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Moral trash films [Schundfilms]—which I always have in mind when I speak of the trash films as such—can be divided into three main groups: tasteless, criminal, and sexual trash films. Of course, the borders between these three groups are often porous, and the last two are actually only varieties of tasteless or vulgar trash films; nonetheless, it is appropriate to draw attention to these two specific varieties whose practical effects are so important. It will not be necessary to characterize these groups in any more detail; suffice it to say that sexual trash films are apt to damage viewers sexually through obscenities or strong eroticism, while criminal films constitute a filmic counterpart to Nick Carter and Sherlock Holmes stories; under the category of tasteless trash films, we may include, for example, callous films and scenes designed to be humorous but which in reality leave spectators with a repulsive impression.

The dangers posed by such trash films are manifold. Their most basic effect, provoked by all of those fantastic representations that pass for genuine copies of real life, can be observed in the blurring of the spectator's sense of reality. This effect represents a particular danger for youthful spectators, who still lack practical experience. Another general effect almost always provoked by these films is that of rendering their audience more brutish. Here I am not thinking of the lowering of artistic taste—although this certainly is an unfortunate side effect of trash films—but rather of the brutalizing moral influence these films exert. And why should we expect anything different? A child in the midst of developing into an adult can still be steered toward the good as well as the bad, at least within certain limits set by his natural character. If such a child repeatedly exposes himself to the many sorts of crimes and cruel acts shown in cinemas today, will this person's moral sense not necessarily be blunted? This brutalizing effect offers the general basis from which we can explain the incentive to crime issued by such trash films, especially the criminal ones. Of course, this incentive to crime can also be explained by the suggestive influence that moving pictures mechanically exert, above all over the psyche of children, spurring them almost against their will to imitate the acts they see. Another result of film's brutalizing effect is that dangerous moral laxity that renders children susceptible to certain moods, makes them the willing victims of moral crimes, and causes young adults to stray; the immoral influence of sexual trash films overpowers moral ideas that otherwise functioned as inhibitory blocks.