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Early Works: Spiders, Harakiri, The Plague in Florence, The Wandering Image, Four Around the Woman 1919-1921

Fritz Lang (1890-1976)

OVERVIEW

The first films Fritz Lang directed, *Halfbreed* and *The Master of Love* are considered lost (as is the case for *The Dance of Death* whose screenplay he wrote). Between 1919 and 1921, Lang directed *Spiders, Harakiri, The Wandering Image* and *Four Around the Woman*. He also wrote screenplays for other directors' films such as *The Plague in Florence*. *The Wandering Image* and *Four Around the Woman* (co-authored by Thea von Harbou) were deemed lost films for decades and discovered in the 1980s in archives in South America (some of the original footage is still missing)—hence, their inclusion in Lang studies is relatively recent.

The five films that would be considered here were products of a tumultuous period in post-war Germany: the Spartacist Revolt; the murders of the communist leaders Luxemburg and Liebknecht; high-profile political assassinations—such as that of former finance minister Matthias Erzberger; street fighting between paramilitary groups and attacks on striking workers by right-wing militias. Hyperinflation was about to kick in and paralyze the economy.

The decade known as the Roaring Twenties also offered reason for optimism. These early films hint at Lang's interest in modernity—especially communication and transportation technologies, as well as the modern city that showcased them. They also show a fascination with other cultures and the exotic. His enthusiasm for diverse genres is evident as the films encompass elements of drama, philosophical mediation, detective story, heist film, period piece, and swashbuckling adventure. Lang would later consider 1922's *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler* to be a document of its times; this approach can also be seen in his earlier films as he meticulously shows his contemporaries—from all walks of life—engaged in daily activities.

SPIDERS, PART I: THE GOLDEN SEA

CHARACTERS

Kay Hoog. A progenitor of Indiana Jones, Hoog is a rich adventurer who likes to travel around the world, fight crime and chase adventure.
Princess Naela. The princess of the Incas is played by German star Lil Dagover who would play the geisha in *Harakiri.*
Lio Sha. The villainess leading the Spiders is a modern woman sporting flapper attire.
Dr. Telphas. Lio Sha's vicious associate is played by a regular of Lang's German films, Georg John.

Spiders. A delightful adventure yarn, *Spiders* was intended as a series of four installments, but only the first two were realized. *The Golden Lake* and *The Diamond Ship* were released in October 1919 and February 1920. The hero Kay Hoog—a progenitor of Indiana Jones—is a sportsman who chases adventure and fights organized crime all over the world. The first film has him travel from San Francisco to South America—thwarting ninjas and gun slinging cowboys on the way. He ultimately paradrops on the land of the Incas and discovers a lost treasure sought by the sinister secret society of Spiders—which recalls The Vampires of Louis Feuillade's *Les Vampires* (1915).

SCENES

Mystery of the Lost Treasure. A ragged man is chased by a native warrior on an island. He is able to throw a message in a bottle into the ocean just before he gets shot by an arrow. Sometime later, the bottle is found by Kay Hoog, who happens to be cruising with his yacht. It turns out that the message was written by a Harvard University archeology professor, who had ended up stranded on an uncharted island. Hoog is able to pinpoint its exact location on a map. Later that day, he shares his findings with fellow members **of his gentlemen's club in San Francisco and announces his plans to solve the mystery. That evening, a band of ninjas infiltrate his home and steal the map. They are revealed** to be agents of the secret society Spiders led by villainess Lio Sha.



The Land of the Incas. Next day, Hoog takes the train to go to Mexico. There, he runs into bandits in Spiders' employ and takes back his stolen map. He is able to ditch his pursuers and board a hot air balloon, which takes him to the lost civilization of Incas in Peru—*Spiders* has scenes that take place in the modern city, but action mostly takes place in exotic lands.



A train's observation car in *Spiders*. Lang would use trains often in his later films.



Lang's visualization of a telephone conversation between Hoog at a pub and a police captain at his office.





Here, he saves princess Naela from a snake and falls in love with her. Meanwhile, Inca warriors capture Spiders' leader Lio Sha and prepare to sacrifice her to their gods. They are deterred by her cohorts, who arrive just in time to save her. The henchmen discover the Inca treasure and begin fighting between themselves for the loot. Lio Sha survives an explosion at the temple which kills most of her gang. Hoog and Naela leave the island with a raft and are taken to San Francisco by a tall ship that happens to be in the vicinity. Their happiness is short lived, as Lio Sha has the princess murdered—Hoog wows revenge.



SPIDERS, PART TWO: THE DIAMOND SHIP

CHARACTERS

Kay Hoog. A progenitor of Indiana Jones, Hoog is a rich adventurer who likes to travel around the world, fight crime and chase adventure.

Princess Naela. The princess of the Incas is played by German star Lil Dagover who would play the geisha in *Harakiri.*

Lio Sha. The villainess leading the Spiders is a modern woman sporting flapper attire.

Dr. Telphas. Lio Sha's vicious associate is played by a regular of Lang's German films, Georg John.

STORY

Second film begins with “a modern (police) raid” spearheaded by a biplane landing on the rooftop of the Spiders’ headquarters. Hoog follows their trail to a subterranean Chinatown that offers illicit services. Clues take him to caves in the Falkland Islands; ultimately, a showdown takes place in London.

Expressionist masterpiece *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*’s set decorator Hermann Warm is behind the design of the Inca city and the costumes. Modern technologies—airplane, train, telegram—are used by the characters, alongside vessels and methods of the previous century such as tall sailing ships and messenger pigeons. Stunts include parachuting from a hot air balloon and diving from a ship’s masthead. The story’s dazzling diversity—comprising Indian spies and a psychic, Pinkerton detectives, the Chinese underworld guarded by tigers, and 16th Century pirates—shows Lang’s wide-ranging interest in the genre of adventure films.

SCENES

San Francisco to London. Kay Hoog and Spiders race to get hold of a Buddha-shaped diamond, which is said to bestow the owner total control of Asia when held by a princess. Hoog’s quest for the diamond takes him to a subterranean Chinatown; he learns about Spiders’ plans to set sail and he secretly boards their ship as a stowaway.



A mirror doubles as a television screen and Lio Sha uses it to view the meeting of the Spiders committee—this scene comes eight years before a similar technology makes an appearance in *Metropolis* for the master of the city to surveil the workers.



Meanwhile, Lio Sha’s associate Dr. Telphas consults an Indian psychic, who informs them that the jewel is in the possession of British diamond king John Terry. Spiders change course to London and kidnap the magnate’s daughter, but they can learn nothing since Terry is clueless about the diamond.



The villainess Lio Sha oversees the field operations of the Spiders and sports a flapper style)



The Falklands. Hoog visits Terry and discovers a map of the Falkland Islands hidden in the portrait painting of Terry’s pirate ancestor. He sails to the Falklands with Spiders on his tail. The thugs get poisoned inside a volcanic crater—except for Dr. Telphas, who returns to London with the diamond and Terry’s daughter. At a hotel, Dr. Telphas is cornered by agents from India and accused of betraying Spiders. Concurrently, Hoog is able to make it to London to alert Terry. With the aid of Pinkerton detectives, the diamond is secured and Terry’s daughter saved.



Hoog finds a map—one of many to come in Lang films—of the Falkland Islands hidden in the portrait painting of the diamond king’s pirate ancestor; Indian spies join Chinese characters as tokens of malicious foreigners.



HARAKIRI, 1919

STORY

With *Harakiri*, Lang turns his attention to the Far East and shows his fascination with Japanese culture. The film is based on John Luther Long's story "Madame Butterfly"—which was inspired by Pierre Loti's 1887 novel *Madame Chrysantheme*. Long's story was adapted for stage by David Belasco as *Madame Butterfly: a Tragedy of Japan* in 1900 and for opera by Puccini in 1904. *Harakiri* is the second of many film adaptations of "Madame Butterfly"—the first one was directed by Sidnet Olcott in 1915 and starred Mary Pickford. The story was reworked by D.H. Hwang for a 1988 play which was adapted for film by David Cronenberg in 1993.

In *Harakiri,* a feudal lord commits suicide after a vicious monk pressures him to wed his daughter O-Take-San. She falls in love with a European naval officer and marries him. However, her husband returns to Europe; the monk reappears and O-Take-San desperately fights for her love.

Like *Spiders*, *Harakiri* also features many outdoor settings such as a beach, a festive lake and a cherry garden. The all-European cast was led by German actress Lil Dagover playing O-Take-San. Lang's attention to ethnographic detail is striking and the film's visuals seem to be inspired by C. Yarnall Abbott's illustrations for the 1903 edition of the original story. Some prevalent themes are exoticism, tourism, patriarchal culture, characters struggling against fate, and innocence versus malice.

SCENES

A Buddhist monk declares his intention to marry the daughter of Daimyo Tokuyawa, a Japanese feudal lord. When O-Take-San and her father try to resist the demand, the monk conspires to frame Tokuyawa for treason to the emperor. Following a visit from an imperial envoy, the Daimyo commits suicide by hara-kiri. Just when it appears that there is nothing to stop the monk to marry O-Take-San, she meets Olaf Anderson, a European naval officer visiting Japan. They fall in love, get married and have a child.



Elaborate sets of Harakiri: O-Take-San, with her father at home; cornered by the monk at the temple



The monk descends down the stairs, anticipating similar shots in *Metropolis* and other Lang films



The European naval officer Olaf Anderson shops at the souvenirs market.



O-Take-San's happiness doesn't last long, as Anderson returns to Europe and gets married to a European woman—Anderson with his European wife; he returns to his accustomed lifestyle following his day in Japan.

Meanwhile, O-Take-San with her child, waits, in vain for Anderson's return. While he is away, the monk reappears to bother O-Take-San again, who is this time protected by Prince Matahari. O-Take-San turns down the prince's marriage proposal, since she considers herself Anderson's wife. After four years, Anderson finally returns to Japan with his wife. According to customs, the passing time has made their marriage void and O-Take-San is obliged to return her child to the state. Anderson's wife visits her and proposes to adopt the child. O-Take-San demands to see Anderson, but before he visits her, she kills herself by hara-kiri.



O-Take-San. O-Take-San is portrayed as a child playing with her toys when the monk attempts to marry her. After she loses her father, she becomes a geisha and gets married to Olaf Anderson. She is devastated when her husband doesn't return to Japan for years and finally commits suicide.

THE PLAGUE IN FLORENCE

STORY

By the time he completed working on the second part of *Spiders*, Lang had written the screenplays of other directors' films. Among the films that Lang contributed as a writer, *The Plague in Florence*—with pandemic as its main theme—is particularly relevant for contemporary viewers and deserves special attention.

The film was directed by Otto Rippert and Lang's screenplay was loosely based on the Edgar Allen Poe story "The Masque of the Red Death". *The Plague in Florence* is set in Medieval Italy and tells about the devastation brought by the Black Death—the bubonic plague. A carefree community and its lustful elites indulge in hedonism and intrigue until a female figure personifying the plague arrives to bring infection and wipe out lives.

The Plague in Florence was produced and released a year after the end of the First World War. Coping with the destruction of the war obviously shaped the themes of the film. An even more immediate social crisis that had an impact on Fritz Lang's writing would have been the Spanish Flu (the 1918 flu pandemic) which lasted until 1920.

The bleak story features compelling special effects and quirky set design with charming matte paintings as backdrops. This interesting film feels pertinent today. It may be said to lack the visual flair of Lang, but some of his favorite themes (destructive lust, intriguing elites, and social strife) and motifs (bonfire, flights of stairs, and massive walls) appear fleetingly in their premature forms.

SCENES

The arrival of a courtesan named Julia stirs an Italian city. Men—rich and poor, young and old—are so attracted by her beauty that they intrigue to get her attention. The ruler of the city Cesare and his son Lorenzo also compete to charm her; even a Franciscan monk who lives as a hermit cannot resist the courtesan. Town's clergy is enraged and the cardinal gets Cesare to investigate Julia's piety. Before she is tortured, Lorenzo leads a mob to raid the palace and kills his father. Townsfolk slip into debauchery; a female figure personifying death arrives to bring infection that causes everyone to die.



Medieval elites lead a carefree life in *The Plague in Florence*; with the arrival of the beautiful courtesan, the master of the city and his son fiercely rival each other.



The clergy attempt to persecute the courtesan; a Franciscan monk is among those charmed by her.





A cruel method of social distancing—a pole is used to keep away a sick child; finally, a female personification of death arrives at the city and brings infection.





WANDERING IMAGE

STORY

The Wandering Image was released a year after *Harakiri*, in December 1920. The setting shifts from Japan to the German countryside. With most of its action taking place at Mount Wattzman in the Bavarian Alps[1], *The Wandering Image*'s use of the outdoors is at a level that would not be seen again in a Fritz Lang film.

A "radical philosopher" who holds unconventional views about love and marriage fakes his death to drop out of modern society. He retreats to the mountains as a hermit but finds his resolve is put to test by a loving wife as well as a scheming and hateful brother.

With its interest in religious exploration, *The Wandering Image* has an affinity to the works of the Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer. The Alpine background anticipates later Weimar era films such as Arnold Fanct's *The Holy Mountain* (1926) and *White Hell of Pitz Palu* (1929), both starring Leni Riefenstahl.

This 1920 film marks three first-time collaborations in Lang's filmography. The first one is art director Erich Kettelhut. The disenchanted philosopher wows not to return to civilization until he sees a certain *Saint Mary of the Snows* statue come down the hilltop; Lang was impressed by the miniature set that was designed by Kettelhut for this crucial scene.[2] Kettelhut would continue contributing to Lang's films, notably creating the dragon in *Die Nibelungen* and the cityscape of *Metropolis*. The second one is Rudolf Klein-Rogge, playing the philosopher's cousin, who would portray Dr. Mabuse in 1922 and 1933, *Metropolis*' mad scientist Rotwang, and *Spies*' Haghi. Thirdly, there is writer Theo von Harbou. Cinematographer Guido Seeber's—*The Student of Prague* (1913), *The Joyless Street* (1925)—breathtaking imagery enhances the contemplative mood in Lang's first collaboration with von Harbou. With her, a new phase begins in Lang's career and certain themes—such as class and gender tensions—come to the fore.

SCENES



Backstory. Georg Vanderheit is a philosopher who advocates free love and argues against marriage. When he falls in love with his secretary Irmgard, they pretend to be officially married. Georg's twin brother John takes advantage of Irmgard's uneasiness about this situation and offers to wed her himself. Unbeknownst to Georg, his name gets to be recorded in the church register. It doesn't take long before Georg learns about this marriage. Frustrated and in dismay, he fakes his own death and goes to the mountains to live as a hermit. Since Irmgard appears to be officially married to Georg, she is his sole heir.

Radical philosopher Georg Vanderheit tells Irmgard that he would contradict his own convictions if they got married—and his brother John eavesdrops; Georg begins to live as a hermit in the mountains.



Acquaintances of Georg and Irmgard observe the couple's relationship and gossip; Irmgard runs away from the abusive John and ends up in the mountains.



Georg's Inheritance. John becomes abusive and attempts to gaslight Irmgard in order to get her inheritance money. She runs away to Königssee with her tormentor in pursuit. On the way to Königssee, she coincidentally encounters Georg's cousin Wil Brand—a rightful heir if it were proven that the Vanderheit marriage was void. Even though Brand finds out who she is, he helps her dodge John.



The Hermit. At Königssee, seeing that John is closing in on her, Irmgard begins hiking up the mountains. At one point, she meets a shepherd—Georg in disguise—who does not reveal his identity to her. Not before long they are spotted by John; his attack prompts the couple to seek refuge at a hut. John steals dynamite from a nearby quarry and detonates it to blow up the hut. The explosion causes an avalanche that leaves Georg and Irmgard trapped in the wreckage. At this point, Georg lets her know who he really is. He tells her that returning to civilization is out of question unless he would witness a particular miracle—a nearby *The Lady of the Snows* statue coming down the mountain. Then, a rescue party led by Wil Brand arrives at the scene and rescues the couple. John hurls rocks at them and subsequently falls to his death from a cliff. Irmgard heads out to the town and Georg goes back to his cabin.



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A Miracle. Some time later, a snowstorm knocks down the Saint Mary statue and it gets swept down the slope. The charitable Irmgard happens to be close by, visiting an ailing mother whose home is on the hills. The woman passes away; Irmgard leaves with her baby since she is left without anyone to take care of her. Just as she is descending down the hill, Georg looks out of his window and sees her—carrying the baby under the snow. Believing that he has witnessed the statue gliding down, he decides that he may now abandon his celibacy wow.



First casting of Rudolf Klein-Rogge in a Fritz Lang film—which also happens to be the one that has many outdoor scenes shot beautifully; Georg mistakes Irmgard to be the *Our Lady of the Snow* statue gliding downhill.

Back to Civilization. Some time later at the city, Wil Brand proposes to Irmgard. She refuses, but offers instead her share of Georg's inheritance to him. At this point, Georg appears, ready to blend into civilization and the couple reunite.

FOUR AROUND THE WOMAN

STORY

Four Around the Woman. Following the spectacular outdoor settings of the previous films, 1921's *Four Around the Woman* (initially titled *Battling Hearts*) signals an urban turn in Lang and co-writer von Harbou's filmography. As a prelude to the modern city that would be showcased in *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler* and *M,* in *Four Around the Woman*, automobiles, bicycles, and horse-drawn carriages crowd a vibrant and hectic city.

A man with a dubious source of wealth is suspicious about the fidelity of his wife. The latter refers to the woman in the title—the four men are the husband, a blackmailer, a former sweetheart and his twin brother. Based on a play by Rolf E. Vanloo, *Four Around the Woman* features deceptive and seedy characters who incessantly spy on one another. Although social classes are sharply divided, both the rich and the poor live on the fringes of the law.

Towards the end of 1921, Lang's breakthrough film *Destiny* would be released. A decade later, his masterpiece *M* would come out, following a series of important works that include *Metropolis* and *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*. Lang's early films (1919-1921) offer a better understanding not only of these classics but also his later output in Hollywood.

SCENES



A beggar on the sidewalk fakes blindness—first of several in Lang's films. Cars, pedestrians, bicycles, hand-pulled carts and horse-drawn carriages crowd the street. A theater plays another film of the *Four Around the Woman*'s production company Decla-Bioscop; the blackmailer secretly gazes—characters watch and are watched by others.



The Husband. Harry Yquem, a wealthy broker, puts on a disguise to visit an illicit pub and buys a stolen necklace for his wife Florence. He pays the seedy seller with counterfeit bills. After leaving, he wanders in the city—apparently tails his wife—whom he suspects of infidelity. Flashback of an incident on their wedding night shows a mysterious intruder run away from the house and Florence found tied-up in their bedroom. Yquem had found a photo of this man among his wife's letters and had been looking for him ever since.



A lavish buffet at the hotel; Upton's inn is home to crooks. Destitute sailor Werner Krafft borrows money from the shady innkeeper played by Rudolf Klein-Rogge.



The Sweetheart and the Blackmailer. A destitute sailor named Werner Krafft is new in town and is searching for his twin brother—a high-profile swindler whom he assumes to be a well-respected socialite. Another flashback reveals that Werner was Florence's sweetheart before she unwillingly got married. He was the one that the would-be husband saw escaping on the day of their wedding, but, be that as it may, Yquem follows his twin brother William around the city. Added to the mix of characters is a men named Charles Meunier, who not only has an interest in Florence, but blackmails her by threatening to expose her affair.

Florence and her friends unpack a dress while the maid looks on; Margot's skirt is ornate with spirals, which will recur many times in comparable forms in Lang's films.



Things get Complicated. Florence's best friend Margot begins an affair with the swindler William Krafft and encourages her to cheat her husband. Getting frustrated with his pursuit of the wrong Krafft brother, Yquem imitates his wife's signature and sends William an invitation letter. Although he hasn't met Florence, William is intrigued and goes to the couple's house.



Criss-Cross. Margot finds out that her ring was somehow swapped with an imitation by William and alerts the police. Officers gather that he would be at Yquem's house and prepare to apprehend him there. In the meantime, the sellers of stolen merchandize are furious at Yquem for getting paid with forged money and head out to his house for robbery. As they are plotting at the pub, Werner Krafft overhears Florence's name and follows them to save her.

Climax. When William witnesses that Florence is mistreated by her husband, he protects her. Concurrently, Meunier pays a visit to Yquem; he gets shot by the broker when he blackmails him. Just then, police raid Yquem's house looking for William. The crooks that have come for robbery are tackled by Werner and get arrested by the officers. Florence is accidentally shot—which prompts her to come clean about her past with Werner. As Yquem is arrested for buying stolen merchandise, he asks his wife for her forgiveness. Florence pledges that she would faithfully wait for his return.

THEMES

Society – (Modernity, Modern City, Modern Pastimes, Modern Police, Classes, Exoticism)

SOCIETY

Modernity. *The Wandering Image*'s main character rejects society and lives outside civilization—or he thinks so, since his hut is not far from a quarry that uses explosives to extract stones for a road construction project. In this film, railways provide access to the lakeside resort and secluded mountains that house the hermit.

Efficient new technologies make a procession in *Spiders*. A train's observation car shows passengers comfortably enjoying the panoramic view as they travel through Mexico; a telegram operator keeps them connected to the world. Railways facilitate other modern techniques—we are informed that the particular line was built to provide a connection to a meteorological station that deploys a hot air balloon. *Spiders* also presents a futuristic device, a vanity mirror that doubles as a round television screen. It enables Lio Sha to watch the meeting of the Spiders executives. Besides such novelties, communication and transportation techniques include more conventional ones, such as messenger pigeons and tall sailing ships

Modern City. In *Four Around the Woman*, the modern city is a vibrant background. Narrow streets are almost congested with pedestrians, cars, hand-pulled carts and horse-drawn carriages—couple of bicycles also come into view. The city offers attractions and excitement. On the other hand, its chaos obviously cultivates crime—Lang would explore this theme in *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler* and onwards.

Modern Pastimes. Early Lang films feature popular leisure activities—circa 1920—such as tourism and sports. *Harakiri*'s Olaf Anderson and his fellow naval officers are introduced as they buy souvenirs from gift shops; Before the action moves to the mountains in *The Wandering Image*, Lake Königssee gets the spotlight with travelers flocking to lakeside resorts; Besides being a crime fighter, Kay Hoog is an avid yachter—before he is distracted by the call of adventure, he is preparing to participate in a major sporting event, the American-Japan regatta.

Modern Police. A modern police force that uses methodological investigation methods plays a role in *Spiders* and *Four Around the Woman*—the former also has a scene that features private detectives from the Pinkerton detective agency.

Classes. Except for *Harakiri* which has very few scenes that take place in Europe, all films show wealthy people indulging in feasts and forms of fine dining, with an abundance of food and luxury utensils. These scenes manifest a cynical view of the upper classes and their excesses, at times suggesting that their source of wealth could be less than honest—a respectable British diamond king's ancestor is revealed to be a notorious pirate; the rich broker Yquem in *Four Around the Woman* uses forged money to buy stolen merchandise. On the other hand, members of the lower classes often appear in shady settings as potential criminals.

Exoticism. Especially *Harakiri* and *Spiders* show a fascination with world cultures. These are represented by stereotypes; with a dash of exoticism at best, and at worst as malicious caricatures (Indian spies, Chinese underworld types, and murderous Incas). Then again, when it comes to technical details such as costumes and architecture, Lang's attention to detail is obvious. *Spiders* was shot at Hagenbeck Zoological Gardens[3] and in *Harakiri*, an intertitle acknowledges the contribution of the Heinrich Umlauf Museum—which would appear again in a consultancy capacity in 1924's *Die Nibelungen*.

Harakiri's Japanese characters are portrayed by an all-European cast that is led by Lil Dagover as the geisha and Fritz Lang regular Georg John as the despicable Buddhist monk. A comparable Orientalist perspective would shape 1921's *Destiny.*

Parallels: Langian Themes and Motifs

Certain Langian visual elements such as trap doors, hands, clocks, letters, and maps make their first appearances in these films. There are visual compositions that would mature in his forthcoming films such as the flight of stairs of the Buddhist temple in *Harakiri* (a tiny version of the steps in *Metropolis* that lead to the Babel Tower) and the 360 degree shot of the bartender in *The Wandering Image* that anticipates the croupier in *Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*.

In *Spiders*, the villains immediately turn against each other as soon as they need to share the loot. Greed and selfishness emerge as inherent parts of human nature with the European naval officer in *Harakiri*, the philosopher's brother in *The Wandering Image*, the broker Yquem and others in *Four Around the Woman*. The monk in *Harakiri* is one of Lang's lecherous characters—prefiguring those in *Metropolis* and *The Blue Gardenia*.

Identity is another theme that links the early films to Lang's later works. Deception is involved: Yquem in *Four Around the Woman* and the philosopher in *The Wandering Image*—for different reasons—use disguise to trick their wives. There are also doppelgangers, such as the twin brothers in *The Wandering Image* and *Four Around the Women,* who are morally polar opposites. Brothers with a problematic relationship would return as a theme in films such as *Man Hunt* and *The House by the River*

Lang's *M, Fury,* and *You and Me* are among his films that turn the spotlight on an attractive shop display. Consumerism gets some attention in the early films with the souvenir vendors in *Harakiri*; *Four Around the Woman*'s Florence and her friend delightfully unwrap a fancy package containing a garment.

Lang's later films would often feature vindictive characters (e.g. *Die Nibelungen, Rancho Notorious*, *Fury*, and *The Big Heat*). Similarly, revenge is an important motivation in the early films (e.g. Kay Hoog in *Spiders* and the monk in *Harakiri*).

[1] Bogdanovich, Peter. *Fritz Lang in America*. NY: Praeger. 1967, 67

[2] McGilligan, Patrick. *Fritz Lang, the Nature of the Beast.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2013, 65

[3] Ibid, 58