down again to the idiot.<sup>44</sup>

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interest in Naturalism in post-World War I Berlin is the resurgence experienced by Kretzer’s novels during these years. Between 1919 and 1921, the majority of them appeared in new editions. *Die Verkommenen* was in its 20<sup>th</sup> edition by 1924. See Günther Keil, *Max Kretzer: A Study in German Naturalism* (1928; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), pp. 16-17.

<sup>42</sup> Qtd. Robert Kramer, *August Sander, Photographs of an Epoch, 1904-1959*, Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibition catalogue (Aperture monograph, 1980), p. 40.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Döblin, “Faces, Images, and Their Truth,” Introduction, *August Sander, Face of Our Time: Sixty Portraits of Twentieth-Century Germans* (Munich: Schirmer’s Visual Library, 1994).

<sup>44</sup> Qtd. Ulrich Keller, *August Sander: Citizens of the Twentieth Century. Portrait Photographs 1892-1952*, ed. Gunther Sander, trans. Linda Keller (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), p. 23.

Art historian Robert Kramer traces the concept of physiognomy at the basis of Sander's project to Johann Kaspar Lavater's *Essays in Physiognomy*, appearing in 1772, a text that Hake also cites as central to the tradition that fed Balázs's film theory of facial expression.<sup>45</sup> The Swedish pastor/artist had "attempted to produce a system of classification from which laws could be deduced concerning the relationship between face and mind." "Sander developed and expanded this concept," Kramer explains, "by shifting the emphasis from individual psychological traits to traits shared by persons of common social, economic, and professional backgrounds. He changed the equation from 'facial type A indicates individual character 'A' to 'facial type A indicates members of social group A'".<sup>46</sup>

Sociological formulas based upon the concept of physiognomy experienced a rapid proliferation in Germany after the First World War. The loss of stability and security, Ulrich Keller points out, produced a host of "scientific and pseudo-scientific disciplines [that] began to specialize in the concoction of physiognomical schemes that allowed each social group to identify their idols and villains on a typological scale ranging from 'good' to 'bad,' or 'friend' to 'enemy.'"<sup>47</sup> This process is already evident decades before the war in works such as *Die Verkommenen*, where Kretzer's sympathetic portrait of the struggling German working class is offset by devastating caricatures of German Jews couched in references to physiognomy.

After the First World War, the "physiognomic rage" that Keller describes became especially apparent in the field of photography.<sup>48</sup> German photography of the 20s and 30s, he concludes, was "an ideologically charged field," yet he credits Sander with being able to avoid

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<sup>45</sup> According to Sabine Hake, "Balázs's description of facial expression as the poetic substance of human life, a category preceding language, can be placed in a philosophical tradition that reaches from Johann Kaspar Lavater. ... Many ideas about the correspondences between inner self and external features recall Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*," p. 230.

<sup>46</sup> Kramer, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> Keller, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Keller, p. 8.

the overt biases found in the works of many of his contemporaries.”<sup>49</sup> One such was Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler’s photographer, who produced *Germany Awake!*, a photographic record of the war and its aftermath in 1923.<sup>50</sup> The prospectus for Sander’s *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, cited earlier, includes the following statement that distances his work from the propagandistic interest in physiognomy driving others: “Sander had no scientific aids and was not advised by race theorists or social researchers ...[h]e relied exclusively on the direct observation of human nature, appearance and environment.”<sup>51</sup> In “A Short History of Photography,” Walter Benjamin, citing this passage from the prospectus, uses Goethe’s term “sensitive empiricism” to describe Sander’s methodology: “[It] makes itself most inwardly identical with the object and thereby becomes genuine theory.”<sup>52</sup> Benjamin puts Sander’s photographs on a par with “the powerful physiognomic galleries” of Russian filmmakers Eisenstein and Pudovkin.<sup>53</sup>

One of the Weimer faces captured by Sander appears in the 1928 photograph *Arbeitslos* (*Jobless*, illustration 7), which belongs to a group that Keller labels Sander’s “reservoir of social outcasts,”<sup>54</sup> followed by the physically sick and the insane. This section of Sander’s text could be read as a naturalist photographic casebook; they are both physically and, most importantly, socially impoverished and alienated. A face in

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<sup>49</sup> Keller, p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> Keller, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Qtd. Keller, p. 23. Sander’s project, in the words of Robert Kramer, ultimately put the photographer “on a collision course with the Nazi myth mechanics” (p. 13), one that contributed to the government confiscation in 1934 of Sander’s printing plates and copies of *Antlitz der Zeit*, which had depicted a Germany that was “racially impure” (Keller, p. 19). “They [the Nazis],” Kramer explains, “had created the mask of the Aryan hero and his female consort, and they struggled to fit these visages upon the ‘faces’ of Germany. The trouble was that anyone could look around and see Sander’s faces everywhere; Nazi physiognomy was evident only in propaganda films and posters” (p. 13).

<sup>52</sup> Walter Benjamin, “A Short History of Photography,” trans. P. Patton, *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg (New Haven: Leete’s Island Books, 1980), p. 211.

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin, pp. 210-211.

<sup>54</sup> Keller, p. 48.

the waiting army of the jobless described in contemporary journals,<sup>55</sup> the unemployed man, unlike the majority of Sander's subjects, does not meet the eye of the camera/viewer; instead, he glances to his right toward a row of buildings in the shadow across the empty, curving cobblestone street. This lack of contact between the observed and the observer, an "un-matching" of the eyes, suggests the subject's peering, an act of seeing beyond the frame of the shot, across an entry point into the historical space and time of his immediate, lost world. His face indicates emptiness, an unfocused gaze that comes from without as well as within; this is the physiognomy of despair, induced by historical displacement. Dressed in black with only a small white v-shaped border accenting his bare neck and close shaven head, he holds his hat in his hand between his folded arms in a submissive manner. He is literally on the edge, standing on the corner before a diagonally positioned building of unadorned concrete blocks.



Illustration 7 – August Sander, *Arbeitslos* (1928) © Die Photographische Sammlung/SK Stiftung Kultur, August Sander Archiv, Köln/SPA, Lisboa, 2009

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<sup>55</sup> See Heinrich Hauser's account, "Die Arbeitslosen," *Die Tat* 25, no.1 (April 1933); rpt. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, pp. 84-85.

A film peopled by visualizations of Zille characters, *Die Verrufenen* nonetheless hearkens to the view of physiognomy as “historical image” at the basis of Sander’s *Antlitz der Zeit*. In an extended and exceptional shot sequence, the film exposes Kraemer’s social and psychological falling off as he joins the army of unemployed and homeless, searching the streets of Berlin for work. It is a process witnessed by the audience early in the film. Is this the face of a man in Berlin, or is it the face of Berlin?

In the first camera setup, a medium shot, both Kraemer and an executive-type sit in the traditional power positions endemic to an interview at his desk, and although papers are exchanged, Kraemer’s first attempt at his post-imprisonment employment fails, the return of the papers signaling his rejected desire for stability. In the second of the sequences, Kraemer speaks with a policeman in uniform, who shakes his head in a responsive “no,” which then leads to the third shot in the series, in which Kraemer, hat in hand, speaks with a physically smaller figure, a chauffeur in uniform. Faced with yet another rejection, Kraemer begins to psychologically deflate.

This list of uniformed men in authority continues with a series of shots in which Kraemer speaks with men dressed in other types of recognizable uniforms or office apparel. In another Weimar era production, F.W. Murnau’s *Der letzte Mann* (1924)<sup>56</sup>, a Berlin doorman is demoted to the job of men’s washroom attendant. For the audience, a loss of social and economic status for whatever reason necessitates a change in uniform and that indicates shame and decline. Thus Kraemer moves from men in higher ranking uniforms to those in shirt sleeves.

As Kraemer’s public humiliation continues, the succession of shots leads to the sixth in the series. Kraemer is positioned at the left of the frame, standing before a gated door; large wooden planks make an “x” across its frame, marking the spot he cannot enter. The gated door, an emblematic prison gate from his past, keeps him on the other side of the barrier in the present, as a guard in uniform clearly rejects a request for future employment and dismisses Kraemer. This also signals a change

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<sup>56</sup> UFA.

in the camera framing in the seventh shot setup from a medium to a close-up, suggesting that space and time, depicting the chronology of Kraemer's continued humiliation and shame, are tightening and passing quickly in suffocating moments. Now Kraemer is no longer dressed like a gentleman but is disheveled and tie-less. He also loses key lighting and is often placed off center and in shadows to signify a loss of hope; a stylistically darker presence of despairing mood begins to physically frame and affect this process.

Continuing with this visual and thematic pacing, in shots eight and nine of the sequence, after more rejected attempts to secure employment, Kraemer loses more key light and space. Shot number ten in the sequence is the most compelling. This final shot presents the product, the suggestive physiognomy of both Robert Kraemer, the defeated man, and Berlin, consuming its own. This shot, the portrait of a lost man, for some, a leaf from a Berlin police department's collection of wanted posters, or a page from a Lombrosion epigone's work on facial craniometrics, in reality is the close-up shot of a tentatively subjugated, unemployed urban male: the physiognomy of despair. Kraemer's head moves from the left to the right of the frame as he stares past the camera like Sander's unemployed man. His face appears "preoccupied, as if attending to some inner voice, or memory."<sup>57</sup> These close-up shots of Kraemer's face are evidence, documents of self discovery; he is unwanted. As his eyes settle and slowly close, his head sinks, and the camera fades to black, concluding this determinist chronological montage sequence.

As Lamprecht's shot sequence fades to black, it is followed by a movement from the individual to the architectural: two interrelated portraits. Film, according to Balázs, "offers the possibility of giving the background, the surroundings ... a physiognomy no less intense than the face of characters... [u]sually ... there is no contradiction between the facial expression of the characters and the physiognomy of the surrounding objects."<sup>58</sup> Balázs, Hake explains, "applies the [concept of

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<sup>57</sup> Shaffer, p. 6, his description of the "inner-reflective" film face, see note 4.

<sup>58</sup> Béla Balázs, *Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art*, trans. Edith Bone (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), p. 96.

physiognomy] to buildings and objects of everyday life, for example, when speaking of the face of an elevator or a factory.”<sup>59</sup> “[T]he representation of the visible world in human terms,” she concludes, “puts an end to the experience of fundamental separation. Thus the process is anthropomorphic as well as anthropocentric.”<sup>60</sup> This process is evident in Lamprecht’s compositional strategy, in which Berlin functions as an actualized, commanding presence. The camera frames a wide shot of an avenue in 1920s Berlin, filling the frame with a background of concrete and glass from street to sky; anonymous people move about like worker insects dwarfed by larger objects. Kraemer’s unprofitable search for a renewed place and purpose in the Berlin that now shuns him generates his downcast facial expression that comments on the emptiness of the “judgmental” streets.

At the beginning of the film, to further demonstrate the decline in Kraemer’s social status and new environment, Lamprecht introduces a parallel narrative in the form of an oppositional, comically subversive extended Berlin underworld family, and this co-extensive plotting provides illuminating class contrasts. Gustav (Arthur Bergen), another released ex-convict, who comes from the lower, even criminal class, eventually befriends Kraemer, formerly his social superior. This is an especially significant development: it redirects the spectatorial focus onto two men, not just one man. But Kraemer is the key man, for a troubled middle class male focalizes the audience’s collective anxieties on the “better” or “eugenically richer” individual rather than on the lower class male that it fears, criminalizes, and avoids. Gustav, the petty criminal, returns to traditional, well-known backstreets in the underworld, underclass, and underground Berlin milieu, similar to the lively but dangerous nether world depicted by Fritz Lang in *M* (1931)<sup>61</sup> and is quickly accepted back into the fold by others of his kind over alcohol, cigarettes, and shared tales and memories.

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<sup>59</sup> Hake, p. 225.

<sup>60</sup> Hake, p. 226.

<sup>61</sup> Nero-Film AG.



Lamprecht also introduces the Berlin prostitute, Emma (Egede Nissen),<sup>62</sup> who saves Kraemer from suicide. She survives by her ability to attract men from the class that formally shuns her. Like Gustav, she is part of the social landscape; these are her streets and her people. According to cultural historian Christiane Schönfeld, “From the mid-nineteenth century, the prostitute was perceived and represented by French and then German artists and writers as an icon of modernity, as a personification of an eroticized reality, as well as of the ambivalent forces of the metropolis and capitalism. ... The prostitute serves as a low-life representative of a ‘milieu.’”<sup>63</sup> Schönfeld characterizes the prostitute as “an outsider, she is the ‘Other,’ the non-bourgeois, and she transgresses the social, moral, and legal boundaries proscribed.”<sup>64</sup> Emma-as-prostitute is a naturalist staple, a wandering commodity, a familiar, slightly worn face on the streets of any urban location. Like Kraemer, she is a representative type. Both the prostitute and the ex-convict are examples of the urban lost.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> A contemporary review of the film in *Film Kurier* 203 (29.8.1925) praises Egede Nissen’s performance: “Keine Edeldirne im Stile eines verlogenen Literatentums, aber auch kein Vampir, vom Standpunkt einer ebenso verlogenen bürgerlichen Ideologie geschaut, sondern ein Vollblutmensch, dessen Schwächen und Stärken organisch seinem Wesen entspringen, eine Frau, in der, trotzdem sie von Hand zu Hand geht, doch noch die elementare Liebeskraft nicht erloschen ist.” [“Neither a high-minded prostitute in a high-blown untruthful literary fashion nor a vampire viewed from the standpoint of an equally untruthful middle class ideology, but a full blooded individual whose weaknesses and strengths are an organic part of her makeup, a woman who, in spite of her hand to mouth existence, is still not dead to the power of love”].

<sup>63</sup> Christiane Schönfeld, “Introduction,” *Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature*, ed. Christiane Schönfeld (New York: Camden House, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> “Streetwalking the Metropolis: Prostitutes in Expressionism,” *Commodities of Desire*, p. 114.

<sup>65</sup> G.W. Pabst’s *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* [*Diary of a Lost Girl*] (1929) depicts a parallel “falling from class” narrative as it delineates the Weimar era experiences of Thymiane (Louise Brooks). Both Kraemer and Thymiane are exposed to public shame and humiliation in what might be read as a series of naturalist declensions. In “Sense and Sentimentality: Margarete Böhme’s *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen*

The figures of Gustav and Emma, the urban gangster and prostitute, embody staples of the “street” film, a genre that, along with the Zille film, was extremely popular in German cinema from the mid to late twenties.<sup>66</sup> The street films, Murray explains, represented “urban environments as inherently dangerous, evil places, dominated by prostitutes, pimps, criminals and alcoholics.”<sup>67</sup> Both the street films and the Zille films, he points out, “*did* portray contemporary life in Germany, and they encouraged audiences to perceive their portrayals as real.”<sup>68</sup> However, he continues, “Whereas the street films concentrated on the potential downward social mobility of middle-class men and women and emphasized the impossibility of upward social mobility for the inhabitants of the street milieu, the Zille films sustained hope for a fortunate few who maintained high moral standards and resisted the temptations of alcohol, sex, and crime...”<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, this traditional emphasis on strength of character and moral behavior in Zille films such as *Die Verrufenen* vitiates the naturalistic portrayal of milieu. Although decidedly depressed and outcast, educated, strong, and self-composed, Kraemer never really belonged in Gustav and Emma’s world. He more appropriately may be viewed as temporarily “demoted” since he never pursues a post-incarceration life of crime, although it is there for him, and earnestly seeks employment and re-entry into society, unlike Emma and Gustav who actively lead the criminal life. All the myths associated with the exceptional man, labor and redemption coalesce in Kraemer, for he later finds love and employment, and reentry into a higher, upper class through hard work, some luck, and marrying Regina, the capitalist’s sister. Kraemer’s personal and social mobility, his fall and rise, can be traced through his interaction within a triangle formed by three women: first, Gerda (Hildegard Imhof), his middle class former

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in Context,” Anna Richards notes the intertextual presence of Zola’s naturalist narrative of the life of a Parisian prostitute, Nana (*Commodities of Desire*, p. 100).

<sup>66</sup> Murray, p. 81.

<sup>67</sup> Murray, pp. 81-82.

<sup>68</sup> Murray, p. 81.

<sup>69</sup> Murray, p. 82.

fiancée, leaves him; then Emma, the working class, caring prostitute, relocates him, along with Gustav, into Berlin's underclass; and finally Regina, the upper class "redemptrice," "saves" Kraemer by functioning as a romantic interest and social uplifter. As Kraemer recounts the final moments in the life of his prostitute friend to the wealthy Regina, Lamprecht's superimposition shot situates a moving army, without uniform, of Berlin's poor, over the parlor room and its hopeful duo.

*Die Verrufenen* is about Berlin in change, a study in the physiognomy of a city full of disposable Kraemers and other unfortunates. Lamprecht's film persuasively incorporates naturalist motifs from international literature, the graphic arts, photography and film culture, including German New Objectivity, "street" and "Zille" film productions, to project a narrative of Weimar bourgeois anxiety associated with the need to relocate one's place in the world. The film may be read as a study of a culture in decline, the bourgeois German family and individual before the ascent of fascism, losing its sense of order after a lost war and in search of a restoration of place and status.