

Early German Cinema

Silent era 1918-1929

Early sound films 1930-1933

Historical background 1918-1933

- German history
 - 1918 end of first world war
 - 1918-1923 Germany impoverished nation
 - 1923-24 hyper inflation
 - 1925-1929 stability and prosperity
 - 1929-1933 growing unemployment and unrest
- Film history
 - Hollywood leading filmmaker
 - France/Italy/Sweden not far behind
 - Ufa founded 1918 to improve Germany's film prospects

Silent films

- The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
 - Robert Wiene 1920
- *Nosferatu*
 - F. W. Murnau 1922
- *Metropolis*
 - Fritz Lang 1927
- *The Last Laugh*
 - F. W. Murnau 1924



- Francis relates the story of his love Jane and his best friend Alan to an inmate of a psychiatric hospital.

Film directed by Robert Wiene

Screenplay by Hans Janowitz and
Carl Meyer



- Dr. Caligari looks after the somnambulant Caesare, an attraction at a carnival.
- Caesare serves as Dr. Caligari's doppelganger, a theme common in early German film.
- Other films with the motif of doppelganger include:
 - *The Student of Prague* (Paul Wegener 1913)
 - *The Student of Prague* (Henrik Galeen 1926)
 - *The Gollum* (Paul Wegener 1915 and 1920)
 - *The Other* (Max Mack 1913, Wiene 1930)
 - *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang 1926)



- Caesare is one of the first film monsters who cannot bring himself to kill a beautiful woman and instead kidnaps her.
- The rooftop motif appears again in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, 1926, and Merian Cooper's *King Kong*, 1933.



- The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari owes its fame to its expressionist sets, designed by Walter Reimann, Walter Roehrig, and Hermann Warm.
- Expressionism, a style which began first in the fine arts and moved to theater, influenced films in the early and mid twenties in Germany. Essentially, expressionism makes visible the inside world rather than showing the outside world as do realism and impressionism.



- The vampire Noseratu contrasts greatly with the usual portrayal of Dracula as a debonair gentleman.
- Here the monster appears in silhouette, a common motif in expressionism.

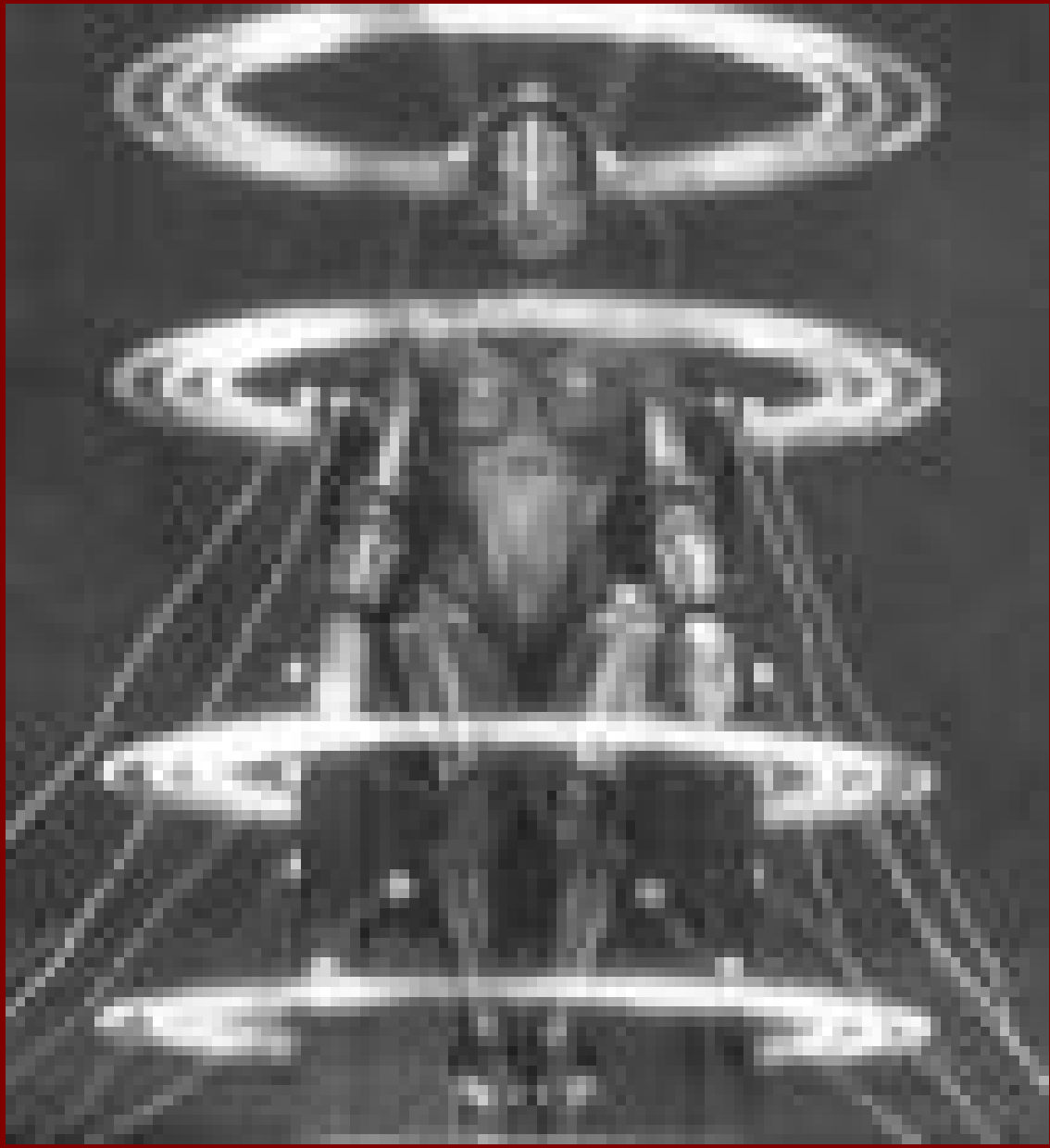


The monster hears the cock crow and knows he will perish now in the sunlight.



Metropolis

- Fritz Lang's Metropolis became a cult favorite in the fifties and still has its fans.
- Giorgio Moroder remastered the film in 1984 and added a disco soundtrack. The film played successfully in Europe and even had theater showings in the States.
- BFI remastered the film in 2002 and released it with its original soundtrack, which had been lost. The film again enjoyed a theatrical release. The DVD version remains the most complete and accurate version.



- Metropolis continues the tradition of science fiction begun with Mary Shelly's Frankenstein of warning against science and technology.



- Freder's Christ like pose as he takes over for an exhausted worker has become one of the signature images of the film.



The Last Laugh

Emil Jannings must undergo humiliation as a lavatory attendant before finally receiving a happy end.

Early sound film

- *The blue Angel*
 - Josef von Sternberg 1930
- *M*
 - Fritz Lang 1931
- *Kuhle Wampe*
 - Slatan Dudow 1932



The Blue Angel

- Marlene Dietrich sings her signature song “ Falling in Love Again” warning men against falling in love with her.



Rath and Lola Lola toast at their wedding.

- Emil Jannings specialized in roles in which his character suffers. In the *Blue Angel* he falls for a songstress and ends his days humiliated but unable to escape his love for her.



Peter Lorre's signature role later used by the Nazis to discredit Jews
In the anti-Semitic film *der ewige Jude*

- *M* made Peter Lorre a star and gave him his persona on which he capitalized for the rest of his career. As a Jew, he had to leave Germany for Hollywood where he often played opposite another “monster,” Boris Karloff.

Kuhle Wampe





- Kuhle Wampe, directed by Slatan Dudow, 1931, with screenplay by Bertolt Brecht, is one of the few overtly communist films produced in Germany before the takeover by the Nazis. The Nazis of course banned the film immediately.