

# Georges mlis essay examples

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Georges Méliès was the one of the first directors in the history of world cinema to leave the audience in awe. The stalwart's works have continued to impress gazillion film lovers across the globe in the past century. What made him stand apart was the fact that his films were not documents of prosaic events. Rather, the man portrayed scenes that could only exist in the vivid imagination of the audience before this. The eminent film theorist, Tom Gunning, tags his films with the phrase 'cinema of attractions' which describes his works as a perfect mesh of spectatorship, exhibition, manipulation of temporality and illusion to create the aura which would leave the audience flabbergasted. Many of his works have been lost in obscurity, though quite a few have been restored. His works stand apart still and place the auteur in a paramount position in the history of cinema. Having failed to convince the Lumière brothers to sell him a camera, he made own of his won with which he started to experiment. He then built a studio to shoot films. His versatility ranged from writing, direction to acting. For him, the medium seemed to one for sharing the exuberance and awe of magical tricks, in which he was proficient being a conjurer himself.

One of Méliès' most noted films is *The Vanishing Lady* (1896). The film portrays the eminent filmmaker walking on to the stage bringing out his assistant. The film then shows him spreading a newspaper on the floor and then putting a chair on it. He then makes his assistant sit on the chair and covers her with a blanket. As he removes the blanket, the audience cannot see his assistant as she is vanished already. Then, he waves his hands in the air conjuring up a skeleton. Next, he places the blanket on the skeleton and removes to make his assistant reappear. His first films were such magical

portraits that extended the show of his on-stage feats up to cinema. His film, *The Man with the Rubber Head*, is a silent fantasy film that portrays a chemist who places his own head on a table in his laboratory alive. He goes on to fix a rubber tube with bellows on his head and starts to blow with all his force. The head starts to increase in size and keeps on making faces thus amusing the audience. Fearing that the head might burst, the chemist pulls the cork to see the head return to its original form. He informs his assistant about this startling discovery who then endeavors to do the same only to make the head burst. The two are knocked over by the sheer force and the chemist then kicks the assistant out of his laboratory in rage. Thus, the director left no stone unturned in his pursuit of leaving his audience in state of astonishment.

A noted film by the genius was *The Haunted Castle* which released in 1896. This is a three minute long film abundant with pantomime elements. This is considered the first horror film. This first vampire film was aimed to amuse the audience, however, rather than scaring them. The film finds its inception with a bat flying into a castle of medieval times which then gets transformed into Mephistopheles. A cauldron appears along with an assistant who help the demon in conjuring a lady. Two cavaliers enter the room as an array of feats continues to be shown on the screen. At the climactic relief of the chronology of events, the devil meets its end at the hands of the intrepid cavalier with a crucifix who has stayed back to fight. *Cleopatra* (1899), a two-minute film, is one of the very first horror films ever made in the history of world cinema. The film is a perfect example of the directorial quintessence of Georges Méliès. The director used special effects and aided in creating

theatrical genre. The film was lost in obscurity for a long time. It was only in 2005 that a print of this film was rediscovered in a secret storeroom. The film showed a queen coming back to her life in the form of a mummy.

In 1902, almost after a span of six years to working with the camera, the director came up with the masterpiece, *A Trip to the Moon*. The film is believed to have been greatly inspired by the idea of life on moon which was expressed in several artistic expressions. Offenbach had penned an opera on the subject. Jules Verne and H. G. Wells had written a book on space travel. The film was the quintessential visual imagery that struck the right cord with the audience. In the film, a group of astronomers embark upon a journey to reach the moon. In the course of events, the astronomers face the alien dwellers of the moon. A face off impends while the Selenites explode being hit hard by the astronomers. Outnumbered, they are taken in custody by the aliens. However, an astronomer manages to get rid of the alien commander. They finally escape in a thrilling climactic sequence and reach earth. The film is immortalized in the hearts of the innumerable audience and is hailed as one of the greatest works of fiction among the films of its age. Another film that left a mark was *20, 000 Leagues under the Sea*. The silent film was an adaptation of the French science fiction novel of the same title by Jules Verne. The film portrays the story of Captain Nemo and the submarine *Nautilus*. The film is recorded to be one of the first color films as the female workers of the factory hand-tinted the film frame by frame. It explores the unknown realm beneath the surface of the sea. The protagonist is driven by his indomitable spirit for quenching his thirst for scientific knowledge and also his desire for revenge.

The Impossible Voyage (1904) is a twenty-four minute long film by the director, is inspired by the novel Voyage à travers l'impossible by Jules Verne. The film shows the bizarre engineer Mabouloff's inventions like an automobile, a submarine, and a railway box car filled with ice. A geographic society proposes to embark upon a journey around the globe in these vehicles. The travelers board the automobile named 'The Impossible Carriage' to travel through the mountains. Next, after their recovery from an accident, they travel by train and after having attained much height, they are lifted in space by the balloons attached to the train. They are 'swallowed' by the blazing sun. After endeavoring to melt the ice which has frozen one of the travelers, they all launch off the sun in a submarine to fall into a vast ocean. The submarine explodes due to a boiler problem leading all to be thrown up in the air and reach the ground. An expression of jubilation is followed. Thus, the director ignited the picturesque imagination of the audience through this film. Conquest of the Pole (1912), one of his most eminent films, is based on Jules Verne's novel The Adventures of Captain Hatteras. The film portrays an exceptional race of rival parties of balloonists to the chilling North Pole. The film showcases a frost-giant which endeavored to devour the crew. The audience was left awestruck at the cinematic genius and imaginative zeal of the director. This film was the director's last successful film. His other notable works among many are Batteuse à vapeur (1896), Cinderella (1899), Gulliver's Travels among the Lilliputians and the Giants (1902).

He had to stop making films in 1913 owing to low finances. He further closed down his studio and even burnt the costumes and the props. He was forced

to sell his theatre too, which was demolished for building a road after the war. In the next seven years, Georges Méliès' occupation was selling toys from a stand which was owned by his spouse near Montparnasee railway station. As the filmmaker sunk in his life of drabness and drudgery, Leon Druhot, the editor of Ciné-Journal, discovered him from his anonymity and urged to get public support for the stalwart. In 1929, many of his works were restored and shown to the audience. The surreal exquisiteness and the charm of his films cast a spell on the audience and the director was from thence held by his countrymen in a paramount position of love and respect. The visionary and true artist who shaped the soul of cinema by his indomitable zeal and creativity still lives on in the innermost core of the hearts of the audience all over the world.