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| Fantômas |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The first and most famous of many films based on the eponymous villain created by writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre, the silent crime serial *Fantômas* (1913) is considered to be one of the greatest and most influential works of French film director Louis Feuillade. In *Fantômas,* Feuillade first experimented on a large scale with techniques that would become staples of various film genres, particularly the thriller, and in a foreshadowing of modern studio wars, both Pathe and Gaumont fought for the rights to develop *Fantômas* into a movie (Abel 373). The character of Fantômas served as an inspiration for writer Norbert Jacques’ master criminal, Dr. Mabuse. Furthermore, modernist director Fritz Lang’s films, including his adaptations of Jacques’ work, seem to bear the mark of Feuillade’s realist fantasies (for example the striking similarity between the opening sequence of Lang’s 1922 *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* [*Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*] and that of *Fantômas*), although there is no definitive evidence that Lang himself acknowledged such a debt. Surrealists too were fascinated by the character, in particular René Magritte, who made direct studies of Feuillade’s film (Walz 71). |
| The first and most famous of many films based on the eponymous villain created by writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre, the silent crime serial *Fantômas* (1913) is considered to be one of the greatest and most influential works of French film director Louis Feuillade. In *Fantômas,* Feuillade first experimented on a large scale with techniques that would become staples of various film genres, particularly the thriller, and in a foreshadowing of modern studio wars, both Pathe and Gaumont fought for the rights to develop *Fantômas* into a movie (Abel 373). The character of Fantômas served as an inspiration for writer Norbert Jacques’ master criminal, Dr. Mabuse. Furthermore, modernist director Fritz Lang’s films, including his adaptations of Jacques’ work, seem to bear the mark of Feuillade’s realist fantasies (for example the striking similarity between the opening sequence of Lang’s 1922 *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* [*Dr. Mabuse the Gambler*] and that of *Fantômas*), although there is no definitive evidence that Lang himself acknowledged such a debt. Surrealists too were fascinated by the character, in particular René Magritte, who made direct studies of Feuillade’s film (Walz 71).  [file: L’assassin.jpg]  Figure 1 Magritte, René. *L'Assassin menace* (The Menaced Assassin) 1927  <http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79267>  [File: fantomas.jpg]  Figure 2 Fantômas, dir. Louis Feuillade, France, Gaumont  <http://www.fantomas-lives.com/fanto4c.htm>  [File: Magritte.jpg]  Figure 3 René Magritte posing with his (no longer extant) 1927 painting *Le barbare* (The Savage), a clear likeness of Fantômas. (1938)  <http://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwart/article/Photo-Flash-First-Look-at-MAGRITTE-THE-MYSTERY-OF-THE-ORDINARY-1926-1938-at-The-Art-Institute-of-Chicago-20140418> |
| Further reading:  (Abel)  (Thomson)  (Walz) |