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A Trip to the Moon as Féerie

A SHORT STORY BY JULES VERNE, first published in 1889 and describing a day in the life of an American journalist in the year 2889, opens with the intriguing remark that “in this twenty-ninth century people live right in the middle of a continuous *féerie* without even noticing it.”¹ This observation linking technological and scientific progress to the magical world of fairy tales quite probably did not surprise Verne’s French readers at the end of the nineteenth century when widely used expressions such as “*la fée électricité*” emphatically conjured up the image of wondrous magic to celebrate the marvels of the modern age. However, the choice of the term “*féerie*,” opens up yet another dimension of Verne’s metaphor, namely the realm of the spectacular. A popular stage genre throughout the nineteenth century, the *féerie* stood for a form of theatrical entertainment combining visual splendor, fantastic plots, amazing tricks, colorful ballets, and captivating music. All these wonders, on the other hand, were not the result of any kind of magic, but of stagecraft, set design, trick techniques, and a meticulously organized *mise-en-scène*. Verne’s metaphor, thus, complexly intertwines magic and technology, fairy tales and progress, fantasy and science. This, precisely, is the context within which I propose to look at Méliès’s 1902 film *A Trip to the Moon*²—as a *féerie*; that is, as a film drawing from a long-standing stage tradition that had also found its way into animated pictures where the *féerie* appears indeed from very early on as a generic category.³

The *Féerie* on the French Stage

According to a former director of the Théâtre de l'Odéon, Paul Ginisty, one of the earliest historians of the genre and author of a book on the subject published around 1910, the roots of the *féerie* reach back into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the ballets at the royal court adapted legends and fairy tales, while the so-called *pièces à machines* presented spectacular effects that were created by intricate stage mechanisms.⁴ Ginisty identifies three genealogical strands of the *féerie*—ballets, fantastic or magical subject matter, and spectacular effects—which throughout the eighteenth century came together in various forms in fairground theaters as well as in the Comédie-Italienne, the Comédie-Française, and the Opéra-Comique.⁵ However, what Ginisty calls the “modern *féerie*” emerged in the last years of the eighteenth century, intimately linked to melodrama, because plays of both genres were written by the same authors, and they were performed in the same theaters.⁶ According to him, *Le Pied de mouton*, written by Alphonse-Louis-Dieudonné Martainville and Louis-François Ribié, which premiered at the Gaîté theater on December 6, 1806, is the “model *féerie*,” a typical instance of the genre, functioning almost like a blueprint: “In fact, *Le Pied de mouton*, was done over and over again, as it combined all the secrets of the art, the struggle between the spirits, who give a charm to their protégés, the charming lover and his grotesque rival, the exploration of marvelous worlds.”⁷ The genre then became established as a popular entertainment in the Parisian theater district along the Boulevard du Temple. *Le Pied de mouton* was staged in various adaptations throughout the nineteenth century, and in 1907 Albert Capellani made a film version for Pathé. Indeed, many of the plays quoted by Ginisty are also known as film titles such as *Les Pilules du Diable* (1839), *Les Sept châteaux du Diable* (1844), *La Biche au bois* (1845), and *La Poule aux œufs d'or* (1848), even though stage and screen versions may have differed quite drastically.⁸

Ginisty sees Jacques Offenbach's 1875 *Le Voyage dans la lune* as “the beginning of an evolution,” with a different kind of magic, namely modern technology, while *Le Voyage à travers l'impossible* (1882) introduced even something like a “scientific element.”⁹ As for *Les Quatre cents coups du Diable*, staged in 1904 at the Châtelet, Ginisty remarks that it is one of the plays that “while featuring charms and spirits, [is] not afraid to show modern characters and to mix echoes of contemporary life with the established rites.”¹⁰ For the period when he wrote the book, he claims, the *féerie* had more or less ceased to exist. The only hope he expresses lies with poets such as Maurice Maeterlinck and his *The Blue Bird* (1909), whose creativity might lead to yet another evolution of the genre.¹¹

In the introduction to his book, however, Ginisty voices a complaint against the overall development that the *féerie* underwent, namely that it abandoned its potential as an art form to become but a “pretext for mechanical artifices,” and he looks back on it rather as a “touching childhood memory, the magic of which has definitely gone.”¹² About one generation earlier the writer Théodore de Banville expressed an equally nostalgic sentiment in one of his stories. In 1866 already he laments the end of the *féerie* as it once used to be, blaming Guilbert de Pixérécourt for having tried to “civilize it, thus planting the first germ of its destruction.”¹³ He subsequently gives a description of the Théâtre de la Gaîté as it once was that provides an almost contemporary, though slightly poetic, glimpse into the stage practice of the *féerie* in the first half of the nineteenth century:

In order to imagine it as it was then, one has to dream up some sort of a compromise between the theaters where operas are played and those small shows where we can see the pantomimes. Spectacular sets representing Heaven or Hell, and, for scenes down here on Earth, the most rugged mountainsides with streams, waterfalls, and decrepit pine trees on a cliff; complicated machinery, tricks, illusions, flights through the air, Bengal fire; armies of ballet dancers, supernumeraries, and characters amalgamating all mythology and chivalry, with their lavish and pretentious costumes, produced the overall effect of boulevard theater when that spectacle was still the only nourishment given to the people’s artistic appetites.¹⁴

This account draws a portrait of the *féerie* as a charming, aesthetically not very ambitious form of popular entertainment, trying to impress the audience through spectacular effects and to provide them with all sorts of visual delights. De Banville quite clearly opposes the *féerie* to a more legitimate kind of theater as an art form, hence his observation that de Pixérécourt’s attempt to “civilize” it, that is to bring it closer to the established norms of the dramatic stage, contributed to the genre’s decline.

De Banville reiterates here a cultural dichotomy, which according to Hassan El Nouty, a literary historian and one of the pioneers of research on nineteenth-century French visual culture, reaches back into the sixteenth century. Until then, theatrical performances had presented a kind of an equilibrium between the “dramatic” and the “spectacular” (or the “literary” and the “visual”), whereas in the sixteenth century aesthetic judgments started to increasingly privilege the former at the expense of the latter.¹⁵ In the seventeenth century, then, “two strands of theater were developing side by side, but separately: 1. One with

limited *mise-en-scène* and consisting mainly of speech. That is the classical theater. 2. The other, which wanted to be but a feast for the eyes. These were the so-called *pièces à machines* such as *Naissance de Hercule* (1649) by Rotrou.¹⁶ In the nineteenth century, the cultural gap between dramatic art and spectacular delights got even deeper because of the class bias that added to the elitist condemnation of the latter. El Nouty quotes Gustave Vapereau proclaiming, “We leave the spectacular plays to the people and to the children.”¹⁷ Among the few defenders of the *féerie* El Nouty discusses in particular the ideas of Théophile Gautier, whose profession that “*le temps des spectacles oculaires est venu*” (the time of visual spectacle has come) clearly belongs to a dissenting voice.¹⁸ In contrast, the references to childhood (Ginisty) or childishness (Vapereau) are but two versions of the rather condescending attitude vis-à-vis the foregrounding of visual delights on the stage. This also may account for the conspicuous absence of the *féerie* and other popular stage genres in the histories of nineteenth-century theater in France.

The *Féerie* from Stage to Screen

Considered as a genre, the *féerie* thus combines several features that clearly place it within a tradition that favors the visual over the verbal, the marvelous over the realist, the effect or the trick over drama, amazement over intellectual engagement. All the elements that characterize this type of stage show are brought together in a definition Arthur Pougin gives in his important dictionary of theater terms published in 1885:

The *féerie* is a spectacular play showing a fantastic or supernatural subject where the miraculous element dominates. Thanks to this element, which allows the play to neglect the logic of facts as well as ideas, the action can evolve freely in a conventional world, without having to worry about plausibility. Its sole objective is to present the splendor, the illusions and all the power that the luxurious staging, the most lavish costumes, the gracefulness of the dances, and the charms of music can provide. In other words: everything which a most spectacular, most strange, and immensely varied scenographic display can come up with to surprise, amaze, and enchant the audience.¹⁹

The *féerie*, in other words, is rather an “attractional” genre (and indeed, some of the terms characterizing the dichotomy mentioned earlier in the field of French theater could also describe the opposition between the

cinema of narrative integration and the cinema of attractional display as Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault define it).²⁰ Even though these plays do present a narrative, what is more important—what constitutes the genre’s “dominant,” to employ a concept derived from Russian formalists—is the wondrous spectacle, the trick, the illusion, in short: the attraction.

This does not mean that *féeries* did not present narratives, quite the contrary. The plot, however, comes second to the display of spectacular effects and other kinds of attractions.²¹ In the entry on trick effects in his dictionary, Pougin explains that this hierarchization occurred at the level of the production process as well: there were in fact people specialized in the invention of elaborate trick effects that they sold to a producer or an author who then built a plot and ultimately an entire *féerie* around them.²² This, doubtlessly, is the type of practice that Ginisty denounces in his remark quoted earlier, stating that the *féerie* too often had become but a “pretext for mechanical artifices.” On the other hand, however, as Pougin notes, tricks were indeed an indispensable ingredient to the *féerie*, as they had the task to make the fantastic appear real to the eyes of the audience.²³ In the terminology Christian Metz proposed with regard to trick effects in cinema, these fall into the category of “invisible *trucage*” (in opposition to visible ones, such as slow motion, blurry images indicating distorted vision of a character, or imperceptible ones, such as the replacement of an actress or actor by a stand-in, a stunt person, and so on):

Invisible *trucage* is another matter. The spectator could not explain how it was produced nor at exactly what point in the filmic text intervenes. It is invisible because we do not know where it is, we do not see it (whereas we see a blurred focus or a superimposition). But it is perceptible, because we perceive its presence, because we “sense” it, and because that feeling may be indispensable, according to the codes, to an accurate appreciation of the film.²⁴

While Metz is analyzing the functioning of tricks in the cinema of narrative integration where, ultimately, tricks and special effects work for the benefit of either the diegetic illusion or the cinematic discourse, his observations also, *mutatis mutandis*, give an accurate account of the way such trick effects function within the context of a cinema, or a theater, of attractions (of attractional display): here, too, the spectator is to appreciate the trick *as* a trick, to understand, with regard to the diegesis, the artificially produced magic as magic the characters experienced, and at

the same time to marvel at the prowess of the technicians who succeeded in performing such wonders.²⁵ Tricks and special effects, in other words, always have a strong “attractational” dimension, but whereas in classical narrative cinema they contribute to the spectators’ absorption into the narration, genres oriented toward the spectacular, such as the *féerie*, rather aim at surprising, amazing, and astounding their audiences. Metz in fact cites *The Invisible Man* (1933) as his chief example to illustrate the functioning of “invisible *trucage*,” and it suffices to compare this to the way in which similar tricks are used in J. Stuart Blackton’s *The Haunted Hotel* (1907) or Segundo de Chomón’s *La Maison ensorcelée* (1908) and *Une Excursion incohérente* (1909) to understand the fundamental differences between the two modes of representation.

Given the continuous search for new effects, for new ways to surprise and amaze the audience, animated pictures, too, were included in *féerie* plays. An article in the November 1896 issue of *La Nature* on Georges Demeny’s Chronophotographe is illustrated by nine frames taken from a film that was “destined to be projected in a *féerie* at the Théâtre du Châtelet.”²⁶ The play in question was *La Biche au bois*; two 58 mm, hand-colored prints of the film actually survive in the collections of the Cinémathèque française and another one at the National Film and Television Archive in Bradford, England.²⁷ Similarly, in 1905 Georges Méliès created a film for the stage performance of *Les 400 coups du Diable* that he integrated one year later in a film advertised as a “grande féerie en 35 tableaux”²⁸ with the slightly modified title *Les Quat’cents farces du Diable* (*The Merry Frolics of Satan*).

As a matter of fact, the first films marketed as *féeries* appeared quite early in French sales catalogs. In 1899 already Méliès advertised his film *Cinderella* as a “grand and extraordinary *féerie* in twenty tableaux.”²⁹ And among the categories listed in the Pathé-Frères sales catalogs from 1903 onward one heading grouped *Féeries et contes*, distinguishing thus between *féeries* on the one hand, and filmic adaptations of fairy tales on the other.³⁰

The *Féerie* as a Cinematic Genre

Even though generic frontiers are notoriously difficult to establish, a problem that is even more complex in the field of early cinema, several formal elements seem to distinguish the *féerie* from the fairy tale film. Following the stage model, in cinematic *féeries*, ballet scenes suspend the line of action, as in both the 1902 and 1907 versions of Pathé’s *Ali Baba et les quarante voleurs*, directed by, respectively, Ferdinand Zecca and Segundo de Chomón. In the scene where Ali Baba’s brother Cassim has to hide in the cave because of the unexpected return of the

forty thieves, his being discovered and executed is preceded by a dance performed by a group of women who, in the 1902 film, are part of the thieves' entourage, whereas in the 1907 remake they emerge from the depth of the cave. There is no narrative motivation for these ballets, nor are they mentioned in the *Arabian Nights* tale. A second scene, however, is part of the original story: Ali Baba's faithful servant, having discovered that the oil merchant visiting her master is in fact the gang leader in disguise, performs a dance in the course of which she stabs the villain with a dagger. But just like the ballet in the brigands' cave, her dance, too, is staged in such a way that it is oriented toward the camera—and thus the spectator in the theater—and not the diegetic audience to which it is supposedly addressed.

Comparing the 1902 and 1908 versions of Pathé's *La Belle au bois dormant*, the former co-directed by Lucien Nonguet and Ferdinand Zecca, and the latter directed Albert Capellani (or Lucien Nonguet, according to another source), the difference between a *féerie* and a fairy tale film becomes quite obvious. While the 1908 film more or less follows the story line of Charles Perrault's version of the tale with many shots being filmed outdoors, the earlier adaptation adds many episodes to the story. Before he finally discovers the castle of Sleeping Beauty, the prince has to travel to various places, and all of them provide the possibility to present special attractions that go beyond the relatively few trick effects that are needed for a representation of the tale: a ballet in the Kingdom of the Fairies, a spectacular fairy grotto, trick effects in an enchanted cottage, and so on. Furthermore, the later film often uses outdoor scenery, whereas Zecca and Nonguet make abundant use of painted backdrops. And while the 1908 version ends with the wedding at the castle,³¹ the 1902 one adopts the conventional closing *tableau* of the stage *féerie*, the so-called apotheosis.³²

The apotheosis is indeed a special feature, functioning as something like a *mise en abyme* of the splendor and opulence the play seeks to display. Pougín gives the following definition of the term: "This is how the final tableau is called in a *féerie*, in which is offered a most splendid and lavish display of stagecraft. Here the art of the set designer, the costume designer, and the director are exhibited to their fullest degree. . . . [A]ll this makes for a superb spectacle, which will enchant the audience and at the same time affect their senses so that it inevitably will bring success."³³ In *féerie* films the apotheosis is generally announced by an intertitle, and in many cases it is presented in colors. Obviously, *féeries* as such are a genre where the spectacular qualities of colorization are frequently to be found, but the apotheosis is indeed a textual element where this feature is especially important. Thus a Pathé sales catalog of 1902 announces

with regard to *La Belle au bois dormant*: “The last *tableau*, or apotheosis, is the only one to be hand-colored.”³⁴

In addition, the *féerie* as a cinematic genre had a strong presence in the contemporary (French) trade press, the sales catalogs of various companies, and in the way a producer such as Méliès presented himself to his clients, his audience, and his peers. In his famous contribution to the 1907 *Annuaire général et international de la photographie*, Méliès explicitly states that he immediately used his (somewhat legendary) chance discovery of the possibilities of the substitution splice to film his first *féeries*.³⁵ The term thus circulates in that period in the communication circuits between producers, exhibitors, and spectators, functioning as a generic marker, even though providing a clear-cut definition would probably have been difficult for any of those who used it. However, following Rick Altman’s important study on the concept of genre, one could say that, nevertheless, there are recognizable markers at a semantic level (such as, for instance, the diegetic universe, which might be characterized as fantastic or marvelous), at a syntactic level (elements such as the ballets and the apotheosis), and at a pragmatic level (with regard to the way the term functions in contemporary discourses).³⁶ In that respect, the *féerie* can indeed be considered a genre in early cinema.

A Trip to the Moon as Féerie

So what does it mean to approach Méliès’s *A Trip to the Moon* as a *féerie*? In the first instance, this means to not look at the film as a “precursor” of whatever ulterior phenomenon (classical narrative cinema, science fiction, fantastic adventure films, and so forth) but as part of a “cultural series” (as André Gaudreault would call it) that reaches back into the nineteenth century.³⁷ At the same time, *féerie* films, and *A Trip to the Moon* in particular, while participating in this tradition, or cultural series, also transform it formally as well as thematically. They are, in many respects, a different format, but still visibly rooted in the generic context to which they belong.

In terms of Ginisty’s historical overview, *A Trip to the Moon*, just as Offenbach’s *Voyage dans la lune*, belongs to the type of *féerie* that combines modern elements with more traditional ones. In this respect, the film presents a rather incoherent diegetic universe, the components of which are juxtaposed without trying to motivate this peculiar kind of blend at the level of a narrative logic. Just as in a stage *féerie* the guiding principle here seems to be the possibility to present a series of spectacular effects.

A 1903 distribution catalog for Star-Film productions in the United States lists the titles of the thirty scenes or “pictures” of which *A Trip*

to *the Moon* is composed.³⁸ The first one, “The Scientific Congress at the Astronomic Club,” already presents the tension between the seemingly modern and the fairy-tale-like fantastic elements that characterize Méliès’s film. The scientists participating in the meeting appear in pointed hats and wide robes, looking rather like wizards or ancient astronomers. Young servants enter the meeting hall carrying telescopes, which a little later transform into seats. A comic element is introduced when one of the distinguished members of the Astronomic Club gets into a fight with Professor Barbenfouillis, who proposes the project, and both behave like quarreling schoolboys. When finally the group of men is formed that will take the trip to the moon, they change into relatively modern (but for 1902 still rather old-fashioned looking) travel clothes (Scene 2: Planning the Trip. Appointing the Explorers and Servants. Farewell). The following pictures (Scenes 3 and 4) show the workshop where the projectile is constructed and the foundries where the “monster gun” is cast and thus transfer the action into a modern industrialized environment in an attitude that is both admiring and ironic. The continuous changes in tone and atmosphere clearly indicate right from the start that *A Trip to the Moon* is anything but a faithful adaptation of Jules Verne’s novel.

The following scenes (5–7) not only depict the explorers climbing into the rocket and the charging and firing of the huge gun, but also provide the occasion for the corps de ballet, appearing as bluejackets, to display their legs. Again, the generic conventions supersede narrative logic: instead of soldiers (as one would expect from the catalog description, detailing “March Past the Gunners” and “Saluting the Flag” as two events occurring in picture 7), we see a group of ballet dancers. The trip through space and then the famous image of the rocket hitting the moon right in the eye (Scenes 8 and 9; the French expression “*dans l’œil*” is the equivalent of “bull’s-eye”) is another abrupt change in the mode of representation or, more precisely, in the way the diegesis is constructed. The moon now turns briefly into an anthropomorphic character, disrupting the type of diegetic universe the earlier scenes had established. The landing on the moon and earth rising above its horizon (Scenes 10 and 11); the snowstorm, the descent into the crater, and the discovery of the mushroom grotto (Scenes 13–15); then the encounter and fight with the Selenites, the captivity and their being brought before the king, the escape, the chase, and the departure (Scenes 16–21)—all these episodes are again part of the fantastic diegesis of the *féerie*, whereas Scene 12—“The Dream (the Bolies, the Great Bear, Phoebus, the Twin Stars, Saturn)” —although motivated as a dreamlike apparition, again anthropomorphizes these various celestial bodies. And after the return to earth,

the descent to the bottom of the ocean, and the rescue (Scenes 22–25), the remaining tableaux (Scenes 27–30) are dedicated to the celebration of the explorers' exploits and function in a way similar to the customary apotheosis.

A Trip to the Moon is thus indeed a film that, even though it does not take the viewer to the realm of the fairies, is clearly situated within the realm of the *féerie*. The characters (whose names already underscore this genealogy: Barbenfouillis, Alcofrisbas, Nostradamus, Oméga, Micro-mégas, and Parafaragaramus sound rather similar to, for instance, some of the characters' names in Offenbach's *opera-féerie*: Cosmos, Microscope, Cosinus, Grosbedon, and Oméga) and their adventures are subordinate to the wealth of effects and spectacular moments which the film contains: substitution splices for transformations and the "exploding" Selenites, pyrotechnical tricks for eruptions, steam, smoke, and flames (the foundries, the craters), changes of scale for the trip through space, the simulation of an underwater scene, stage machinery for changing sets and props, group arrangements and parades of the ballet dancers, the stars and planets, comic and fantastic images (the rocket hitting the moon in the eye), fantastic costumes and sceneries, and so on. The characteristic elements of the genre are more or less all present in this film. Looking at *A Trip to the Moon* as a *féerie* thus not only leads to a more accurate understanding of the film in terms of its historical embedding in a cultural tradition, but also to more insights into its structural composition and the functioning of its various components with regard to the text as a whole.

More in particular, even though *A Trip to the Moon* clearly presents a narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end—the adventures of a group of people flying to the moon and back—this narrative sequence does not take place within a coherent diegetic universe, not even if one allows for many fantastic elements in the story. The only logic that is capable of tying everything together is the logic of the genre. The "Right in the Eye!" tableau, for instance, cannot be integrated into the narrative logic, the anthropomorphization of the moon, its all of a sudden having a face and being hit in the eye by the rocket, is incompatible with the tableaux that precede and follow it. However, once this image is seen as an attraction meant to surprise and amuse the spectator within the *féerie* tradition, it is entirely functional in that context. *A Trip to the Moon*, in this respect, plainly illustrates André Gaudreault's contention that Méliès's work belongs to the cultural series of the *féerie* as much as to the emerging new cultural series of what he calls *cinématographie-attraction*.³⁹

Between Jules Verne and the *Féerie*

In a 1902 program leaflet of the Cirque féérique Anderson, *A Trip to the Moon* is announced as a “Grande Féerie en 30 tableaux, tirée du roman de Jules Verne.”⁴⁰ Even though, as Thierry Lefebvre convincingly demonstrates in his above-mentioned analysis, the traces of Verne’s work in the film are rather superficial, the explicit reference to it in such a leaflet indicates that contemporary audiences did not perceive the coupling of the fantastic world of the *féerie* with the rationalist nineteenth-century tales of technical progress as a complete mismatch. In fact, Méliès himself continued to exploit the possibilities of this combination in his 1904 *An Impossible Voyage*, which again takes up the title of a Jacques Offenbach work and a reference to Jules Verne. In terms of Hassan El Nouty’s study of the French stage in the nineteenth century, the common denominator between them is their orientation toward the spectacular.

Interestingly, a 1907 Pathé production also connects Verne and the *féerie*, even though the film initially seems to focus exclusively on the writer and his books. In *Le Petit Jules Verne*, directed by Gaston Velle and marketed as a *scène à trucs*, a little boy goes to bed and secretly continues reading after his mother has turned out the lights. He falls asleep and starts to dream. A portrait of Jules Verne and his name appear in a vignette above the bed. The dream scene first looks somewhat Méliès-like—the sun, the moon, and a meteor appear. The boy then seems awake and climbs into a balloon that takes him into the air. He looks through a telescope down to earth, and what he sees is represented by nonfiction images in vignettes. Then a storm occurs and he falls into the ocean. He sinks through underwater scenery with corals, shells, and some jellyfish. The corals are transformed into women’s heads that subsequently become dancing ballerinas. The jellyfish, too, turn into young women. Then the women disappear, and an octopus attacks the boy. He awakes from the fight, entangled in his bedclothes, which he pulls to pieces with the feathers flying all around.⁴¹

In this film, the *féerie* elements are part of a fantastic dream triggered by the boy reading a Jules Verne book. Otherwise, however, *Le Petit Jules Verne* presents a relatively tightly organized narrative, combining actuality pictures with artificial sceneries, and in the end rather evokes the abrupt awakenings of Little Nemo from his nightmares. Here the *féerie* and its ballets can be understood almost as a quote or a reference to the genre, and it is quite remarkable that this connection is made in such a context that by no means calls for it. It is almost like a reminiscence of the earlier coalition between Jules Verne’s novelistic

imagination and the fantasy world of the *féerie*, which is so powerfully present in Méliès's *A Trip to the Moon*.

Notes

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1. Jules Verne, *La Journée d'un journaliste américain en 2889* (Paris: Nautilus, 2001), 29. (Unless stated otherwise, all translations from French sources are mine.)

2. For possible literary and other sources for *A Trip to the Moon*, see Thierry Lefebvre, "A Trip to the Moon: A Composite Film," trans. Timothy Barnard, this volume, 49–63. I would like, however, to shift the focus from such intertextual relations to a genre perspective.

3. See my "La Féerie—un genre des premiers temps," in *La nascita dei generi cinematografici*, ed. Leonardo Quaresima, Alessandra Raengo, and Laura Vichi (Udine, Italy: Forum, 1999), 229–238.

4. Paul Ginisty, *La Féerie* (Paris: Louis Michaud, n.d. [1910]), 12–24.

5. See Ginisty, *La Féerie*, chaps. 4 and 5. Ginisty of course concentrates on the French situation. In a more international perspective one could also look at, for instance, the Austrian *zauberspiel* and the English tradition of the pantomime, which present both certain similarities with the *féerie*.

6. See Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 66. Ginisty, who slightly earlier had written a book on melodrama, too, claims that in fact the story lines in both genres are quite similar, the main difference being that the role of providence in melodrama is taken over by a fairy in the *féerie*, whereas the villain's part is played by some kind of evil spirit. But obviously, the *féerie* presents everything in a light and comical mood.

7. Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 96.

8. I have discussed such differences with regard to the stage and screen versions of *Ali Baba* in my "In the Realm of the Fairies: Early Cinema between Attraction and Narration," *Iconic* 5 (2000): 7–26; see esp. 11–14.

9. Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 214.

10. Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 216–217.

11. Ginisty, *La Féerie*, chap. 13.

12. Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 9.

13. Théodore de Banville, *Les Parisiennes de Paris* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1866), 207.

14. De Banville, *Les Parisiennes*, 208–209.

15. Hassan El Nouty, *Théâtre et pré-cinéma: Essai sur la problématique du spectacle au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Eds. A.-G. Nizet, 1978), 16.

16. El Nouty, *Théâtre et pré-cinéma*, 17.

17. El Nouty, *Théâtre et pré-cinéma*, 66–67.

18. El Nouty, *Théâtre et pré-cinéma*, 68.

19. Arthur Pougin, *Dictionnaire historique et pittoresque du théâtre et des arts qui s'y rattachent*, 2 vols. (1885; repr. Plan-de-la-Tour: Eds. d'Aujourd'hui, 1995), 360.

20. See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser with Adam Barker (London: British Film Institute, 1990), 56–62; André Gaudreault and Tom Gunning, "Early Cinema as a Challenge to Film History," trans. Joyce Goggin and Wanda Strauven, in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 365–380; original French version published in 1989. For my rephrasing of the original couple of concepts see my "The Cinema of Attractions as *Dispositif*" in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, 57–69.

21. I discuss this point in detail with regard to *féerie* films in my "In the Realm of the Fairies."

22. Pougin, *Dictionnaire historique*, 748. Interestingly, in a retrospective text written in 1932 Méliès describes his own work from the first decade of the century in similar terms. According to him, the story line in those days was but a pretext to link the various tricks. See Georges Méliès, "The Importance of the Script," trans. Paul Hammond, this volume, 241–243. See also André Gaudreault, "Theatricality, Narrativity, and Trickality: Reevaluating the Cinema of Georges Méliès," trans. Paul Attalah, this volume, 31–47, where Gaudreault discusses the role of narrativity in Méliès's films.

23. Pougin, *Dictionnaire historique*. The range of trick effects that could be obtained on the stage is amazing, indeed. Katherine Singer Kovács, "Georges Méliès and the *Féerie*," in *Film before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 244–257, points to the similarities between nineteenth-century stage effects and the tricks in the films of Méliès. See also the descriptions offered by Ginisty, *La Féerie*, 173–177, and, as an important contemporary source, M. J. Moynet, *L'Envers du théâtre: Machines et décorations* (Paris: Hachette, 1874).

24. Christian Metz, "Trucage and the Film," trans. Françoise Meltzer, *Critical Inquiry* 3, no. 4 (1977): 664.

25. On the complex relationship between tricks and the performance of magic by conjurors on the stage around the turn of the century see Matthew Solomon, "Up-to-Date Magic: Theatrical Conjuring and the Trick Film," *Theatre Journal* 58, no. 4 (2006): 595–615.

26. G. Mareschal, "Le Chronophotographe de M. G. Demeny," *La Nature*, Nov 21, 1896, 393.

27. See Laurent Mannoni, "Une Féerie de 1896: *La Biche au bois*," *Cinémathèque*, no. 10 (1996): 117–123.

28. The translation of the French term "*tableau*" in contemporary British and American sales catalogs varies. Sometimes they use "picture," sometimes "scene," and sometimes even the French term "*tableau*." I therefore will use these terms indiscriminately. In French, however, "*scène*" rather referred to a film as a whole (as is the case with Pathé catalog categories such as "*scènes de plein air*" or "*scènes à trucs*"), whereas "*tableau*" denotes a subsection of a staged film.

29. Jacques Malthête, *Méliès, images et illusions* (Paris: Exporégie, 1996), 219.
30. See Henri Bousquet, *Catalogue Pathé des années 1896 à 1914*, vol. 4 [1896–1906] ([Bures-sur-Yvette]: Henri Bousquet, 1996), 1.
31. This is the case at least in the print held by the Netherlands Filmmuseum that was screened at the 2005 edition of the Il Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna. According to Henri Bousquet, *Catalogue Pathé des années 1896 à 1914*, vol. 1 [1907–1908–1909] ([Bures-sur-Yvette]: Henri Bousquet, 1993), 67, the Pathé sales catalog mentions an apotheosis, but not the wedding scene, so it could be that here the ending of the tale is coinciding with the apotheosis, whereas in a *féerie* the apotheosis comes after the end of the narrative.
32. See Bousquet, *Catalogue Pathé*, vol. 4, 873, and Bousquet, *Catalogue Pathé*, vol. 1, 67. According to Bousquet both versions were announced as *féeries*, the formal differences between both indicate however that the later film clearly stays closer to the fairy tale.
33. Pougín, *Dictionnaire historique*, 45–46.
34. Henri Bousquet and Riccardo Redi, *Pathé Frères: Les films de la production Pathé*, vol. 1, *Quaderni di cinema*, no. 37 (1988): 79.
35. Georges Méliès, “Cinematographic Views,” trans. Stuart Liebman, in *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology*, ed. Richard Abel, vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 35–47.
36. See Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999).
37. See André Gaudreault, “*Les Vues cinématographiques* selon Georges Méliès, ou: comment Mitry et Sadoul avaient peut-être raison d’avoir tort (même si c’est surtout Deslandes qu’il faut relire). . . ,” in *Georges Méliès, l’illusionniste fin de siècle*, ed. Jacques Malthête and Michel Marie (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997), 111–131. See also Gaudreault’s *Cinéma et attraction: Pour une nouvelle histoire du cinématographe* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008).
38. See “A Fantastical . . . *Trip to the Moon*,” 227–228, this volume. An identical list of scenes appears in the British distribution catalog of the Charles Urban Trading Co., *Revised List of High-Class Original Copyrighted Bioscope Films*, February 1905, 282. Here the film is announced as “An extraordinary Bioscope Series in 30 pictures.” See also the description of the film in Jacques Malthête, *Méliès, images et illusions*, 222–224.
39. Gaudreault, *Cinéma et attraction*, 115–116, 156–158.
40. Reproduced in *Méliès, magie et cinéma*, ed. Jacques Malthête and Laurent Mannoni (Paris: Paris-Musées, 2002), 176. Obviously, the reference to Verne here also serves promotional ends.
41. The film was screened during the 2007 Il Cinema Ritrovato festival in Bologna. See also Bousquet, *Catalogue Pathé*, vol. 1, 44.