



Ill. 1: Max Klinger, *Ein Schritt*, Dramen Opus IX, Blatt 2, 1883, etching (45 x 28 cm), *Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig*.

## Introduction

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LOVE HAS ALWAYS PLAYED a dominant role in literature — countless texts center around the joys, the torment, the adventures, and the art of love. Whether Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) or Goethe's *Werther* (1774) comes to mind first, there is no literature in which love is not one of the most common themes. At all times and in all cultures, the attraction between human beings has been deemed worthy of literary representation. And although love in literature often remains platonic, there are many examples in which the physical experience of love and the commodification of the body are the topic of the literary text.

The focus of this book is on the representation of the prostitute, who has been for centuries both a marginal and a central character in German literature. It was specifically between the 1890s and the 1920s that the prostitute became one of the most popular female figures in modernist German literature, and this book examines primarily her representation during this pinnacle of her popularity.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the time frame of this study is based on only one possible interpretation of “modern,” reaching from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the publication of Bertolt Brecht's *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (The Good Person of Szechwan) in 1941. It was during those decades that the sex worker became predominantly an object of ideological observations of a sometimes contradictory nature, and it is one of the aims of this volume to examine the multi-faceted iconography of this colorful literary figure. As this collection illustrates, the representation of prostitutes and the question of love as *commodity* have served male and female authors as a vehicle for a large variety of objectives: from moral reflection and social criticism to saucy entertainment. The following analyses of the prostitute shed light not only on the understanding of sexuality and the social and moral positioning of prostitution of the time, but also emphasize the diversity of depiction and approach we encounter when focusing on the representation of the sex worker.

Here, I shall only hint at the historical development of the literary figure in question before proceeding with a discussion of some of the most relevant cultural and theoretical contexts.

As early as the Middle Ages, for example in works by Hrothsvith von Gandersheim of the tenth century, or Cäsarius von Heisterbach of the thirteenth century, the sex worker appears favorably as remorseful sinner.<sup>2</sup> Positioned outside or at best on the margins of society, the sex worker's only hope for reintegration into a society whose moral codes are firmly rooted in Christian traditions is to confess her sins penitently and devote her life to God. The representation of the prostitute here obviously functions to reinforce moral beliefs and social order. Just as the *Frauenhaus* (brothel) is located outside the city walls and therefore spatially distanced, so is the sex worker morally, socially, and legally removed. Only after turning her back on a life of depravity and corruption, is the remorseful sinner's modesty, her willingness to sacrifice, depicted. Redeemed, she is praised for all her good and humble work, which might even, after all, reserve her a place in heaven.

The remorseful sinner, the kind and benevolent courtesan — “die selbstlose Kurtisane” as Elisabeth Frenzel calls her —, or the prodigal daughter continue to appear as different facets of the same motif throughout the history of German literature well into the twentieth century, and several chapters of this collection examine representations of prostitutes that fit this category.<sup>3</sup> Other uses of the sex worker in German literature include crude depictions of harlots in folk plays emphasizing particularly the prostitute's economic egotism. One of the most well known harlots of German literature, however, is Johann Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen's picaresque representation of a prostitute who tells her life-story from a socially “low” but all the more critical point of view in *Trutz Simplex: Oder Ausführliche und wunder-seltzame Lebensbeschreibung der Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche* (Trutz Simplex: Or a Detailed Account of the Peculiar Life of the Arch Swindler and Vagabond Courasche, 1669), which was to be the origin of Mother Courage in Bertolt Brecht's play 270 years later.

In this *Continuatio* of Grimmelshausen's famous novel *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch* (The Adventurous Simplicissimus Teutsch, 1668), the *Soldatenhure* (Soldiers' Whore) Courasche takes revenge on Simplicissimus by dictating her experiences from her point of view, since Simplicissimus had not painted a very flattering picture of her in his accounts. Courasche's life during the Thirty Years' War appears determined by external forces, and her survival depends entirely on her capacity for unscrupulous, perceptive, and resourceful behavior.

Already at the age of fourteen, Courasche marries for the first time. By the time she is thirty-eight, seven husbands later, she realizes that marriage can provide security only temporarily, and it is prostitution that seems surprisingly safer and decidedly more profitable. Her moral indifference during these years of religious and political conflict is significant: a woman of her class had to be flexible, cunning, and shrewd to survive a time of countless killings and rapes, burnt-down villages, and looted towns. Moral behavior is recognized as a luxury a marginalized woman is unable to afford. Her marginalization, however, providing the basis for the character's picaresque tendencies, sharpens her gaze. Her penetrating look unveils disillusioning social mechanisms and rather unflattering human characteristics. It is only after Courasche's account has ended that she herself is criticized in a “Zugab des Autors” (Author's Addition). The author warns his male readers to beware of these dangerous monsters and accursed sirens, for the love of whores can only lead to filth, shame, poverty, scorn and, most of all, a bad conscience.<sup>4</sup> With his “böses Gewissen,”<sup>5</sup> Grimmelshausen positions himself firmly in the Christian tradition and reinforces a Christian value system, whereas his protagonist Courasche remains entirely within the picaresque tradition throughout her “own” narrative. The criticism implied in the narrative is clearly undermined by the concluding comments and thus Courasche's social critique becomes decidedly ambivalent.

In the majority of texts representing harlots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the prostitute is placed opposite the innocuous virgin or the virtuous wife, to balance the narrative structure and to emphasize its moral content. The prostitute (mainly in the form of a prince's mistress)<sup>6</sup> appears predominantly as such an antipode, the most famous being Countess Orsina who is the antipode of Emilia in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* (1772) or Lady Milford who is placed opposite Luise in Friedrich Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (Cabal and Love, 1784). In these texts, Countess Orsina and Lady Milford aid in clarifying the value system implied. By being morally imperfect themselves, they emphasize Emilia's and Luise's impeccable moral standing and purity of body and character.

But there are also examples of idealizations of the sex worker as moral and selfless. Harlots appear as completely cured of all vice or indeed untouched by any evil, but more so in Italian and French literature. Examples of socially and morally elevated prostitutes in German literature include Christian Martin Wieland's *Musarion* (1768) and Johann Jakob Wilhelm Heinse's *Laidion* (1774). Johann Friedrich Ernst Albrecht, best known for his prose adaptation of Friedrich Schiller's

verse tragedy *Don Carlos*, wrote a long, lurid novel about the Roman courtesan Laurette Pisana, based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's figure in *Les Amours de Mylord Edouard Bomston* (Mylord Edouard Bomston's Loves, 1780), who is depicted as a virtuous prostitute who in the end turns her back on her profession and enters a convent. A well-known ballad centered on an Indian prostitute who falls in love with the god Siva is Goethe's *Der Gott und die Bajadere* (God and the Bajadere, 1798).

Two of the most famous novels of harlotry were also written in the eighteenth century, but in England, not in Germany: Daniel Defoe's *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* (1722) and John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749), also known as *Fanny Hill*. In France, a type of prostitute very similar to the naive but worthy Fanny Hill became the heroine of Restif de la Bretonne's *Lucile ou les progrès de la vertu* (Lucile or the Development of Virtue, 1768), and Bretonne continued to depict harlots of naive integrity in other works, such as Zéphire in *Le Pornographe* (The Pornographer, 1769) and *Le Paysan perverti* (The Perverted Peasant, 1775). The figure of the benevolent prostitute became fashionable in French literature and remained so well into the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

In German literature of the nineteenth century, the use of the prostitute gains further popularity and complexity, although compared to the numerous examples of famous sex workers in French literature, her use by German authors remains sporadic until the second half of the century. The prostitute is mainly used as a marginal vehicle of social criticism and realism, such as Marion in Georg Büchner's *Dantons Tod* (Danton's Death, 1835). She may also appear as a representation of an alternative community, as in Wilhelm Raabe's *Im alten Eisen* (In Old Iron, 1878), and often the figure signifies a fascination with the origins of power and nature. The destructive potential of a sexuality not contained within marriage is depicted in Clemens Brentano's *Godwi oder das steinerne Bild der Mutter* (Godwi or the Mother's Stone Image, 1801). In this multi-layered novel, one of the women Godwi encounters is Violette, who is — like so many before her — portrayed as both naive and sensual. Violette falls in love with Godwi, and she feels rejected when he flees her mother's estate. Utterly dispirited, she becomes a soldiers' harlot. After spending several years in Italy, Godwi returns and is deeply shocked to find Violette a broken whore. He takes her to his country estate, where she dies soon after. It is her death that reforms the rather eccentric and selfish Godwi who had been floating

through life sensually and subjectively. The stone image from the title is of Violette, and the protagonist places it next to his mother's grave.

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. Following the success and scandal surrounding paintings such as Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1867) depicting often well known prostitutes in the nude, and the success of two French novels that focus on the life of prostitutes, Edmond de Goncourt's *La Fille Elisa* (The Girl Elisa, 1876) and Emile Zola's *Nana* (1879), the prostitute becomes truly visible in German literature. After reading Zola's novels, Max Klinger became the first German artist to depict prostitutes, as for example in *Ein Schritt* (One Step, 1883, see ill. 1), which is part of a cycle entitled *Dramen* (Dramas).<sup>8</sup> Coinciding with a sharp increase in the number of prostitutes across the German Empire, the sex worker's appearance in German poetry, drama, and prose after 1890 can be called almost inflationary. The prostitute serves as a low-life representative of a "milieu" (in works by Max Kretzer,<sup>9</sup> Clara Viebig, Hermann Conradi, Arno Holz, Karl Henckell, or Hans Ostwald), and as a mouthpiece of social, political, or legal criticism (in Else Jerusalem, Emmy Hennings, Ilse Frapan, or Margarete Böhme). She fascinates as an allegory of eros and life (in Ernst Stadler, Heinrich Mann, Curt Corrinth, or Alfred Lemm), or she is used as a symbol of disease and death (as in Gottfried Benn or Frank Wedekind). One of the most famous harlots in German literature is undoubtedly Lulu, and Stephanie Libbon examines in detail this ambivalent creation by Frank Wedekind later on in this volume.

The sex worker in German literature is depicted to arouse attention, to shock and even threaten, but also to entertain, as Alan Lareau shows in his essay on prostitute songs. In expressionism of the 1910s and early 1920s, the prostitute is finally crowned as the most popular female figure of this movement's art and literature, and she is celebrated — among other manifestations — as the madonna of sexual liberation. Again, she disturbs and criticizes, appearing as the *ewig Weibliche*, as commodity, as abyss. She uncovers the essence of the modern human being and symbolizes the ambivalence of modern time and space. Throughout the twentieth century, the sex worker also signifies the reality of the modern metropolis, whether we look at works by Alfred Döblin, Bodo Kirchhoff, Matthias Altenburg, or Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Within the apathetic and savage space of the big cities, she is often recognized as a human being. Consider Bertolt Brecht's depic-

tion of the sex worker: the prostitute as she is represented variously by Brecht in many of his works is the topic of Paula Hanssen's essay in this collection. Alan Lareau also examines Brecht's depiction of the sex worker in his analysis of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*Threepenny Opera*, 1928). Time and again, the harlot is represented as an ideal: a selfless, blessed teacher of physical pleasures, as for example in Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1922).

The works of German literature in which prostitutes play a major part are always about the existing social order, about boundaries and their transgression. The sex worker is used either to enforce the boundaries or to challenge their existence. But what is it about the prostitute that exerted such fascination on artists and writers for centuries, and why do we witness such an increase in prostitutes as literary figures between the 1890s and the 1920s?

When Wilhelm II took the throne in 1888, prostitution had become one of the most pressing social problems of urban Germany. Rapid industrialization, severe poverty among the proletarian masses within swiftly growing urban spaces, and gender roles culturally constructed only in terms of dominance and submission constituted a fertile ground for prostitution.<sup>10</sup> In 1809, the Berlin authorities had counted only 311 prostitutes, but by the end of the nineteenth century an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 women worked the streets of Berlin. In the Wilhelmine empire as a whole there were reckoned to be 330,000 prostitutes.<sup>11</sup> The *Sittenpolizei* or Morals Police were in charge of controlling this sale of female bodies; the male prostitute, however, was legally nonexistent in Wilhelmine Germany. But regardless of their gender, prostitutes were subject to extreme marginalization. Even the question of prostitution — as raised, for example, by women's rights advocates — was considered an explosive political as well as private topic in Wilhelm II's prudish Germany. In this repressive society, brothels and mental hospitals were remote "places of tolerance," spaces of incarcerated hysterics and whores who were, at least verbally, nonexistent within bourgeois culture; for, as Michel Foucault told us, "repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and by implication, an admission that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know."<sup>12</sup> However, despite modern puritanism's "triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence,"<sup>13</sup> prostitution remained a popular commodity and attracted more than just the interest of its male clients.

Since the early decades of the nineteenth century in France and from the second half of the century in Europe and North America, it was also scientists and scholars — such as Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet, William W. Sanger, Abraham Flexner, Franz Seraph Hügel, or Iwan Bloch — who paid an increasing amount of attention to the female sex worker. Trained as a doctor, Parent-Duchâtelet had for decades been working on public health issues, especially sewers, before focusing on a Parisian "cesspool of another kind."<sup>14</sup> His two-volume study *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris* (*Prostitution in the City of Paris*, 1836) is an effort to confine the threatening harlot by recording details about her habits, to analyze the data recorded, and to arrive at numerical results. Jann Matlock rightly points out that the belief in the danger these women represented to society became the vantage point of many studies of prostitution in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> While most of these more or less scientific accounts and histories indicate a concern for this particular group of marginalized women or rather for the threat it might pose to society, they also all too often carry an air of prejudice and serve not only as moral condemnations, even demonizations, of prostitutes, but also, of course, as vehicles to a socially sanctioned voyeurism.

William W. Sanger's *History of Prostitution*, published in 1858, may serve as another example of the academic treatment of prostitutes at the time. As a member of the New York medical profession, Sanger not only realized the necessity of publicizing the social, medical, and legal problems surrounding sex work in nineteenth-century New York City. He also recognized bourgeois society's trepidation when confronted with the "unspeakable" in the shape of sex or, even worse, its commodification. The author is also conscious of the repercussions to which the thematization of sex work might give rise: "he who dares allude to the subject of prostitution in any other than a mysterious and whispered manner, must prepare to meet the frowns and censure of society."<sup>16</sup> Despite this awareness he displays in it, Sanger's work is itself proof that the author is embedded in a socially as well as morally confined bourgeois society. Prostitution is feared, mystified, and remains "evil." Countless times in Sanger's history, "evil" or "vice" serve as synonyms for sex work. Despite indications of a relationship between economic hardship and prostitution, the profession nevertheless seems to gain its nourishment from secret, incomprehensible and uncanny springs. Prostitution "has all the imagined force of a monster, because of its obscurity; all the virulence of an avenging fiend, because its true powers are hidden."<sup>17</sup> And, of course, to complete its myth, the beast

appears to be immortal, as Sanger and many of his colleagues well into the twentieth century are eager to confirm.

The politics of prostitution were as ambiguous as the academic studies of harlotry at the time. The regulation of prostitution in Germany was in place from 1871 and was modeled after Britain's 1864 *Contagious Diseases Act*. In the German empire, as in the British one before it, the legal system guaranteed the austere suppression of prostitutes and their unquestioned availability at the same time. The Act "identified sex as a public issue, differentiated male from female sexuality, marked certain types of sexual activity as dangerous, and produced the prostitute body as the site of disease and pollution,"<sup>18</sup> as Shannon Bell points out. In Wilhelmine Germany, a woman who was believed to be a prostitute — and therefore a polluter of the male body — could be arrested at once. The possible consequences of such an arrest are illustrated by Ingrid Sharp as she places the case of Lisbeth Kolomak in the context of the regulation of sexuality in the Weimar Republic. The manner in which these arrests were sometimes carried out also led to an infuriated protest in Helene Lange's feminist journal *Die Frau*, when in 1913 an 18-year-old girl suspected of indecent behavior was led on a leash with her hands tied behind her back through the busiest streets of Berlin by a policeman on horseback.<sup>19</sup>

Once seized by the *Sittenpolizei* (Morals Police), a woman of no fixed abode was usually registered as a prostitute, and thereby stripped of the opportunity of finding safe and decent shelter in the future, for it was illegal to host prostitutes unless one wanted to take the risk of being charged with procuration. Licensed brothels, of course, were tolerated by the Morals Police since it was there that the product "sex," quietly authorized and regulated, could be consumed. Thus women or girls once registered — whether they had prostituted themselves or not — often had to take up high-priced residences with procurers, and they were turned into harlots by a society in which prostitution was "a necessary social institution of the bourgeois world,"<sup>20</sup> as August Bebel put it. Under Berlin regulations<sup>21</sup> "a person of female sex who has been assigned, because of her practicing immorality as a trade,"<sup>22</sup> to the surveillance of the Morals Police was subject to a large number of restrictions. The registration not only branded woman as outcast, it also robbed her of a significant amount of individual freedom. She was obliged to undergo regular medical examinations, which could be ordered by the Morals Police at any time, to take place in her own home, and she had to submit to them without resistance. At any hour of the day or night, she had to grant immediate admission to the police officer

who asked to inspect her dwelling. She was not allowed to visit theaters, museums, or even the zoo. She was not permitted to loiter or live in the vicinity of a school, church, higher institution of learning, Government or other public building, especially military barracks, and she was altogether forbidden to set foot into sixty-three of Berlin's streets and squares. This is not to say, of course, that sex workers were successfully excluded from bourgeois space. But when entering "illegal" territory, a prostitute had to adopt a carefully balanced behavior that was at once obvious enough to indicate availability to possible clients and inconspicuous enough not to attract the attention of a police officer.

By 1900, the *Prostitutionsfrage* (The Question of Prostitution) had become one of the most discussed issues in the German monarchy. Just as among the scholars mentioned earlier, this concern for harlotry was often a mixture of compassion, repulsion, and voyeurism. This ambivalent sentiment towards their subject of scholarly enquiry is reflected in most of the numerous German studies of prostitution. F. J. Behrend's regional study of *Die Prostitution in Berlin* (Prostitution in Berlin) was published in 1850, an indicator of the prevalence of sex work in the Prussian capital. Three years prior to Behrend's work, however, a memoir entitled *Memoiren einer Prostituierten oder die Prostitution in Hamburg* (A Prostitute's Memoirs or Prostitution in Hamburg, 1847), supposedly written by a sex worker herself and edited by Dr. J. Zeisig, was published in Hamburg. Franz Seraph Hügel's book *Zur Geschichte, Statistik und Regelung der Prostitution* (Regarding the History, Statistics, and Regulation of Prostitution, 1865) is the first comprehensive account of the historical, political and legal aspects of prostitution published in Austria. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, we can detect a distinct increase in publications on the matter and a tendency to analyze the phenomenon not as an historical manifestation but as a contemporary issue of immediate political relevance. Moreover, psychoanalysis and sexology led to a resexualization of the asexual Victorian body and therefore transformed sexual theory significantly. Evidence of this can already be found in Julius Kühn's *Die Prostitution im 19. Jahrhundert* (Prostitution in the Nineteenth Century, 1892) and Alfred Blaschko's *Syphilis und Prostitution* (Syphilis and Prostitution, 1893), and even more so in Robert Hessen's *Prostitution in Deutschland* (Prostitution in Germany, 1910), or Stephan Leonhard's *Die Prostitution* (Prostitution, 1912), to name but a few. This sexualization, however, was intrinsically divided into normal and pathological — be it women, bodies, or sexualities — and thus fits very well into the tradi-

tion of one of the more aggressive aspects of bourgeois ideology: the dual nature of woman.

The rigorous polarization between mother and whore was especially enunciated by criminologists Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero in Italy. Their book on *La donna delinquente: La prostituta e la donna normale* (The Female Criminal: the Prostitute and the Normal Woman, 1893) was published in German in 1894 under the title *Das Weib als Verbrecherin und Prostituierte* (Woman as Criminal and Prostitute) and gained immediate recognition among academics despite its rather questionable scientific approach. Their study aimed to offer proof for the claim that “the prostitute was a relic of an earlier stage of human evolution: mentally underdeveloped, physically deformed, and subhuman.” According to Lombroso, “all prostitutes exhibited the physical characteristics of this retarded development, which included a receding or narrow forehead, abnormal nasal bones, and enormous jaws.”<sup>23</sup> Their behavior was instinctive, Lombroso claimed, making them “born criminals” and “born prostitutes.” The idea of the “born prostitute” seems to have fascinated numerous scholars who in turn tried to come up with statistical data regarding a sex worker’s physical appearance, intelligence, and personality in an effort to correlate these characteristics with her profession. In this volume, Barbara Hales examines the writings of Paul Möbius, Erich Wulffen, and Hans Schneickert in the context of this construction and analysis of the criminal *femme fatale*.

Iwan Bloch, a specialist in sexually transmitted diseases, claims to have coined the term and founded the discipline of “Sexualwissenschaften” — “sexual sciences” or “sexology.” In 1912, he published the first volume of his planned twelve volume “handbook for the sexual sciences.” This first volume (*Die Prostitution*) again deals with a number of different aspects regarding sex work but is essentially a historical account of prostitution from early evidence to the Middle Ages. The second volume was not published until 1925 in collaboration with Georg Loewenstein. Bloch did not succeed in his aim to offer his discipline a basic multi-volume handbook, but the popularity of the first volume and his other sexological writings<sup>24</sup> give an indication of the popular interest in sexuality and prostitution even within bourgeois circles. Films that intended to educate the public in regard to the dangers of any contact with prostitutes also enjoyed popularity for obvious voyeuristic reasons. It is no surprise that the posters advertising films about social hygiene such as J. Fenneker’s design for the “sozialhygienisches Filmwerk” *Die Prostitution* (Prostitution, 1919, see ill. 2) usually depicted women who were erotically appealing. Here, the pros-

titute might have dark shadows around her eyes, but that is the only indicator for her being a possible threat to a client’s health. Her open mouth, her long neck and low dress, her slim waist, all support her seductive look directly at the viewer.

Within bourgeois space, prostitution was visible but not to be seen; observed but to be ignored; desired but to be repudiated. Under the veil of scholarly inquiry or educational purpose, however, just like the mythological frame around the depiction of a nude in French *Salon* art, a discussion of harlotry became acceptable. This acceptance, however, shrunk rapidly if society or state were denounced, or if the person daring to utter the word “prostitution” happened to be a female member of society.

In 1882, a public lecture on the treatment of prostitutes by the authorities was held in Darmstadt, supervised and soon interrupted by the local police. In her speech, the representative of the proletarian women’s rights movement and dedicated abolitionist Gertrud Guillaume-Schack confronted her audience with an attack on the, in her view, pernicious, hypocritical, and unjust system of regulated prostitution in the German Empire.<sup>25</sup> Abolitionists thought little of academic efforts to pathologize sexuality, since in their view this only reinforced the prostitute’s marginalization and strengthened the social and legal system that sought to categorize, confine, and criminalize these “fallen” women. Gertrud Guillaume-Schack, Lida Gustava Heymann and Anna Pappritz, to name but a few, considered the root of sex work to be not genetic predisposition, but poverty.

Following in the footsteps of her British colleague Josephine Butler, Gertrud Guillaume-Schack started to politicize the prostitution issue in 1880 and founded the *Kulturbund*. This was the first German branch of Butler’s “Ladies’ National Association,” which in 1869 had introduced the campaign against anyone — from pimp to state official — profiting from the availability of woman as sexual commodity. Like Butler before her, Guillaume-Schack argued that the regulation of the sale of female bodies by the Government stood in sharp contrast to all moral values the same authorities purported to uphold. The *Kulturbund* attacked in particular society’s hypocrisy in regard to prostitution, which had become an extremely attractive and even necessary commodity, conveniently maintaining the bourgeoisie’s economically oriented marriage conventions. While it was socially acceptable for middle-class men to visit brothels, especially since they could marry only after having established themselves professionally and financially, women were expected to remain virgins until they entered marriage.

Men buying sex were in no danger of prosecution in the German Empire, whereas women once registered as prostitutes usually became lifelong social and legal outcasts. In the abolitionists' view, the regulation of sex work unjustly affected solely women, who in turn did nothing but provide a service demanded by society. Therefore, prostitution became a key issue in the fight for women's rights since it so blatantly embodied the double standards of bourgeois society. This abolitionist view was shared by the writer Amely Bölte who used literature to publicize her political understanding in *Die Gefallene* (The Fallen Woman, 1882). Ilse Frapan's play *Die Retter der Moral* (The Saviors of Morality, 1905) also centers around the abolitionists' fight for the end of regulated prostitution. It depicts a young proletarian female, wrongly accused of prostitution, who is forced to undergo a physical examination during which she is raped. The play ends with the young woman's suicide. Her death serves as a powerful criticism of the state's regulation of harlotry.<sup>26</sup>

Gertrud Guillaume-Schack's abolitionist views and outspoken criticism of the state had serious repercussions for her career, and she was charged with causing a public nuisance when naming the ineffable in a public lecture. After surprisingly winning in court, Guillaume-Schack continued her public fight against regulated prostitution, the exploitation of proletarian women, and the discrimination of the sex worker. She was well aware of the connection between the extremely low wages of female factory workers or seamstresses and occasional prostitution, and she set up a number of organizations in support of proletarian women. In 1884 she established the journal *Die Staatsbürgerin* (The Female Citizen), the first German journal for the proletarian woman, which she again used to highlight the issue of prostitution. Her efforts threatened the authorities and eventually the continued legal prosecution resulted in her expatriation. Her journal was prohibited and pulped after it had been distributed for only six months. Gertrud Guillaume-Schack moved to Britain in 1886 where she died seven years later.

It was not until 1892, two years after the infamous Anti-Socialist-Law had finally been repealed (the law outlawed the socialist press and prohibited workers' meetings) that Clara Zetkin, who was to become the most prominent representative of the proletarian women's rights movement, created a new journal for the proletarian woman, the well-known *Gleichheit* (Equality). Again Clara Zetkin fought not only for the rights of the proletarian female, but also for those of the prostitute. For her, however, the emancipation of both the proletarian woman and

the prostitute involved nothing less than a complete restructuring of society as a whole. In this view, the emancipation of the female proletarian and industrialization were evidently linked. As Zetkin pointed out in a speech in 1889,<sup>27</sup> industrialization put an end to the economic significance of the woman in her home. On the one hand, this economic revolution marginalized woman, while on the other hand, it offered her an opportunity to gain economic power within society and hence aided her in her quest for emancipation. But despite the (at least theoretical) possibility of financial independence, emancipation is, in Zetkin's view, not conceivable in a bourgeois society. True, the proletarian female found herself to a limited extent financially independent of her husband, but only to be exploited by her employer and society. The wages of a female worker in the German Empire could hardly suffice to sustain one person, let alone a family. The proletarian woman was valued, Clara Zetkin tells us, for she was not only submissive but also cheap. Since low wages were identified as main threat to the social position of woman, the fight for the organization of female labor unions to achieve economic equality with men became a key issue within the proletarian women's rights movement. In 1882, more than 20% of the work force was female, but women still lacked organizational support. Proletarian women at the time earned up to 80% less than male workers carrying out a similar profession.<sup>28</sup> Occasional prostitution became increasingly common among proletarian women at the time and was seen as a downward spiral not only in regard to their health but also economically and socially.

The problem of poverty and its effects was reflected in several literary texts of the time, by authors such as Irma von Troll-Borostyáni — especially in her collection of novellas entitled *Hunger und Liebe* (Hunger and Love, 1900) — Clara Viebig in her novel *Das tägliche Brot* (Daily Bread, 1901), Karl Henckell in his poems "Einem Mädchen" (To a Girl, 1885) and "Das Blumenmädchen" (The Flower Girl, 1885),<sup>29</sup> or Albrecht Schaeffer in his novel of the steady descent of a sexually active woman in *Elli oder Die sieben Treppen* (Elli or the Seven Steps, 1919) to name but a few. As we can see in plays of the Weimar Republic<sup>30</sup> — such as Maria Lazar's *Der Henker* (The Henchman, 1921), Ilse Langner's *Frau Emma kämpft im Hinterland* (Mrs. Emma Fights in the Hinterland, 1929), Elke Eckersberg's *Drei Jahre und eine Nacht* (Three Years and a Night, 1932), and Eleonore Kalkowska's *Zeitungsnutzen* (Newspaper Items, 1933) — poverty remained the primary reason identified by writers that drove women into prostitution.

Most historians, sociologists, or left-wing feminists of the time would have agreed with Clara Zetkin, August Bebel, and Lily Braun that the poor pay of proletarian women was one of the main reasons for the rapid growth of the number of sex workers in the German Empire. But the women's rights movement was split into too many factions — radical bourgeois, bourgeois, Christian, socialist, proletarian — with too many different aims and opinions, to be truly effective in supporting the prostitute and fighting the regulators of her trade. The fight for the rights of the prostitute by left-wing feminists merely disrupted the conservative discourse of the moderate bourgeois and Christian activists. Prostitution was considered immoral, and a conversation about sex work, let alone a public display of interest in the issue, was more than most conservative women's rights advocates would have wanted to handle. Gertrud Guillaume-Schack's *Kulturbund* was disbanded due to the fact that only very few bourgeois women were willing to join a group that focused on something immoral.<sup>31</sup> Many of the conservative activists were all too often more likely to go into rapture when talking about the late Queen Luise of Prussia (1776–1810) than they were when discussing emancipatory issues. It was Queen Luise, rather than the German Emperor's wife Auguste Viktoria, who was upheld at the time as a symbol of female modesty and chastity, intelligence, and motherly instincts. In an opinion poll conducted in 1899 by the *Berliner Illustrierte*, Queen Luise was still considered the most important woman of the nineteenth century, relegating even Queen Victoria into second place.<sup>32</sup> In keeping with the notion that "respectability" was essential to the welfare of women, bourgeois feminist circles commonly merged traditional "feminine" values with demands for equal rights in education or career. While proletarian and radical feminists fought against the exploitation of the prostitute, the conservative bourgeois women's rights activists demanded the acknowledgement of their own intellectual equality with men,<sup>33</sup> social purity, and the abolition of prostitution. "Unbridled passion" or even a hint of lack of control in regard to sexual desire was seen as a threat, because, as Marianne Weber put it in 1907, it would lead to a brutalization of the emotional sphere, and it would be the woman who would have to carry the burden of this brutalization.<sup>34</sup>

Considering these open-minded bourgeois women's views on prostitution, it comes as no surprise that the writer Else Jerusalem chose to begin her famous novel *Der heilige Skarabäus* (The Holy Scarab, 1909) by addressing bourgeois women and by dedicating this novel of prostitution to them: "Euch! Tanzenden Mädchen, lachenden Bräuten,

spielenden Müttern, euch gehört dieses Buch."<sup>35</sup> The author wants to encourage these women and girls — who in her view are completely free of all worries — to pay attention to women who are not as lucky, namely prostitutes. Her emotional dedication continues: "Aus der Höhe eures Daseins lauschet in die Tiefen. Aus dem Lichte eures Lebens starret in das Dunkel. Fühlet — wo ihr lange verurteilt habt. Denket — wo ihr allzulange vorübergeschritten seid. Und euer Mitempfinden grüße sie sanft — diese Opfer eures Glückes."<sup>36</sup> The last line of this dedication is particularly interesting, since it refers to prostitutes as victims of the economically oriented bourgeois marriage system. The author criticizes the bourgeoisie's ignorance and arrogance in regard to prostitutes, and she makes it quite clear that in her view, a little compassion is the least these victims of society's hypocrisy deserve. Else Jerusalem offers her readers a glimpse of a milieu that was to be hidden from bourgeois women: the brothel. The motto of her novel is a quote by Lenau: "Auch im zerbrochenen Spiegelglase/Zeigt sich von unserer Zeit ein Bild," which indicates that Jerusalem regarded prostitution not only as a sad reality, but also as a part of society not at all as marginal as bourgeois women were brought up to think.

The first part of the novel describes the downfall of Katerine and is a typical story of a seduced girl who ends up on the street. Since her body is the only commodity she has left, its gradual disintegration plunges her even further into misery until she dies in a poorhouse at the age of thirty-five. Her daughter Milada is the focus of the second part of the novel. Born and raised in a brothel, Milada works as a servant in the brothel until her sixteenth birthday when she starts her career as a prostitute. Milada's origin is a decisive factor in Jerusalem's novel, since the day-to-day realities of a sex worker's life and the daily routines in a brothel are the only reality and normality she knows. She is unaware of bourgeois moral codes — the brothel is her home with its own value system and code of honor. When Milada is confronted for the first time with the bourgeoisie's repugnance for women of her social status, it is as incomprehensible to her as it is painful. Jerusalem does not at all ignore the tragic side of the life of a prostitute, but she makes it quite clear that in her opinion, it is the bourgeoisie and its hypocrisy that makes a difficult situation hopeless. The prostitute Milada, detested by middle and upper-class society for her profession, is therefore equipped by her author with exceptional personal qualities. She has courage, vitality, intelligence, and soul.<sup>37</sup> Anything but scum, she is rather the "holy scarab" of Viennese society. Jerusalem uses discussions between Milada and the brothel's "philosopher" Horner to raise ques-



tions about the bourgeois moral code and its consequences for the individual. Knowing that most of her fellow prostitutes had to enter the brothel after finding themselves pregnant with nowhere else to go, Milada asks Horner to explain society's logic of casting away unmarried women who become pregnant. In her mind pregnancy is not only natural, but a healthy female body's honorable duty.<sup>38</sup> Especially in a culture that claims its basis in Christianity, her questioning of a morality which excludes the helpless is an obvious pedagogical strategy by the author. "Sind denn diese Gesetze nur für die Gesicherten und Glücklichen da? Alles, was hilflos ist, steht außerhalb?"<sup>39</sup> In his reply, Horner unveils the bourgeoisie's fear of anarchy and chaos, which children born out of wedlock implicitly symbolize. Together with their mothers, they have to be excluded from society, because in them dwells autonomous, and therefore potentially destructive, power. Ironically he describes the perfect, that is mild and submissive, citizen who can only be conceived within the bourgeois marriage system: "Nur in der Ehe erzeugt man die einzig wertvollen, frommen, milden und verwendbaren Staatsbürger. Jede willkürliche Erzeugung ist untersagt."<sup>40</sup> But despite her critical attitude and naturalistic depiction of life in a brothel, Else Jerusalem returns to a somewhat naive idealism in the end. Milada leaves the brothel and buys a house idyllically placed in the mountains to offer a home to the children of prostitutes. However, time and again the author stresses the necessity of breaking the silence and recognizing prostitutes as human beings, before the silence breaks them,<sup>41</sup> and she clearly encourages her female readers to examine critically their own attitudes towards these outcasts as well as their own moral codes.

Considering the tremendous success of Jerusalem's novel, which had to be reprinted four times in the first year after its publication alone, and of Margarete Böhme's *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen* (Diary of a Lost Girl, 1905), which sold 90,000 copies in the year it appeared, the influence of literary texts that critically analyzed bourgeois society's attitude towards prostitutes should not be underestimated. Margarete Böhme's text, an international bestseller translated into fourteen languages and probably the most widely distributed German novel about the life of a harlot, is the focus of two chapters in this volume. Anna Richards places Böhme's diary in its literary context, comparing it with Alexandre Dumas's *La Dame aux camélias* (The Lady with Camélias, 1848), Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880), and Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* (1934). Margaret McCarthy examines the status of Böhme's novel as diary. This is particularly interesting because the strategy of raising a narrative to the status of a diary and thus laying claim to authenticity

was used by many German authors from Margarete Böhme to Emmy Hennings. Margaret McCarthy also analyzes the representation of the prostitute in German film, namely in G. W. Pabst's 1929 film adaptation of Böhme's text. Weimar street films, such as Karl Grune's *Die Strasse* (The Street, 1923) and Joe May's *Asphalt* (Asphalt, 1929), are discussed by Barbara Hales in her essay on the female criminal who becomes synonymous in these films with the evil and destructive forces of the modern metropolis.

But in spite of literary texts<sup>42</sup> that focus on the necessity of reforming bourgeois moral codes being extremely popular among a female readership, or plays such as Clara Viebig's *Eine Zuflucht* (A Refuge, 1905),<sup>43</sup> which unveil the ineffectiveness of imprisonment as way of reforming "fallen women," many middle and upper class women nevertheless regarded prostitutes as a threat that needed to be contained. Hanna Bieber-Böhm was one of the prominent conservative activists who perceived prostitution as the symbol of the moral decay of modern society and declared war on its colorful erotic outcasts. The *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine* — the umbrella organization for all bourgeois women's associations — adopted Bieber-Böhm's "morality"-program in 1895. The *BdF's* statutes<sup>44</sup> focus on the necessity for an improvement of public morality and condemn the prostitute as much as the state that organizes prostitution. Bourgeois activists advocated preventative measures such as banning "immoral" literature and organized anti-alcohol campaigns. Bieber-Böhm demanded drastic punishment of sex workers (one to two years imprisonment in the strictest "re-education" institutions; three to five years if infected with syphilis or other sexually transmitted diseases), the prohibition of brothels, and the extension of the criminalization of prostitution to its clients. The aim was to create awareness among both sexes, but especially among "fallen" women, of their moral responsibilities. Contrary to the abolitionists, whose aims included the decriminalization of sex work and who believed sex to be a private matter, conservative bourgeois women such as Hanna Bieber-Böhm simply ignored the social impetus for prostitution, such as the extreme economic hardship female workers faced at the time. For the latter, "moral behavior" was a luxury they all too often were unable to afford.

Although not all conservative activists were as fundamentally moralistic in their approach, they clearly divorced their own demands for political rights from any objective regarding sexual freedom. In Germany as well as in England, George Mosse states, "an alliance between feminists and puritans stifled any chance for a change in traditional atti-

tudes. This strategic alliance allowed the movement to stay within the bounds of respectability, while building up a certain kind of female self-respect.<sup>45</sup> Even Minna Cauer, who was considered a radical within the left-wing of the bourgeois women's rights movement, saw it as her obligation to "educate state and society so that recognition of our equal rights is not only seen as a necessity, but also as desirable for the maintenance of order, manners, and morality."<sup>46</sup>

From 1919, when German women had finally achieved *political* equality with men, the official regulation of prostitution was denounced mainly as a special legal system that contradicted the common *legal* position of men and women set out in the constitution of the Weimar Republic. It was not until 1927, however, that the women's rights activists' fight against the regulation of prostitution resulted in an eradication of the Morals Police. The "Gesetz zur Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten"<sup>47</sup> at last put prostitution within the jurisdiction of the welfare and health services, but it was one of the first laws to be repealed by the National Socialists in 1933.<sup>48</sup> Prostitution was once again made illegal and offenses were punished with imprisonment. Even walking up and down the street could be considered breaking the law, as a case in Breslau in 1935 shows: a woman was convicted despite the fact that there was no proof that she had prostituted herself. The argument in this case was that a woman could justifiably be identified by a police officer as a commodity because in walking up and down the street she places herself on display, like merchandise in a shop window, which is available even if no one walks past.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, once a police officer established her commodification via her appearance, no further proof was necessary and prison awaited the convicted.

Imprisonment and prostitution often present themselves as related topics in the representation of harlotry. In Emmy Hennings's novel *Gefängnis* (Prison, 1919), the protagonist meets mostly streetwalkers during her time in jail, and the question of the regulation of prostitution is raised. The prostitute is identified as the one most in need of protection — "das schutzloseste Geschöpf, ein Straßenmädchen"<sup>50</sup> — but the law is anything but on her side. Just as the women's rights advocate Hanna Bieber-Böhm demanded the extension of the criminalization of prostitution to its clients, Emmy Hennings's protagonist proclaims that if it is illegal to sell sex, it must also be illegal to buy it. But in her view, it is due to the weakness of the judicial system that the courts punish the female streetwalkers rather than their male clients: "Der Gerichtshof besteht aus Männern, und es erfordert weniger Kraftaufwand, das schwache Geschlecht zu bestrafen, als Männer zur Re-

chenschaft zu ziehen, die ihre stärksten Neigungen geheimzuzulhalten wünschen."<sup>51</sup>

Emmy Hennings's case is an interesting one, for prostitution is a dominant topic in her early poetry and prose, and the author seems almost eager to confirm that it is from personal experience that she produces her fiction.<sup>52</sup> In the first part of her novel *Das Brandmal* (The Stigma, 1920) the narrator turns to prostitution for the first time out of financial necessity, and she experiences through it a fusion of her self with the money in her hand. At once she senses that the two are interchangeable. She has sold herself and is holding the evidence of her commodification in her clenched fist. The bright ten mark coin brands her as an outcast; it becomes a sign for her decline into depravity and a symbol of her shame.<sup>53</sup> When she subsequently places her order in a café she feels that the money is only one part of the economic chain — the other links are herself and the food that she craves. The main female character in *Das Brandmal* subsequently tries her hand at, among other things, a peddler and as a hostess in a wine bar, but in the end she chooses prostitution as the more "honest" profession. The brothel becomes her home, the prostitutes — or "Mädchen," as she calls them — are her family. In many of her early poems, too, Hennings exhibits an attachment to this milieu, which appears as a refuge. For example, in the poem "Im Krankenhaus" (In Hospital, 1913),<sup>54</sup> as in *Das Brandmal*, she speaks of her "Schwestern von den Gassen" whom she is longing to be with. Her early works address the issue of prostitution head on, its misery, the shock of utter commodification, the consequences (including the health factors), the emptiness, the everyday life of the brothel. Prostitution is presented essentially not as a choice but as a necessity, for it makes survival possible: "Und diese Kunst, die geht nach Brot," as Hennings put it in her poem entitled "Mädchen am Kai" (Girl at the Quay, probably 1915).<sup>55</sup> As many women's rights advocates before, Hennings time and again denounces a legal system as unjust that punishes women for trying to survive.

In 1902, the Viennese writer and critic Karl Kraus publicly condemned a legal system that was eager to convict its sex workers — or, for that matter, anyone who violated the moral code —, but that was unwilling to guard those members of society who were in need of care and protection. In his 1902 article on "Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität" (Morality and Crime), Kraus challenges the fact that bourgeois moral codes were considered the appropriate basis for the legal system. A legal system which hypocritically speaks of honor<sup>56</sup> and hides behind the mask of morality is bound to be, in his view, ineffective. Kraus criticizes

the legal system which was set up as the executor of moral codes and thus effortlessly divides society into insiders and outsiders, into full members and despised outcasts. Kraus stresses that criminal jurisdiction has nothing to do with morals, and that morality as a legally protected right is a delusion.<sup>57</sup> The legal system should, he believes, concentrate on the protection of the unprotected, such as minors, rather than pester adults and snoop around in their private matters. But instead of guarding the rights of the individual, the legal system deals with great enthusiasm and curiosity with events that belong, in Kraus's opinion, entirely to an individual's private sphere, such as extramarital love affairs, prostitution, and homosexuality. By criminalizing certain types of sexual encounters between consenting adults, the legal system criminalizes individuals who should instead have been legally protected from its interference. It is in this context that the fine line drawn in Austrian literature of the time between a prostitute and a "süßes Mädel" gains significance. In her chapter on the "süßes Mädel" Brenda Keiser analyzes depictions of this literary figure by Arthur Schnitzler, Paul Busson, and Trude Marzik, and she discusses the socially significant difference between the "süßes Mädel" and a sex worker.

In the first essay of this collection, Karl Leydecker examines the representation of the "fallen woman" in a number of German and Austrian plays — namely by Felix Hollaender and Hans Land, Arthur Schnitzler, Otto Erich Hartleben, Ludwig Fulda, and Hermann Sudermann — within the context of bourgeois society's value system. He especially directs our attention to the fine line drawn by dramatists of the 1890s between prostitutes and women engaged in free love relationships, which served to challenge bourgeois society's undifferentiated condemnation of sexually active, unmarried women. At the same time, some of these dramatists had doubts about the legitimacy of such a distinction, which yet again set the "bad" prostitute against the woman in a loving relationship. The significance of this distinction lies mainly in the efforts of the conservative bourgeoisie to continually erode it, since they needed instead to uphold the distinction between the respectable and the fallen woman to ensure the continuation of their moral codes, their values, and their marriage system.

Many of Karl Kraus's contemporaries, especially within avantgarde circles, shared his disgust with and contempt for the legal system in regard to sexuality. The expressionist Ludwig Rubiner, for example, compared efforts to avoid sinful activities to mere decoration, the arts and crafts of community life: "Und was ist Vermeiden des 'Sündhaften' anderes als Schmuck; Dekoration des Ethischen; Kunstgewerblichkeit

des Gemeinschaftslebens! Es ist weder seelische noch geistige Gesinnung, das Böse aus dem Leben [. . .] 'auszusparen.' Es ist nur bequem. Es ist — erbärmlich schauerlichster aller Zustände — zufriedenstellend."<sup>58</sup> In Rubiner's opinion, omitting "vice" leads to a comfortable and a dreadfully satisfactory condition that will eventually just leave an empty, echoless architectural construct of life. And it was this void created by the restrictions of a bourgeois moral code, that the avantgarde sought to fill with intense, often grotesque visions of the *essence* of modern existence. Taking seriously Friedrich Nietzsche's claim that "ordered society puts the passions to sleep," they aimed precisely to experience and to express instincts, emotion, and ecstasy. The only figures who appeared to create chaos successfully within the tidy and chaste living-room atmosphere of the Austrian and German Empires were the ones who had been excluded from bourgeois space: strangers, criminals, beggars, psychopaths, and prostitutes. In expressionist art and literature (1907–23), even more so than in other sub-divisions of modernism, the prostitute became the most dominant female figure and a symbol for almost all aspects of the modern urban experience, as I will later discuss in more detail. Considering the provocative and even shocking aesthetic potential of this colorful outcast in any representation, it comes as no surprise that sex workers became favorite characters in the art and literature of anti-bourgeois, bohemian artists and writers.<sup>59</sup> The prostitute is often depicted as the madonna of the metropolis and the saviour of modern man. The latter is beautifully illustrated by Carl Sternheim, who refused to be labeled an expressionist, in his novella *Busekow* (Busekow, 1913). In this novella, printed for the first time in the journal *Die weißen Blätter* in 1913, Gesine, a young prostitute, becomes the lover of Christof Busekow, a nerdy policeman. Because of her positive and rejuvenating influence, Busekow not only manages to break out of his *Kleinbürgerexistenz* of order and suppression, he also receives promotions in his job due to his sudden understanding and enthusiasm. Gesine turns out to be a deeply religious Catholic. When Gesine becomes pregnant, Busekow cannot but regard this prostitute as the personification of *all* divine miracles beginning with the creation of the earth. Unfortunately, Busekow does not live to see his offspring, since he — in the midst of a victorious outcry<sup>60</sup> — is run over by an automobile.

While I could discuss further examples of harlots at this point, I will instead allow the following essays to shed light on many more of the most interesting and symptomatic depictions of the prostitute in modern German literature. I shall present a few ideas to establish a theoretic-

cal context here that might help us to read the streetwalker as textual representation in additional ways. In recent years, theories of the "Other" have captured the imagination of many scholars, and literary figures were often defined through "difference" or located in Homi Bhabha's "Third Space."<sup>61</sup> Although the prostitute can easily be read as "Other," she is all too often ignored.<sup>62</sup> But before focusing on more recent thoughts, I would like to concentrate on the sociologist and neo-Kantian philosopher Georg Simmel, whose ideas were not only very well known among the avantgarde of the early twentieth century, but which also quite obviously exerted their influence on writers of the time who depicted bourgeois society and the prostitute.

As Simmel pointed out in his *Philosophie des Geldes* (Philosophy of Money, 1900), the problematic nature of the bourgeois marriage system lies in its claim to moral purity based essentially on its demand of the groom's financial security and the bride's virginity. Here, *die Geldheirat* is unveiled as not much more than a barter deal struck between bourgeois men — one man's money and social status for another's unpolluted daughter — that manifests the objectification and alienation of the human being.<sup>63</sup> In Simmel's view this type of deal lacks significant distinction from the exchange of money for sex between client and prostitute. This is only one example Simmel gives to illustrate the determination of modern society and spaces (namely the modern metropolis) by the money economy, which consequently leads to the specialization of social activity and the depersonalization of individual as well as social relationships. It is *money* that represents the sole relation left between the city-dwellers. Georg Simmel depicts the prostitute as the most striking example of the power and mechanism of money in the modern metropolis. The price of the prostitute is not only subject to supply and demand; as Simmel points out, her value is integrated completely in the machinery of the modern metropolis through the possibility of acquisition of her body by a male customer, as also Luce Irigaray emphasizes.<sup>64</sup> Even fashion may dictate her personal value, a value which nevertheless remains a monetary one. For Simmel, as for Karl Marx, this monetary value thus incorporates what Simmel himself called a "Nivellierung"<sup>65</sup> or "levelling out of objects." "Objects" here comprise human beings as well, for they have long since turned into objects themselves, and this "Nivellierung" is at the same time both cause and effect of the interchangeability of things.

Within the modern metropolis the prostitute becomes one of the most salient of "dialectical images" of capitalism, as Walter Benjamin would later phrase it.<sup>66</sup> No longer an accidental fly in the soup of bour-

geois societies, the prostitute is commodity and seller, owner and means of production in one, and she is thus beyond the reassurance of a designated marginality. A symbol of capitalism, she is now beyond any simple synthesis of "the form of the commodity and its content,"<sup>67</sup> as Susan Buck-Morss put it. Rather, the synthesis is here thesis and antithesis in one without losing the dialectic of contradiction between the two. At once object-to-be-sold and subject-to-sell, merchandise and merchant, the prostitute embodies the quintessential qualities of any commodity: the flexibility to become whatever sells and the relative stability that accompanies any money-oriented market. The sex worker was therefore, not surprisingly, recognized by the avantgarde as an appropriate representative of modern time and space.

But again we are twice denied any form of sociation, for the harlot in German literature always remains directly *inside* and at the same time entirely *outside* of modern society; her literary representation around 1900 consolidates the prostitute's complete integration into immense production processes as well as emphasizing her lethargic dwelling in total isolation. The sex worker appears as a woman thoroughly determined by the money economy of the modern metropolis, who at the same time fixes her own price on the street corner. And again, it is precisely her ambivalent nature and her implicit lack of certainty that makes her — in the eyes of Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin and, in my view, many German writers, an almost ideal symbol of a dialectical capacity that still characterizes the metropolis and modern capitalism today.

The original meaning of harlot — or its Old French root *arlot* — was "vagabond" (and is, however urbanized, still present in the term "streetwalker"). In German literature and art — we may think of the poetry of Ernst Stadler or the paintings by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner — the prostitute often appears as a nomad, wandering the streets of the roaring metropolis, belonging and yet not belonging, familiar and yet strange. At once invited into and yet by definition outside bourgeois space, she is akin to "the stranger" who was so pointedly described by Georg Simmel in 1908 as "the man who comes today and stays tomorrow."<sup>68</sup>

The stranger *and* the prostitute bring themselves into the innermost circle of society while at the same time remaining spiritually, socially, or even legally remote. Following Simmel, the stranger represents "a synthesis of [. . .] remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement,"<sup>69</sup> which is surely also true of the prostitute. The stranger and the prostitute are neither friend nor enemy and therefore incongruous

with society. Again they lack the comfort of such a stable opposition that — to quote Zygmunt Bauman's essay on "Modernity and Ambivalence" — "sets apart truth from falsity, good from evil, beauty from ugliness."<sup>70</sup> It is precisely in such terms that, for example, the expressionists' representation of the prostitute denounces the bourgeois *Weltbild* and its cozy set of oppositions, thus denying that which makes the world "readable" for certain classes: it indulges in doubt and confusion, for this, according to the modernists, is the essence of modern spaces and their inhabitants.

These immanent dialectics in the representation of the prostitute as we witness it in the works of Frank Wedekind, Else Jerusalem, Max Brod or Curt Corrinth consciously pose a threat to any bourgeois conception of the world. A simple provocation or opposition could be dealt with, but this awesome figure represents illegibility itself and threatens the mere possibility of difference and sociation. The prostitute is neither friend nor enemy, but she could be both.<sup>71</sup> She is undecidable, to borrow Jacques Derrida's term, like the Greek word *pharmakon*, which can mean remedy as well as poison, or as Derrida puts it, "neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, [ . . . ] neither speech nor writing";<sup>72</sup> Her touch is both healing and contaminating, she appears as both the saviour and the polluter of the male body. As an undecidable, the prostitute cannot be included in a philosophical world of binary antagonisms, but this is where her power lies. Or, as Zygmunt Bauman phrases it: "Their underdetermination is their potency: because they are nothing, they may be all. [ . . . ] They bring the outside into the inside, and poison the comfort of order with the suspicion of chaos."<sup>73</sup>

The power of the prostitute in German literature is often due to her instability and ambivalence. This figure — by just being what she was made to be by state, church, and society — opposes all that is complete, finished, and polished, and she challenges "every ready made solution in the sphere of thought and world outlook."<sup>74</sup> She is the perfect image for writers who seek to question existing hierarchies, moral codes, or social norms. Despite her clear, actual marginalization and social exclusion, the sex worker in German literature is hardly ever portrayed just as an outcast, powerless, and diseased. In most cases, she seems to function in the literary texts as a symbol for a necessary transgression of the boundaries prescribed and serves to effectively circumscribe a problem that is in dire need of a solution.



Ill. 2: Film poster "Die Prostitution," 1919, design J. Fenneker, ill. 88 in Rita Täuber, *Der häßliche Eros* (Berlin: Mann, 1997), 111.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The focus of this collection is on the female prostitute only. For an example of one of the very few allusions to male prostitutes in German literature of the time, see the poetry of Max Hermann-Neisse, such as "Nocturno," published in *Das Bordell. Eine groteske Publikation* (Berlin: Worien-Worm, 1921), 25.

<sup>2</sup> See especially Hrothsvith von Gandersheim's Thais in the *Pafnutius*-legend, and Cäsarius von Heisterbach's Beatrix in the *Libri miraculorum*. Both texts are in Latin.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Elisabeth Frenzel's discussion of "die selbstlose Kurtisane" in her *Motive der Weltliteratur* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1992), 434–51, and the essays by Margaret McCarthy, Anna Richards, Christiane Schönfeld, Paula Hanssen, and Alan Lareau in this collection. See also Nancy McCombs's introduction to her book *Earth Spirit, Victim, or Whore* (New York: Lang, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen, *Lebensbeschreibung der Erzbe-trägerin und Landstörzerin Courage* (Munich: Goldmann, 1969), 139.

<sup>5</sup> Grimmelshausen, 139.

<sup>6</sup> The *Fürstenmätresse* is included in the category of the prostitute due to the fact that a prince's or king's mistress exchanges sexual favours for profit, be it monetary or political gain.

<sup>7</sup> For more information see Frenzel, *Motive*, 444–49, and Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nine-teenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> See Rita E. Täuber, *Der hässliche Eros: Darstellungen zur Prostitution in der Malerei und Grafik 1855–1930* (Berlin: Mann, 1997), 43–44.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed discussion of Max Kretzer's novel about streetwalkers, see McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim, or Whore*, 50–66.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. among others Iwan Bloch's *Die Prostitution* (Berlin: Louis Marcus, 1912); Abraham Flexner's *Prostitution in Europe* [1914] (Reprint: Montclair, N.J.: Patteron Smith, 1969); Judith Walkowitz's essay on "The Politics of Prostitution," *Signs* 1 (1980): 123–35; Daniela Weiland's *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1983); Regina Schulte's *Sperrbe-zirke: Tugendhaftigkeit und Prostitution in der bürgerlichen Welt* (Frank-furt/M.: Syndikat, 1984); the volume on *Frauen und Sexualmoral*, edited by Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit (Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 1986); and Christine Overall's "What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work," *Signs* 4 (1992): 705–24.

<sup>11</sup> August Bebel in his new revised and more detailed edition of *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1909, originally published in 1879), 196, and Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, 26 and 28.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality I* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Foucault, 4–5.

<sup>14</sup> See the first volume of Alexandre J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet's *De la prostitu-tion dans la ville de Paris* (Paris: Baillière, 1836), 7. Cf. also Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction*, 22–33.

<sup>15</sup> Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction*, 26.

<sup>16</sup> William Sanger, *The History of Prostitution* (New York: Harper, 1858), 17.

<sup>17</sup> Sanger, 18.

<sup>18</sup> Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostituted Body* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1994), 55.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Helene Lange's article "Im Namen der Sittlichkeit!" *Die Frau* 20 (1912/13): 753–54.

<sup>20</sup> Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, 185.

<sup>21</sup> See Appendix II, in Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, 415–19; and Eva Borst, *Über jede Scham erhaben* (Frankfurt/M.: Lang, 1993), 24–28.

<sup>22</sup> Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe*, 415. The following list of regulations is a summary of the most restrictive rules quoted by Flexner, 415–19.

<sup>23</sup> As quoted in Nickie Roberts, *Whores in History* (London: Harper Collins, 1992), 229; See also Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostituted Body*, 64–66; Janssen-Jurreit, *Frauen und Sexualmoral*, 20; Barbara Hales, "Woman as Sexual Criminal," *Women in German Yearbook* 12 (1996): 103, a revised version of this article is included in this collection of essays.

<sup>24</sup> For example, his book on contemporary sexuality in its relation to modern culture *Das Sexualleben unserer Zeit in seinen Beziehungen zur modernen Kul-tur* (Berlin: Marcus, 1907) sold more than 60,000 copies in the first six years after its publication.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Gertrud Guillaume-Schack's lecture "Über unsere sittlichen Verhält-nisse und die Bestrebungen und Arbeiten des British-Continentalen und Allg. Bundes," reprinted in Janssen-Jurreit, *Frauen und Sexualmoral*, 61–69.

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed discussion of Frapan's play see Borst, *Über jede Scham erha-ben*, 167–200.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Clara Zetkin's speech at the International Workers Conference in Paris, 19th July 1889. See *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften I* (Berlin: Dietz, 1957), 4–5.

<sup>28</sup> See Clara Zetkin, "Frauenarbeit und gewerkschaftliche Organisation," *Die Gleichheit*, 1 Nov 1893. See her *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften I*: the figures published by the Leipzig Chamber of Commerce are quoted on page 34.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of these poems by Karl Henckell and an analysis of Hermann Conradi's poem "Verkauft," see Nancy McCombs, *Earth Spirit, Victim, or Whore*, 94–103.

<sup>30</sup> See Belinda Carstens-Wickham's entry on prostitution in Friedericke Eigler and Susanne Kord, eds., *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature* (Westport: Greenwood, 1997), 420, and Christa Gürtler, *Schwierige Verhältnisse: Liebe und Sexualität in der Frauenliteratur um 1900* (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> See Daniela Weiland, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation* (Düsseldorf: Econ, 1983), 122.

<sup>32</sup> George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Fertig, 1985), 96.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Hedwig Dohm "Zur sexuellen Moral der Frau," *Die Aktion* 12 (1911): 360.

<sup>34</sup> Marianne Weber, "Sexualethische Prinzipienfragen," (1907), in *Frauenfragen und Frauengedanken: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1919), 49.

<sup>35</sup> Else Jerusalem, *Der heilige Skarabäus* (Berlin: Fischer, 1909), 5.

<sup>36</sup> Jerusalem, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Jerusalem, 235.

<sup>38</sup> Jerusalem, 279.

<sup>39</sup> Jerusalem, 279.

<sup>40</sup> Jerusalem, 281.

<sup>41</sup> Jerusalem, 367. For a more detailed analysis of Jerusalem's novel, see Borst, *Über alle Scham erhaben*, 60–114.

<sup>42</sup> See also Julie Burow's novel *Frauen-Loos* (Women's Fate, 1850), Anna Pappritz's novel *Vorurteile* (Prejudices, 1894), Helene Böhlau's novel *Halbtier* (Half Animal, 1899), Dora Duncker's *Maria Magdalena* (Mary Magdalene, 1903), and Gabriele Reuter's novel *Das Tränenhaus* (The House of Tears, 1909).

<sup>43</sup> *Eine Zuflucht* is part of a drama cycle entitled *Der Kampf um den Mann* (The fight for a man, 1905).

<sup>44</sup> See Weiland, *Geschichte der Frauenemanzipation*, 252.

<sup>45</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, 110.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Mosse, 110.

<sup>47</sup> The law combating sexually transmitted diseases.

<sup>48</sup> On prostitution during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, see Käthe Frankenthal "Prostitution und Geschlechtskrankheiten in der Weimarer Zeit" (1940), in Janssen-Jurreit, *Frauen und Sexualmoral*, 303–10.

<sup>49</sup> See Käthe Frankenthal, 308.

<sup>50</sup> Emmy Hennings, *Gefängnis* (Frankfurt/M.: Ullstein, 1985), 105.

<sup>51</sup> Hennings, *Gefängnis*, 105.

<sup>52</sup> The most recent publication regarding the life of Emmy Hennings is Bernhard Echte's excellent exhibition catalogue *Emmy Ball-Hennings: 1885–1948: 'Ich bin so vielfach . . . ' Texte, Bilder, Dokumente* (Frankfurt/M.: Stroemfeld, 1999). The catalogue includes a chronology of Hennings's life (pages 287–91) in which the author clearly identifies two periods in her life during which she had to resort to prostitution (1907–8 and 1915). See also my essays on the topic, "Confessional Narrative/Fragmented Identity: Emmy Ball-Hennings's *Das Brandmal. Ein Tagebuch*," in *Women's Autobiography in German*, ed. et al. Gisela Shaw (London, Bern, New York: Lang, 2000) and "Constructing the Subject? Emmy Hennings's Autobiographical Works," in *Representing Lives*, eds. Pauline Polkey-Taylor and Alison Donnel (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 187–95.

<sup>53</sup> Emmy Hennings, *Das Brandmal* (Berlin: Reiß, 1920), 46.

<sup>54</sup> Emmy Hennings, *Die letzte Freude* (Leipzig: Wolff, 1913), 12.

<sup>55</sup> Emmy Hennings, *Betrunkene taumeln alle Litfaßsäulen* (Hanover: Postscriptum, 1990), 32.

<sup>56</sup> Karl Kraus "Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität" (1902), *Sittlichkeit und Kriminalität* (München: Langen, Müller: 1963), 13. See also Laurie Teal, "The Hollow Women: Modernism, the Prostitute, and Commodity Aesthetics," *Differences* 7.3 (1995): 80–108.

<sup>57</sup> Kraus, 14.

<sup>58</sup> Ludwig Rubiner, "Aktualismus" (1916), in Otto F. Best, *Theorie des Expressionismus* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1982), 18.

<sup>59</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this topic see my book *Dialektik und Utopie: Die Prostituierte im Expressionismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996).

<sup>60</sup> Carl Sternheim, *Busekow* (Leipzig: Wolff, 1914). Reprinted in Fritz Martini, *Prosa des Expressionismus* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983), 163–84.

<sup>61</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>62</sup> See for example Claudia Breger and Tobias Döring, *Figuren der/des Dritten* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998). A noteworthy exception in the general literature is G. Spivak's essay on "Women and Difference."

<sup>63</sup> Georg Simmel, *Die Philosophie des Geldes* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1989), 520–6.

<sup>64</sup> See Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977). See especially her chapter on "Le marché des femmes."

<sup>65</sup> Simmel, *Die Philosophie des Geldes*, 540.

<sup>66</sup> "Zweideutigkeit ist die bildliche Erscheinung der Dialektik, das Gesetz der Dialektik im Stillstand. Dieser Stillstand ist Utopie und das dialektische Bild also Traumbild. Ein solches Bild stellt die Ware schlechthin: als Fetisch. Ein solches Bild stellen die Passagen, die sowohl Haus sind wie Sterne. Ein solches Bild stellt die Hure, die Verkäuferin und Ware in einem ist." Walter Benjamin, "Paris, die Hauptstadt des XIX. Jahrhunderts," *Das Passagen-Werk I* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1983), 55.

<sup>67</sup> Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing. Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1989), 185.

<sup>68</sup> Regarding Georg Simmel's essay "Der Fremde," *Soziologie* (Munich, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1908, 685–91), see the English translation by Donald Levine: "The Stranger," *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1971), 143.

<sup>69</sup> Levine, 145.

<sup>70</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, "Modernity and Ambivalence," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2–3 (1990): 144.

<sup>71</sup> My argumentation here was inspired by Zygmunt Bauman's outstanding essay quoted above.

<sup>72</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1981), 43. The term 'undecidables' was coined by Jacques Derrida in *Disseminations* (London: Athlone, 1981) and *Positions*. See also Bauman, "Modernity and Ambivalence," 145–47.

<sup>73</sup> Bauman, 146.

<sup>74</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1984), 3.