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HARTRICK, ELIZABETH

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Consuming Illusions: The Magic Lantern in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand 1850-1910.

Elizabeth Hartrick

Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2003

The Australian Centre
The University of Melbourne

Abstract

This thesis maps the existence, extent and diverse applications of the magic lantern in the Australasian colonies and brings to light a cultural practice that had remained largely invisible in histories of photography, cinema, and popular culture in nineteenth century Australasia.

The thesis demonstrates that the magic lantern was popular as entertainment on both a private, domestic and a public scale. It traces its widespread adoption in two broad institutional contexts, the educational and the religious, and shows how this wide-ranging practice and consumption was supported by developing social and commercial infrastructure in the colonies and a network of touring lanternists. It argues that the magic lantern located the Australasian colonial culture within a global one centred around the consumption of visual technology and an international exchange of images.

Colonial audiences were not, however, merely the passive recipients of a globalised imagery or culture. They were active contributors to it, constructing their own meanings in response to imported images. The thesis argues that, while the magic lantern functioned to affirm a sense of imperial identity in both colonisers and the colonised, it was adapted locally to the creation of colonial, intercolonial and regional identities, as an alternative to a dominant Eurocentric mass-mediated world view. Colonial practitioners applied this powerful medium to the generation of images at a local level that reveal an enthusiasm for colonial events and stories, a sense of place, and a celebration of local identity on the big screen.

This is to certify that:

- (i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
- (iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed

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My thanks go to my supervisors at the Australian Centre, Associate Professor Kate Darian-Smith and Professor Paul Carter. Kate has consistently provided encouragement, reliable direction, academic and practical support, access to resources, funding and academic opportunities. Paul's encouragement, his recent critical reading of the thesis, and his insightful suggestions and feedback have been invaluable.

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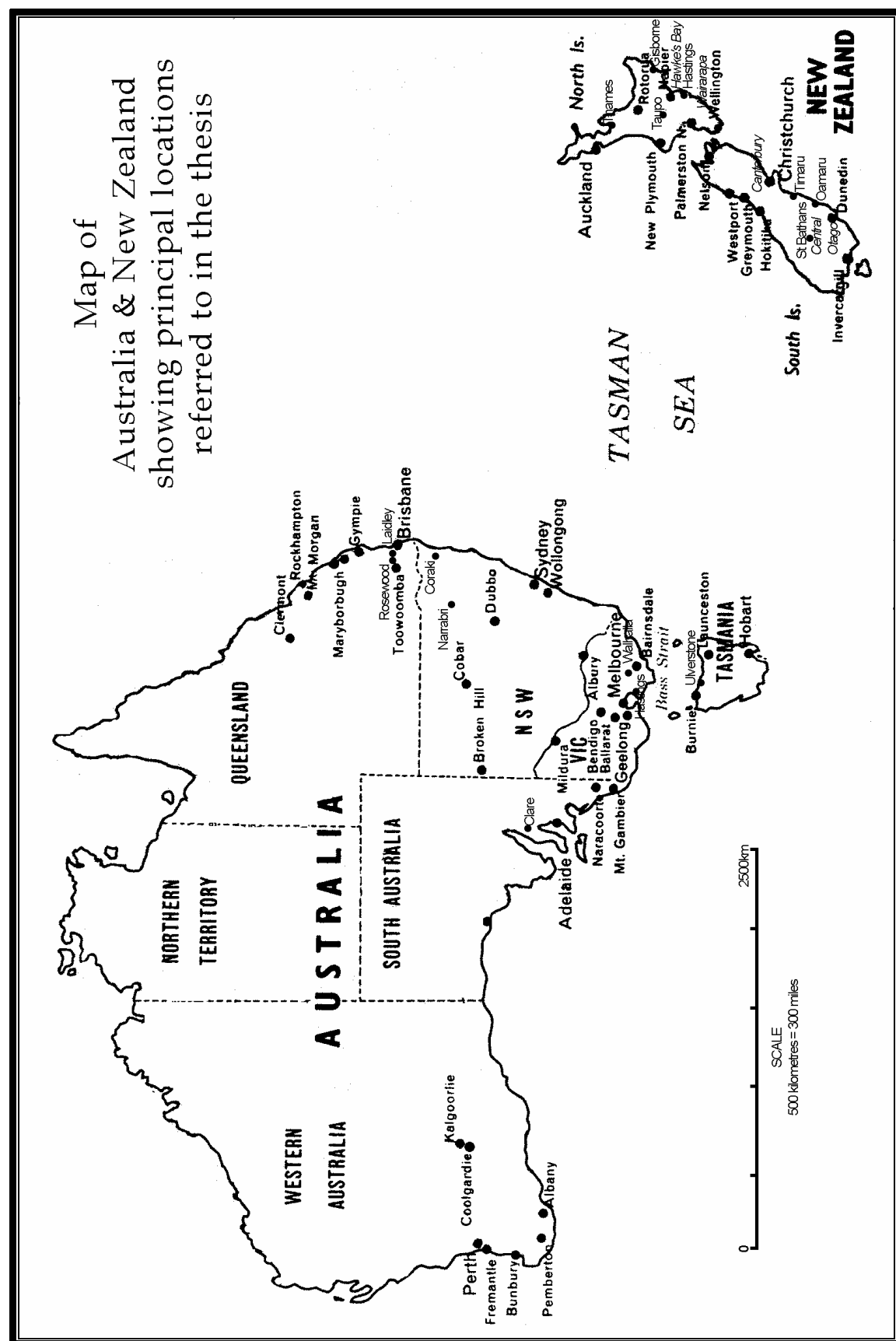
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Map of
Australia & New Zealand
showing principal locations
referred to in the thesis



Glossary

Biunial	A double lantern having the two projectors stacked one above the other, enabling two slides to be screened simultaneously to produce dissolving and other effects. Otherwise used to effect a smooth transition between sequential images or merely as a back-up in case one projector failed.
Chromatrope	A mechanical lantern slide using two decorated glass discs which when rotated in opposite directions create kaleidoscopic abstract patterns.
Daguerreotype	The earliest form of photography to have a commercial application, it was developed and patented in the late 1830s by Louis Daguerre. It flourished briefly until around 1850. The technique produced a crisply defined, positive image on silver-coated copper plates, highly suitable for portraits.
Diorama	A three dimensional stage production, typically a re-enactment of historical events, journeys by means of the skilful manipulation of painted backdrops, moving pieces of scenery and scale models, accompanied with lighting, sound effects and music.
Limelight	A powerful illuminant created by applying a gas flame (oxygen and hydrogen, oxygen and ether, or other combinations) to a cylinder of calcium carbonate 'lime.' Developed for military and commercial use in the 1820s, it was also known as the Drummond light, oxy-hydrogen light, oxy-calcium light, and calcium light. Major practical applications included lighthouses, survey stations, and stage lighting, which donated the term 'in the limelight' to mean being on show.
Optical lantern	An alternative, more sedate name for the magic lantern.
Phantasmagoria	The term phantasmagoria, taken from the notorious ghost shows of the French Revolution by Robertson in Paris, came subsequently to indicate the technique of back-projection, in which the image was projected from behind a translucent screen.
Phenakistoscope	One of a number of mechanical, optical devices which demonstrated the 'persistence of vision.' Devised in the 1830s, it became a popular drawing room amusement. The apparatus consists of a disc bearing a series of images representing a sequence of movements and radiating slits. Held in front of a mirror and rotated, the device produced

	an illusion of a figure in motion when viewed through the slits.
Praxinoscope	Resembling the zoetrope, with the addition of mirrors in the centre which reflected the 'moving' image. This device was augmented and developed to a sophisticated level suitable for commercial exhibition by French inventor Emile Reynaud in the 1880s.
Sciopticon	An improved model of lantern devised by Philadelphia manufacturer L. J. Marcy, used internationally from the 1870s.
Stereopticon	A double lantern intended to project two almost identical images to produce an illusion of solidity or depth. More frequently used for normal projection.
Stereoscope	A device for viewing a pair of two almost identical images, usually photographs taken from slightly different points of view, so that an impression of depth and solidity is obtained. Popular as a drawing room entertainment.
Thaumatrope	A simple device consisting of a card or disc with different images on either side, when rotated rapidly the images appear to combine.
Triunial	A triple lantern having three projectors stacked vertically. Like the biunial or double lantern, it could be used for special effects or as a back-up.
Zoetrope	Again dependent on the persistence of vision, this apparatus consists of a cylinder with a series of vertical slits. The inner surface of the cylinder bears a sequence of images which appear to be in motion when rotated and viewed through the slits.

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Introduction

Golden pagodas gleaming in the noonday sun.

Antarctic expedition, 1911.¹

In 1911 the frozen southernmost continent of Antarctica was the surprising location for a series of lantern lectures (**figure i**). Selected by Captain Robert Scott to join his second Antarctic expedition, professional photographer Herbert Ponting was charged with making a complete visual record using the latest image recording technology, both photographic and cinematic.² But finding ways of relieving the tedium of long winter evenings was a contemporary preoccupation in normal conditions, and the four months of darkness of the Antarctic winter exacerbated the problem. As on previous expeditions, Scott suggested a program of regular lectures and theatrical evenings. In his personal account of the expedition Ponting wrote:

My own cooperation in these evenings consisted of half-a-dozen lectures about my travels in foreign lands, illustrated with lantern-slides. I had brought my own lantern with me – a most ingenious and compact one I had bought in Canada several years before – and about five hundred lantern-slides of the Far East, made from my own negatives and coloured by Japanese artists during my long stay in Tokyo.³

Scott commented regularly in his journals on the contribution of Ponting's lantern lectures: 'His store of pictures seems unending and has been an immense source of entertainment to us during the winter. His lectures appeal to all and are fully attended.'⁴ 'In the dreary night he fixed up his carbide light,' wrote fellow explorer Cecil Meares, 'And took us around the world quick as winkin.'⁵ Ponting listed the lecture titles as: 'Switzerland,' 'Across Northern India,' 'Burma and Ceylon,' 'Peking and the Great Wall of China,' 'Flowers, Festivals and Customs of Japan,' and 'Japanese Temples and Scenery,' 'golden pagodas gleaming in the noonday sun, and a hundred other

¹ Herbert Ponting *The great white south* London: Duckworth & Co. 1921 p. 139.

² H. J. P. Arnold *Photographer of the world: the biography of Herbert Ponting* Rutherford; Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971 p. 51. Although visual records, particularly photographic records even including lantern slides, of early Arctic and Antarctic expeditions have been the subject of study, the use of the practice of magic lantern exhibitions in these regions has not. Biographer Arnold makes only a brief reference to the projection lantern Ponting took with him.

³ Ponting *Great white south* p. 138, 9.

⁴ Robert F. Scott *Scott's last expedition: the personal journals of Captain R. F. Scott* John Murray: London, 1968 edition p. 318.

⁵ Cecil Meares *South Polar Times* 1911/12 cited by Stephen Herbert in Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 238.

scenes aglow with colour of that fascinating East ... to remind us that all the world was not ice and snow and science.’⁶

As a diversion from winter’s tedium, the phantasmagorical nature of the spectacle contrasted strongly with the harshness of their immediate reality. This almost hallucinatory quality is conveyed by Scott in his description of the lecture on India. He found Ponting’s ‘impressionist style of lecturing ... very attractive,’ enlivened with ‘distinctly dramatic’ reminiscences, and ‘vivid description.’ ‘We saw,’ he continued, ‘ a confusing number of places – temples, monuments, and tombs in profusion, with remarkable pictures of the Taj Mahal – horses, elephants, alligators, wild boars, and flamingoes – warriors, fakirs, and nautch girls.’⁷

Ponting even used the medium to transform the enveloping ‘ice and snow and science’ into spectacle. On mid-winter’s night, as part of the ‘feasting and festivity’ he showed one hundred slides from his photographs of the expedition, and commented that: ‘The company were in a mood to receive each of these topical pictures with a generous round of applause. They were a real hit.’⁸

While this incident could be analysed from a range of different perspectives, I will nominate only some of specific relevance to the present study of the magic lantern in Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century. First, what is the nature of the technology employed here and what made it the entertainment of choice in such a remote and inhospitable location?

The optical device used by Ponting, popularly known as the magic lantern, is recognisably the forerunner of the modern slide projector. The principle is the same. A beam of intense light passing through a transparency and a series of lenses projects an enlarged image onto a screen for viewing by a captive audience in a darkened room. What separates the modern slide projector – the chosen medium of suburban Uncle Arthurs and Edna Everages for decades, and still an essential tool of trade for art historians⁹ – from the ‘modern magic lantern’ of the 1890s and early 1900s, are the advances in technology. Combustion illuminants, such as gases, acetylene, kerosene or whale oil, have been superseded by electric and laser light; bulky and fragile double layered glass slides with cumbersome manual slide changing mechanisms have been replaced with 35mm film and automated slide carriers.

⁶ Ponting *Great white south*, p. 139.

⁷ *Scott’s last expedition* p. 303.

⁸ Ponting *Great white south* p. 142.

⁹ Uncle Arthur and Edna Everage are fictional characters, devised by Melbourne social satirists Glen Robbins in the 1990s and Barry Humphries in the 1960s respectively, who entertained friends and relatives with slide presentations of their travels and adventures.

Educational use of the projected image has continued to increase. Even as electronic forms, such as Powerpoint, are being introduced across all disciplines, a well-stocked slide library remains a central teaching resource in any university art history department.

Ponting's five hundred glass lantern slides represented a substantial investment of baggage space for the Antarctic expedition. His 'ingenious and compact' lantern, a concession to these constraints, was an unusually progressive model. The more familiar magic lanterns of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came in an immense variety of styles from mahogany and brass structures capable of projecting two or even three slides simultaneously, to less expensive devices of pressed metal. They also ranged widely in size from substantial models for public exhibitions to smaller devices for home entertainment. **(figure ii)**

One of the spectacular characteristics of the medium was that even a modest-sized, basic lantern was capable of projecting crisp, clear images of astonishing scale. In Sydney in the 1840s one exhibitor attained images of two hundred and fifty square feet (more than twenty square metres), if his own publicity is to be believed, and forty years later amateur photographers in Melbourne proudly exhibited their work on a twenty foot screen.¹⁰ In London the technology was deployed for decades for large scale public exhibitions in specially built venues such as the Adelaide Hall and the Royal Polytechnic Institution. Though lacking locations of that sort in the Australasian colonies, public screenings of this scale were not unusual, taking place in large public halls and even on exterior walls.

Monumental scale was not the only attraction. The medium was perfectly adaptable for exhibition, and just as spectacular, in smaller venues from a cramped explorers' hut in Antarctica to a private middle-class drawing room. Techniques developed over two centuries had resulted in impressive displays. Finely detailed hand-painted transparent images on glass were richly coloured in translucent media. Astounding effects of illumination, kaleidoscopic movement and metamorphoses were achieved with mechanical and moving slides **(figure iii)**. Photographic slides brought a further dimension of detail and literality, enhanced, as Ponting's were, with judicious and skilful hand-colouring.

Nineteenth century innovations in slide-making and replication processes not only increased the diversity of content available for public and private use, but also the mechanical reproduction of slides enabled a common set of images to be distributed to widely dispersed audiences. At the same time the means for producing slides became increasingly accessible to both professional and amateur practitioners. The flexibility of content allowed exhibitors to adapt their programs to suit local tastes and interests. The order in which the slides were shown was entirely under the command of the operator and could be changed at will, so the repertoire was endlessly variable.¹¹ Such diversity of repertoire delivered novel and innovative

¹⁰ 'At the Amateur Photographic Society Exhibition' *The Illustrated Australian News* December 22 1888 p. 218.

¹¹ Philip Carpenter, founder of British lantern and slide manufacturers Carpenter & Westley, drew attention to this aspect of variability when he explained how the paintings in his sliders

programs of appeal and interest to audiences across the spectrum from educated to general, and adult to juvenile.

As well its versatility and adaptability the magic lantern's portability was a significant advantage. Most lanterns, and a whole range of associated paraphernalia from collapsible screens to padded slide boxes, were designed with transportation in mind. With reasonable care, the apparatus and slides could be carried by road, rail and even by foot over the long distances and through the harsh conditions characteristic of the Australasian colonies. Itinerant lanternists, from individuals to large ensembles, toured an extensive network encompassing urban and rural communities. Exhibitions could be set up in the varied venues available in the colonial context: rural halls, educational and religious institutions, metropolitan lecture rooms, private homes, outdoors and even in shop windows. The magic lantern achieved the same penetration into the heartland of colonial Australia and New Zealand as the many entertainers, merchants or tradespeople who habitually serviced both the urban and rural populations of the Australasian colonies.

Nineteenth century magic lantern technology was, however, far from perfect. The use of whale-oil or kerosene, of volatile gases, oxygen and hydrogen, in combination with naked flame, resulted in a noisy, smelly procedure fraught with the danger of fire and of deafening, even life-threatening, explosions. Nevertheless an unrivalled spectacle of spell-binding illumination, colour scale and novelty combined with the practical advantages of versatility, adaptability and portability, guaranteed the spread and popularity of the magic lantern throughout the Australasian colonies over sixty years, from the colonies of Western Australia to tropical north Queensland to snowbound south Otago. These were the exactly same characteristics that made the magic lantern an excellent choice of entertainment for Scott's expedition to Antarctica.

The second point to be drawn from Ponting's magic lantern show in relation to the Australasian context is that of cultural identity and cross-cultural exchange. What intersection of global technological, social and visual cultural practices could have led to a New Zealand photographer using a Canadian

were mounted individually with the advantage that they 'can be changed or differently arranged at the pleasure of the purchaser.' Carpenter also emphasised portability; even in the age of the monolithic triunials and their complicated appendages, transportability remained a design consideration. (see Philip Carpenter 'A short account of the copper-plate sliders ...' in *Elements of zoology* London 1823, facsimile reproduction in Laurent Mannoni, Donata Pesenti Campagnoni & David Robinson *Light and movement: incunabula of the motion picture 1420-1896* Gemona, Italy: Giornate del cinema muto, [Paris, France]: Cinémathèque française-Musée du cinéma; [Turin]: Museo nazionale del cinema, c1995.pp. 125-131)

Carpenter, an optician, was the first to mass produce lantern slides using the copper plate method to imprint glass slides with a linear engraved image, to which colour was added by hand. His 'copper-plate sliders' were in commercial production from the 1820s. The level of detail and accurate reproduction possible with this method made it suitable for scientific illustration as well as more general subjects. The London firm was known as Carpenter and Westley from 1835.

lantern to entertain an audience of British explorers in Antarctica with projected images of the Far East?

One could speculate that Ponting's magic lantern exhibitions in Antarctica provided a focus for Scott's team to enact various identities as imperial subjects, as global citizens and as subjects positioned in terms of their gender, race and class. They even saw themselves projected as subjects of a magic lantern show in Ponting's slides of the expedition. By the same token, by virtue of its remarkable affective and performative characteristics and its practical advantages, the magic lantern introduced into the colonial popular cultural context a powerful vehicle for the expression of the multiple identities Australians and New Zealanders constructed for themselves over the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In considering questions of identity formation not only the content but the production, circulation, exhibition and reception of magic lantern slides must be taken into account. These are central concerns of this thesis. For dislocated Britons, for example, the parade of glowing images inspired the reconstruction of memories of 'home,' while as a social event a magic lantern show might evoke a comforting familiarity. Views of iconic landscapes, buildings, historical events, and 'personages' functioned as ritualised reaffirmations of allegiance to the imperial cultural centre. Comical and fantasy images kept alive connections with popular visual culture and folk traditions. Images of recent events and scientific lectures kept colonists abreast of European modernity and progress. Audiences of indigenous peoples in the colonies were expected to receive the same images differently. New Zealand based missionaries, for example, used magic lantern shows to impress upon young Maori and Pacific Islanders the superiority and advantages of western civilisation.

While identification with the British Empire remained central for Australasian colonists throughout this period, their early cultural anxieties were alleviated by a growing sense of their unique place within the Empire. Paralleling trends in contemporary colonial literary and visual arts, local slide producers, both amateur and professional, released a tide of images which challenged the dominance of external productions and imports. Imperial identities were overlaid by expressions of local identity fashioned around the depiction of the region's natural geographical, floral and faunal features, the narration of local topics, events and history, and the appropriation of motifs from traditional indigenous cultures. The increasing accessibility of photographic technologies towards the end of the century accelerated the production of informal images of colonists and colonial life for the magic lantern. As they entered global and intercolonial circulation these locally produced images served variously to distinguish the Australasian colonies within the empire and internationally, and to differentiate the individual colonies from each other.

As the first comprehensive overview of the historical uses of the magic lantern in nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia and New Zealand this thesis establishes the significance of the medium in terms of the breadth of repertoire, the extent and variety of practices, and the rapid and thorough integration of visual technology into everyday colonial life. Magic lantern culture extended geographically, ideologically and socially: from the colonies of Australia to New Zealand; from elite, imperial heroes, to middle-class provincial self improvement groups, to the lower socio-economic urban and rural audiences. Internationally the magic lantern and its practice were located in contemporary discourses of education and entertainment, leisure, class, modernity and visibility; discourses which held particular relevance in the context of colonial cultural concerns, conditions and values. This thesis aims to show how the widespread consumption of the magic lantern in the Australasian colonies fostered a visually and technologically literate audience accustomed to new conventions of spectatorship. A further aim is to examine ways in which the magic lantern functioned as a vehicle for the formation of shared cultural identities for Australians and New Zealanders.

International magic lantern studies.

There is a marked contrast between the lack of recognition given to the magic lantern in accounts of Antipodean cultural and social life, and the extensive body of recent international research and literature documenting the medium, its long history and its rise in popularity over the nineteenth century. Combined interests in early cinema and its pre-history and nineteenth century popular culture have given rise over the past forty years to numerous publications, histories, monographs, articles, websites, a journal, and an international society.¹² They provide a wealth of information on the history, technology, iconography and practice of the projected image in Europe and North America.

Magic lantern history

The history of this quaintly named technology and its exhibition practices reaches back to the Enlightenment philosophers of the seventeenth century. This was a time when the notion of magic encompassed the operation of unknown, invisible forces whether natural or supernatural, as well as deception, illusions and trickery.¹³ Despite regular attempts to modify it with more progressive epithets and titles such as optical lantern, 'stereopticon'

¹² The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, an organization of lantern enthusiasts, collectors and practitioners established in London, England, in 1977, began publication of *The new magic lantern journal* in 1978, and a quarterly *Newsletter* in 1980. The Magic Lantern Society modified its name in 1991 to reflect increasing international membership. <http://www.magiclantern.org.uk/society1.htm>.

¹³ On the significance of the term 'magic' see Appendix I.

'sciopticon' and 'terpuoscope', the old term 'magic lantern' with its 'pleasantly irrational suggestions' persisted into the twentieth century.¹⁴

The often-contested origins, history and practice of the projected image have been the subject of continued interest by European and American scholars and enthusiasts, examined from various perspectives: from the history of science and technology; the history of cinema and the projected image; and the history of mass-media and visual communication.¹⁵ Cinema historian Tom Gunning provides this succinct outline of magic lantern practice in nineteenth century popular culture in Europe and America:

The lantern show was adapted to every possible task of entertainment and instruction, and adopted by a huge range of institutions and practices from travelling entertainers, to temperance lecturers, to the promotion of principles of both religion and sciences and the conveying of distant lands and current events to masses of people. As a mass medium, the magic lantern was industrialized in both the manufacture of lanterns (for professional exhibition as well as home use) and of the slides themselves, including the adaptation of photography to mass reproduction via photographs printed on glass slides.¹⁶

The complex origins of the magic lantern have been meticulously documented, competently surveyed and debated by a multitude of voices. It is not the intention of this thesis to recount this history in detail here. However, for surveys of the magic lantern since the seventeenth century, possibly the most comprehensive are two recent substantial compilations of primary sources and citations which provide a rich resource for the magic lantern researcher. They are Hermann Hecht's massive catalogue of published works and sources entries encompassing more than three centuries *Pre-cinema*

¹⁴ The title of *The optical magic lantern journal and photographic enlarger (OMLJ&PE)* from 1889 to 1903 attests to this. David Robinson discusses this briefly in *From peep show to palace: the birth of American film* New York: Columbia University Press, 1996 p. 3, 4. He notes that the misnomer 'stereopticon' came to be applied in America from the 1850s; 'optical lantern' was in use from the 1880s in Britain introduced by J. F. Dallmeyer.

For further discussion of the ambiguity of the magic lantern see Simon During *Modern enchantments: the cultural power of secular magic* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 262-266.

¹⁵ The magic lantern has been considered by writers exploring and theorising on the transitions in forms and communication of knowledge, epistemologies of the Enlightenment such as Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the observer: on vision and modernity in the nineteenth century* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990; Thomas L. Hankins & Robert J. Silverman pay close attention to the extensive use of the magic lantern in the context of natural philosophy and science in the seventeenth, eighteenth centuries and nineteenth centuries, *Instruments and the imagination* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995, Chapter three 'the magic lantern and the art of demonstration' pp. 37-71; Terry Castle, *The female thermometer: eighteenth-century culture and the invention of the uncanny* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

¹⁶ Tom Gunning 'Introduction' in Laurent Mannoni (trans. Richard Crangle) *The great art of light and shadow: archaeology of the cinema* Devon: University of Exeter Press, 2000, p. xxxvii.

history: an encyclopaedia and annotated bibliography of the moving image before 1896 (1993) and Franz Paul Liesegang's *Dates and sources: a contribution to the history of the art of projection and to cinematography* published by The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain in 1986.¹⁷

Other studies position the magic lantern as part of cinema history. Among the earliest of these is the frequently cited C. W. Ceram's *Archaeology of the cinema*, first published in English in 1956. Further surveys subsequently appearing in English by Brian Coe, Erik Barnouw, Laurent Mannoni, David Robinson and Deac Rossell have increased the public accessibility of images and information regarding the place of the magic lantern in the technological and social development of projected images for entertainment and education.¹⁸ Sharing a concern with techniques for creating the illusion of movement on the screen, publications such as these locate the magic lantern merely as a forerunner within a developmental trajectory which culminated in the emergence of cinema.

Relatively fewer publications focus on the documentation of magic lantern history in its own right. The following studies establish grounds for an alternate narrative to the teleological trajectory dictated by cinema historians. The earliest of these is Olive Cook's *Movement in two dimensions* (1963). Cook's detailed history and description of two important lantern slide technologies – 'dissolving views' and 'life model slides' – and her rich and evocative description of a nineteenth century lantern show, indicate that the magic lantern practice was not merely a inferior precursor to cinema but constituted a unique visual cultural experience in its own right.¹⁹ G. A. Household's *To catch a sunbeam: Victorian reality through the magic lantern* (1979) and Colin Gordon's *By gaslight in winter* (1980) use lantern slide images as a basis for documenting nineteenth-century British daily life and customs, as well as giving some useful background information on lantern practice and life model slide production in the late nineteenth century.²⁰

More recent publications emanating from The Magic Lantern Society by Dennis Crompton, David Henry, Stephen Herbert, David Robinson, Richard Franklin and Richard Crangle, which include the recent *Encyclopedia of the*

¹⁷ Franz Paul Liesegang, (trans. Hermann Hecht) *Dates and sources: a contribution to the history of the art of projection and to cinematography* London: The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, 1986; Hermann Hecht & Ann Hecht, *Pre-cinema history: an encyclopaedia and annotated bibliography of the moving image before 1896* London: Bowker-Saur, 1993.

¹⁸ Erik Barnouw *The magician and the cinema* New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; Brian Coe *The history of movie photography* London: Ash & Grant, 1981; Mannoni et al. *Light and movement*; Mannoni, *The great art of light and shadow*; Robinson, *From peep show to palace*; Deac Rossell, *Living pictures: the origins of the movies* New York: State University of New York Press 1998; see also Werner Nekes, *Film before film* Germany (video), 1986.

¹⁹ Olive Cook *Movement in two dimensions: a study of the animated and projected pictures which preceded the invention of cinematography* London: Hutchinson & Co., 1963, chapters 6 and 7, pp. 81–120.

²⁰ Colin Gordon *By gaslight in winter* London: Elm Tree Books, 1980; G. A. Household (ed.) *To catch a sunbeam: Victorian reality through the magic lantern* London: Michael Joseph, 1979.

magic lantern (2001), have extended the breadth of documentation.²¹ These often lavishly illustrated texts provided detail on aspects such as slide production techniques and typology, apparatus, manufacturers and dealers, as well as displaying artefacts and images of this essentially visual phenomenon.

Further articles and chapters in books focus on various special applications of the magic lantern in the nineteenth century, across areas as diverse as school education, social welfare and the education of the insane. In her article for the American journal *History of Photography* 'The magic lantern slide in entertainment and education, 1860-1920' Elizabeth Shepard gives a useful overview of lantern practice in the USA which could become the basis for productive comparison between Australasian and North American lantern practice.²²

Maren Stange's article 'Jacob Riis and urban visual culture: the lantern slide exhibition as entertainment and ideology' (1989) considers American social reformer Jacob Riis' lantern slide lectures on the urban poverty in New York in the 1880s and 1890s. Riis and his entourage, like the geographical explorers of the era, ventured out into 'the field' in search of subjects. But as ethnographical explorers they captured candid views of the impoverished and destitute with the aid of new flash lamp technology. Stange exposes the intrusive 'excursionistic' nature of the Riis' practice and the power of lantern slide lecture, combining truth-implying photographic images with commentary and narrative, as a persuasive vehicle of ideology.²³

The use of lantern slides by the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee is subject of James R. Ryan's chapter 'Visual instruction' in *Picturing empire: photography and the visualisation of the British Empire* (1997). The Committee, established in London in 1902, developed and promoted a program 'to instruct, first, British school children about their Empire and, second, the children of the Empire about the "Mother Country."' Ryan discusses the ways in which these powerful visual lessons in geography perpetuated an entrenched view of British Imperial domination.²⁴

²¹ Dennis Crompton, David Henry, Stephen Herbert (eds) *Magic images: the art of hand-painted and photographic lantern slides* London: The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, 1990; David Robinson *The lantern image: iconography of the magic lantern 1420-1880* London: The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, 1993; Dennis Crompton, Richard Franklin & Stephen Herbert (eds) *Servants of light: the book of the lantern* London: Magic Lantern Society, 1997; David Robinson, Stephen Herbert & Richard Crangle (eds) *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* London: The Magic Lantern Society, 2001.

²² Elizabeth Shepard 'The magic lantern slide in entertainment and education, 1860-1920' *History of photography* vol. 11, no. 2, April-June 1987 pp. 91-108.

²³ Maren Stange 'Jacob Riis and urban visual culture: the lantern slide exhibition as entertainment and ideology' *Journal of urban history* Vol 15 no 3 May 1989, pp. 274-303.

²⁴ James R. Ryan Chapter 6 'Visual instruction' in *Picturing empire: photography and the visualisation of the British Empire* London: Reaktion, 1997.

Stange and Ryan share a Foucauldian critique of the discourses behind lantern practice. Emily Godbey, however, identifies other motivations at work behind the application of the medium in an institutional context. In her article 'Picture me sane: photography and the magic lantern in a nineteenth-century asylum' she considers the use of lantern slides and photography in the Philadelphia Hospital for the Insane in the middle of the nineteenth century. Godbey finds there that documentary photography was not used for the surveillance of inmates and as a medium for the satisfaction of voyeuristic curiosity. Instead, she argues, the photography and the magic lantern were part of a program aimed at extending and enhancing the social and intellectual life of inmates.²⁵

The body of international research and documentation outlined here establishes the magic lantern as a globally significant medium in the nineteenth century, and as a social cultural and political practice in which the operation of a range of contemporary discourses can be examined. However, these studies have all focussed on European or American history and practice. The significance of the magic lantern in colonial Australia and New Zealand, the subject of this thesis, remains as yet undefined.

Magic lantern studies in Australia and New Zealand

By contrast to the international literature, the magic lantern has been subject to persistent scholarly neglect in the Australasian context. Even Australian photographic historian Jack Cato who, in his pioneering work *The story of the camera in Australia* (1955), identifies the magic lantern as 'the most popular form of public entertainment in the nineteenth century,' gives it little more than a page as an introduction to a chapter entitled 'Motion picture photography.'²⁶

Similarly, the magic lantern has been largely ignored in histories of Australasian popular culture. Australian cultural historian Mimi Colligan identified the need for specific attention to be paid to the colonial magic lantern in the 1980s. In the introduction to her own doctoral thesis *Canvas and wax: images of information in Australian panoramas and waxworks: with particular reference to Melbourne 1849-1920*, Colligan recommends that 'Pictures painted on glass as magic lantern slides and the later use of photographic slides to provide 'instructive amusement', sometimes called 'dissolving views', deserve a long and separate study.'²⁷ Yet of all the numerous surveys and commentaries on entertainment and leisure in Australia and New Zealand in

²⁵ Emily Godbey, 'Picture me sane: photography and the magic lantern in a nineteenth-century asylum' *American Studies* 41:1 Spring 2000, pp. 31-69.

²⁶ Jack Cato, *The story of the camera in Australia* Melbourne: Institute of Australian Photography, 1979 [first edition Melbourne: Georgian House 1955] p. 114.

²⁷ Mimi Colligan, *Canvas and wax: images of information in Australian panoramas and waxworks: with particular reference to Melbourne 1849-1920*. Ph.D. thesis, Monash University History Department, 1987, p. i.

the nineteenth century, few if any have anything substantial to say about the magic lantern. Richard Waterhouse's detailed studies of colonial amusements would be a logical first reference point, particularly his *Private pleasures, public leisure: a history of Australian popular culture since 1788* (1995) and a more recent article, 'Travelling shows in rural Australia 1850-1914' (1999) which alerts us to the prevalence of large and small itinerant minstrel troupes, circuses, drama and variety companies.²⁸ Waterhouse has however omitted the magic lantern from his investigations.

Publications such as *The Melbourne scene 1803-1956*, which first appeared in 1957, compiled from primary sources by James Grant and Geoffrey Serle, provide a rich variety of contemporary accounts of life and labour in Melbourne but nowhere acknowledge the existence of the magic lantern.²⁹ Again the medium is absent from Frank van Straten's chapter on 'Popular entertainment in Victoria' in A. G. L. Shaw (ed) *Victoria's heritage: lectures to celebrate the 150th anniversary of European settlement in Victoria* (1985).³⁰ Barbara J. Savill is one of the few cultural historians who acknowledge the existence of the magic lantern, when she includes it in a chronology of 'Cinema in Victoria' in her chapter on 'Entertainment' in *Victoria illustrated 1834-1984* (1985).³¹ Another is Katherine Brisbane in her broad ranging survey of the performing arts, *Entertaining Australia: an illustrated history* (1991).³² The brevity and scarcity of such references only reinforce the notion that the place of the magic lantern slides in the cultural life of the colonies was negligible.

If the medium has escaped the attention of historians of colonial theatre and popular entertainment, it has also been largely overlooked in the many historical surveys of early cinema in Australia and New Zealand published in the last twenty years. In a brief discussion of the origins of cinema, Graham Shirley and Brian Adams in *Australian cinema: the first eighty years* (1983) cite the precedence of optical toys, the 'Thaumatrope, Zoetrope and Praxinoscope,' which had 'conditioned a public to the illusion of continuously reproduced movement.' The significance of magic lantern exhibition practice as a precondition to cinema does not, however, receive similar acknowledgement, although they go on to explain that the 'limelight views' were 'glass magic lantern slides which had become common throughout the

²⁸ Richard Waterhouse *Private pleasures, public leisure: a history of Australian popular culture since 1788* Melbourne: Longman 1995; *From minstrel show to vaudeville: the Australian popular stage 1788-1914* Sydney: New South Wales University Press 1990; 'Travelling shows in rural Australia 1850-1914' in *Australasian Drama Studies* Vol 35, October 1999 pp. 19-31.

²⁹ James Grant & Geoffrey Serle *The Melbourne scene 1803-1956* Neutral Bay, NSW: Hale and Iremonger, 1978.

³⁰ Frank van Straten 'Popular entertainment in Victoria' in A. G. L. Shaw (ed) *Victoria's heritage: lectures to celebrate the 150th anniversary of European settlement in Victoria* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985 pp. 98-108.

³¹ Barbara J. Savill 'Entertainment' in Paynting, Harold H. & Malcolm Grant (eds) *Victoria illustrated 1834-1984* Melbourne: The James Flood Charity Trust, 1985 pp. 431-445.

³² Katherine Brisbane (ed) *Entertaining Australia: an illustrated history* Sydney: Currency Press, 1991, p. 129.

world over the past two hundred years.’³³ The magic lantern merely flickers in and out of Ina Bertrand’s *Cinema Australia: a documentary history* (1989).³⁴ A magic lantern is astonishingly visible in a full colour photograph on the cover of John Baxter’s *Filmstruck: Australia at the movies* (1986) but unacknowledged in the text. Raising the question (and this researcher’s interest): ‘What did people do for entertainment before there was cinema?’ Baxter lists the ‘fanciful names’ of ‘optical toys [which] enjoyed a vogue from the 1850s’ but makes no mention of the magic lantern.³⁵ The curious omission is perpetuated in a video documentary *Home entertainment last century* (1986) made in the same year and illustrated with artefacts from Museum Victoria – which itself houses a substantial collection of slides and associated paraphernalia.³⁶

Not all previously neglected or hidden aspects of colonial popular and material culture have been subject to the same lack of scholarly attention as the magic lantern, however, suggesting that the time may have come for this present study. Graeme Davison, for example, has argued that the practices of recording, marking and apportioning of time are now so taken for granted and integrated into contemporary culture that the history of their development and implementation had been overlooked and unrecorded.³⁷ Mimi Colligan’s thesis and subsequent book published in 2002 have revived interest in colonial panorama and wax-work entertainments. Similarly, Anita Callaway in *Visual Ephemera* (2000) ‘discusses varieties of nineteenth-century Australian visual culture that have been hitherto either unrecorded or dismissed as irrelevant to the history of Australian art.’ Although not primarily concerned with aesthetic hierarchies, as is Callaway, this thesis considers an adjacent aspect of visual culture that has been ‘hitherto either unrecorded or dismissed as irrelevant.’³⁸

Although largely neglected in accounts of colonial public entertainment, lantern practice does come within the ambit of historians of Australian and

³³ Graham Shirley & Brian Adams *Australian cinema : the first eighty years* Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1983 p. 4, 6. See also Andrew Pike & Ross Cooper *Australian film, 1900-1977 : a guide to feature film production* Melbourne : Oxford University Press in association with the Australian Film Institute, 1980, on whose work in this specific area Shirley and Adams base theirs.

³⁴ Ina Bertrand’s *Cinema Australia: a documentary history* Kensington, NSW: NSW University Press, 1989.

³⁵ John Baxter *Filmstruck: Australia at the movies* Sydney: ABC Enterprises, 1986 pp. 26-28. Listed are the Zoetrope, Phenakistoscope, Thaumatrope, Kineograph, Praxinoscope and Kinora. Ironically, however, the beautiful full colour crystal clear photographic image on the wrap-around cover of this lavishly illustrated publication depicts in almost life-size a typical late nineteenth century mahogany and brass magic lantern with complete slide changing mechanism.

³⁶ Tony Paice (producer), Jeff Spencer (director) *Home entertainment last century* video recording [Melbourne] : Curriculum Branch, Ministry of Education at Channel 7, c1986.

³⁷ Graeme Davison *The unforgiving minute: how Australia learned to tell the time* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993.

³⁸ Anita Callaway *Visual ephemera: theatrical art in nineteenth century Australia* Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2000 p. ix.

New Zealand colonial photography. A careful reading of the work of historians of colonial photography reveals scattered but persistent references to lantern slide making and exhibiting as an aspect of photographic practice. The mainstream photographic histories of Chris Long, Gael Newton, Alan Davies and Peter Stanbury in Australia, and William Main and Hardwicke Knight in New Zealand, among others, disclose an awareness that the magic lantern was not only known in the colonies but also that its use was extensive and diversified.³⁹ A sub-group of photographic historians have recently extended their research and interests to a knowledge of colonial lantern practice, and subsequently to the collection of research material, data and artefacts, and in some cases to the staging of exhibitions using original (and modified) apparatus and slides. As a magic lantern collector and practitioner, New Zealand photographic historian William Main has acquired a deep historical and practical knowledge of the medium and published a small proportion of his findings.⁴⁰ More recently South Australian photographic historian Robert J. Noye has published electronically the results of a thorough and exhaustive search of South Australian newspapers, providing a valuable resource of listings, advertisements, articles and reports on magic lantern practice in the region.⁴¹ This body of data alone points to a substantial and widespread practice from the late 1840s through the nineteenth century.

Another easily overlooked study on the magic lantern is a small catalogue published to accompany an exhibition based on lantern slide collections of Ray Barnes, formerly of Hobart, and of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Put together as a fourth year Art History project at the Tasmanian School of Art, this has been to date the only dedicated piece of research on the magic lantern undertaken in the region to assert the extent of the practice. The catalogue editors point out that in the nineteenth century the lantern was used both as a children's toy and as mass entertainment and instruction, and even at late as the 1920s 'the wooden boxes of big glass slides remained

³⁹ Alan Davies & Peter Stanbury *The mechanical eye in Australia: photography from 1841-1900* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985; Hardwicke Knight *Photography in New Zealand* Dunedin: John McIndoe, 1971; *New Zealand photographers: a selection* Dunedin: Allied Press, 1981; Chris Long *Tasmanian photographers 1840-1940: a directory* Hobart, Tas.: Tasmanian Historical Research Association; Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 1995; William Main & James B. Turner *New Zealand photographers from the 1840s to the present* Auckland: Photoforum, 1993; Gael Newton *Shades of light: photography and Australia 1839-1988* Canberra: Australian National Gallery; Collins, 1988; Margaret Tassell and David Wood *Tasmanian photographer: from the John Watt Beattie collection* South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1981; Anne-Marie Willis *Picturing Australia: a history of photography* North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1988.

⁴⁰ William Main 'The magic lantern in Aotearoa (New Zealand),' the 3rd International Convention of the Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, London, 6-8 April 1990; "'The lanthorn that shews tricks": the magic lantern in nineteenth century New Zealand' a short article in *The Turnbull Library Record* 1994 Vol. 27, pp. 45-54; and contributions to Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern*.

⁴¹ Robert J. Noye "Photohistory SA: A web site dedicated to the history of South Australian photography from 1845 to around 1915.' Established 22 June 1998, <http://users.chariot.net.au/~rjnoye/>

essential equipment for the serious lecturer.'⁴² 'Even now,' they further claim, 'the older generation recall slide-shows as a high-spots in entertainment in the small community.' These valuable substantive studies on the magic lantern are yet to make a impact on the mainstream focus on photographic practice and/or cinema history.

Outside of these specialist studies, the neglect of the magic lantern reinforces a prevailing notion that a history of the projected image in Australasia commences with the introduction of fully formed cinema to an expectant audience. From this, it can only be assumed that if the magic lantern had any place in colonial culture prior to or outside early cinema it was only very marginal and obscure. This historiographic oversight is consistent with an approach already identified in the international literature which conceptualises earlier visual technologies within the teleological narrative of the achievement of twentieth century cinema, and which posits a pre-cinema history in which primitive proto-forms, such as the magic lantern and its repertoire of visual effects, were developed and discarded. This approach has been challenged by Tom Gunning, among others. Although it is undeniable that early indicators of moving picture technology can be readily discerned in lantern practices, 'the special effects of motion,' as Gunning points out, 'were basically a sideshow to the key role the magic lantern took on, in much of nineteenth-century Europe, as the mass medium of visual information.'⁴³

Reasons for the magic lantern's neglect in Australia and New Zealand

Prior to the 1960s one could point to modernist prejudices against Victoriana in Australia and New Zealand as an explanation for scholarly neglect of the magic lantern. Such prejudices have since been reassessed by English cultural historian Asa Briggs, for example, who complains that Victorian things and people were 'often misunderstood, even caricatured.'⁴⁴ Reasserting cultural continuity between the unmodern Victorian and the modern post-war epochs is the concern of Matthew Sweet in his recent *Inventing the Victorians*.⁴⁵ 'Many of the pleasures we imagine to be our own, the Victorians enjoyed first,' Sweet claims, 'They invented the theme park, the movies... They were engaged in a continuous search for bigger and better thrills. ... took their pleasures in private fetish clubs and at terrifying magic lantern displays.'⁴⁶ Sweet also calls into question modernist mythologies (such as 'the alleged Victorian prudery over the visibility of the legs of furniture especially pianos, raised to emblematic status of the era's obsession with modesty') and argues for a

⁴² Kylee Barry et al *The magic lantern show* Hobart: Tasmanian School of Art Gallery, 1979

⁴³ Mannoni *The great art of light and shadow* p. xxxvii.

⁴⁴ Asa Briggs *Victorian things* London: B. T. Batsford, 1988, pp. 12, 14.

⁴⁵ Matthew Sweet *Inventing the Victorians* London: Faber and Faber, 2001.

⁴⁶ Sweet *Inventing the Victorians* p. x.

greater awareness 'that the Victorians shaped our lives and sensibilities in countless unacknowledged ways.'⁴⁷

An aversion to Victoriana can therefore be only part of the explanation for the magic lantern's persistent neglect up to the present day. Another reason which may explain why colonial magic lantern practice has eluded conventional cultural and technological categories is its hybrid nature. As a cultural practice heavily inflected with the ideology of 'rational recreation' it operated across boundaries from public amusement to public instruction in the lecture hall to domestic leisure. The content of lantern images belongs both to 'high' and 'low' culture, to education as much as entertainment, and the magic lantern show resists existing categories of the visual and performing arts. The magic lantern is also a complex apparatus that enlists the technologies and physical sciences of mechanical reproduction, optics, thermodynamics and illumination. As a visual technological medium the magic lantern of the nineteenth century is most closely allied to photography, and, as we have seen, it is in the category of photographic histories and studies that the lantern slide is often mentioned. Photographic images were increasingly used, as were photographic methods of image reproduction, and many photographers made photographs specifically for lantern projection. Yet photographic historians have routinely marginalised the hybrid magic lantern medium.

Finally, there are practical considerations that may help to explain lantern's neglect in the face of the large body of material evidence in archives and museums. While the slides and apparatus have in many cases been diligently preserved there are obstacles to deciphering them and their practices. The frequently complex and idiosyncratic apparatus is no longer operational, the glass slides are fragile and have to be held up to the light and viewed one by one, and the effect of projection and illumination and performance are lost.

The discouraging perceptions of the magic lantern outlined above, variously, as a piece of superseded technology, or as Victorian kitsch, or as a kind of hybrid sideshow to the 'main event' of photography and cinema, do this once immensely popular medium a great injustice. This thesis is dedicated to the proposition that the magic lantern deserves to be considered as a phenomenon in its own right, as a familiar aspect of cultural life in the Australasian colonies, entering into and impacting upon the same cultural, social and economic spheres identified by Gunning in the global context.

Theoretical Perspectives

In the remainder of this introduction I will elaborate on the key concepts and theories that have informed my approach to the study. I will then discuss the nature and scope of the primary material collected and analysed in the thesis and provide a justification for its temporal and geographical parameters. In

⁴⁷ Sweet *Inventing the Victorians* p. xxiii.

conclusion I will provide a brief chapter summary and a restatement of the aims of the thesis.

Nineteenth century discourses

The paired concepts of 'rational recreation' and 'useful knowledge' rested on the acquisition of knowledge for intellectual and moral self improvement and social progress. As Peter Bailey explains, these notions were part of a wider social philosophy which gained increasing adherence throughout the nineteenth century in response to the phenomenon of 'leisure' in an industrialised society on one hand and on the other problems of social order and public health faced by English society.⁴⁸ Improved and 'improving' recreations were an important instrument for the education of the working classes in the social values of middle-class orthodoxy. This is not to say that rational recreation was not necessary for all classes of British society, but the different socio-economic groups had varying needs depending on the lack of physical or mental stimulation in the daily lives. At the instigation of philanthropists and moral reformists, institutions were set up throughout Britain for intellectual and moral improvement, such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the Working Men's Clubs and Mechanics' Institutes and, in America, the Young Men's Society. Steeped in the sensibilities of the bourgeoisie, the agendas of these institutions vilified and attempted to repress many of the leisure activities of the lower classes, noisy 'unstructured' behaviour such as drinking and singing in saloons. Bailey has set out clearly how energetically middle-class values and concerns informed the new discourse of rational recreation of mid-nineteenth century England.⁴⁹

Not confined to the public and institutional realms, rational recreation entered middle class homes in the form of 'philosophical toys' for children, youths and adults.⁵⁰ The ideal of rational recreation persisted throughout the

⁴⁸ Peter Bailey *Leisure and class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control 1830-1885* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press 1978.

⁴⁹ See also Robert A. Colby "'Rational amusement': fiction vs. useful knowledge in the nineteenth century," in J. R. Kincaid & A. J. Kuhn (eds) *Victorian literature and society: essays presented to Richard D. Altick* Ohio State University Press, 1984 pp. 46-73.

Such classist biases did not go unnoticed. Edward Bulwer Lytton in his 1833 publication *England and the English* observed that 'the very essence of our laws has been against the social meetings of the humble, which have been called idleness, and against the amusements of the poor, which have been stigmatised as disorder.' But as Bailey demonstrates, the new discourse of rational recreation remained resolutely classist and determinedly censorious towards anything perceived as 'idleness.' Edward Bulwer Lytton *England and the English* vol I 1833 pp. 35-8, cited in Bailey *Leisure and class* p. 35.

⁵⁰ The magic lantern joined a plethora of technological media flooding the market for rational amusements for public and private consumption. For the individual consumer, the stereoscope, the kaleidoscope and other optical devices were small and portable enough for domestic use as a middle-class, drawing room amusement. In the public domain Richard Altick has described the great three-dimensional painted and stage-lit panorama and diorama installations, exhibitions of astonishing waxworks, automata and even electric shocks which

nineteenth century, and beyond, promoted by social commentators and writers such as G. J. Romanes whose 1879 essay on 'Recreation' in the English journal *Nineteenth Century* was published again at the end of the century. 'Recreation is, or ought to be,' Romanes intoned, 'not a pastime entered upon for the sake of pleasure it affords, but an act of duty undertaken for the sake of the subsequent power which it generates, and the subsequent profit which it ensures.'⁵¹

As a powerful, versatile technology and one that was continually undergoing improvement and development, the magic lantern was well suited to serving the tenets of rational recreation, combining amusement and instruction for the dissemination of an expanding repertoire of 'useful knowledge' to an ever widening audience socially and geographically.⁵² As a scientific instrument the medium had retained its close associations with education in physics or natural magic, to the extent that even the exhibition of comic mechanical slides derived some educational worth as a demonstration of optics. As American scientist Henry Morton (1836-1902) explained in the late 1860s, the magic lantern:

assists in exhibiting to many at once, and thus renders possible the visible demonstration of a fact which must otherwise be only stated, is at once so eminently useful to the man of science in his relations with the now scientific public, and so in tune with the temper of the time, as to merit much attention and study.⁵³

Fictional narratives had a place too in the magic lantern repertoire, paralleling the deployment of literary fiction to the cause of rational amusement. Robert A. Colby cites 'three kinds of instructional functions for works of fiction' which were also characteristic of magic lantern narratives: 'communicating knowledge of ordinary life and manners'; 'the obligation of some moral principle'; 'examples of conduct superior to those that are met with in ordinary life.'⁵⁴ Such was the motivation behind, for example, the Salvation Army's use of illustrated sentimental ballads which left such a deep impression on audiences of the 1890s throughout Australasia, and which are examined in chapter seven. The range of subject matter mediated through the magic lantern was extended by developments in imaging technology from the

huge crowds in London. Richard D. Altick *The shows of London* Cambridge Mass.: Belknap Press 1978. See also Castle *The female thermometer*; Hankins & Silverman *Instruments and the imagination*.

⁵¹ G. J. Romanes 'Recreation' in *Essays* London; New York; Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co. 1897 pp. 164-212, p. 167, first published in *Nineteenth century* September 1879 (Romanes' emphasis), cited in Bailey *Leisure and class* p. 67.

⁵² Although Bailey has nothing to say about the place of visual technology in the rational recreation movement.

⁵³ Henry Morton (1836-1902) 'The magic lantern as a means of demonstration' *The Journal of the Franklin Institute devoted to Science and the Mechanic Arts* Philadelphia c1867-1871; cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 153, item. 247.

⁵⁴ Colby "Rational amusement" p. 48. Colby draws from Hugh Murray *The morality of fiction* Edinburgh: s.n. 1805 pp. 5-7.

1820s, to include more accurate scientific and natural history illustrations, more literal representations of history, geography and culture, and elaborately illustrated moral narratives. Photographic slide making processes accelerated the expansion of this already diverse repertoire.

The concept of 'rational recreation' applies throughout this thesis and its applications are explored, in particular, in the first three chapters which survey the magic lantern as an entertainment medium.

Visuality and Truth

A second broad concern of the Victorian mind implicated in and mobilised by the nineteenth-century lantern practice was a preoccupation with vision and visuality understood as a primary means of apprehending the truth of the observable world.⁵⁵ The veridicality of the visual was accepted as self-evident by both the educated and the general population. As Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan observe: 'Nineteenth-century aesthetic theory frequently makes the eye the pre-eminent organ of truth.'⁵⁶ Such beliefs persisted despite the fact that the very advances in optical science that accompanied the privileging of vision also demonstrated the ease with which the eye is deceived. The effectiveness of visual communication was predicated on a commonly understood visual language – based on Western academic aesthetic precepts of pictorial 'realism', theatrical traditions of depiction of human emotion, and layers of ancient and contemporary iconographical symbolism – which crossed cultural, class and regional boundaries.⁵⁷ As the *Melbourne Age* commented with regard to a magic lantern exhibition held in 1855: 'The language of which pictures are the written words is one which is understood by all nations. Ideas communicated by such characters are comprehensible by the world's population.'⁵⁸ Salvation Army practitioners of the 1890s too made frequent reference to the value of the 'eye-gate' along with the 'ear-gate' as

⁵⁵ The emerging dominance of the visual in nineteenth century media has been identified in a number of studies, following Martin Meisel who surveyed of the importance of the detailed and precise pictorial representation of narrative, emotion, ideology and factual information in the fine arts. Martin Meisel, *Realizations: narrative, pictorial and theatrical arts in nineteenth-century England* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983.

More recently Jonathan Crary has drawn attention to the significance of optical devices of the early nineteenth century and the perceptual transformations that came about in response to new visual technologies. Crary *Techniques of the observer*; and *Suspension of perception: attention, spectacle, and modernity in the nineteenth century* Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, c1999.

And Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan investigate the significance of vision and visuality in literary fiction and documentary. Carol T. Christ & John O. Jordan (eds) *Victorian literature and the Victorian visual imagination* Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press 1995.

Furthermore the significance of visual media in the nineteenth century must also be located within 'the radical shift' identified by Barbara Maria Stafford 'underway since the eighteenth century from a text-based to a visually dependent culture.' 'Preface' *Body criticism: imaging the unseen in Enlightenment art and medicine* Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, p. xviii.

⁵⁶ Christ & Jordan *Victorian literature* p. xx.

⁵⁷ For further discussion see Christ & Jordan *Victorian literature*.

⁵⁸ *Age* May 3 1855 p. 6.

entry not only to the minds but to the souls of their congregation.⁵⁹ Such beliefs supported the potency of the magic lantern as a vehicle for education and instruction at all levels from the academic to the popular.

This thesis argues that, with the relocation of magic lantern practice into the distinctive cultural experience of colonialism, the encoded notions of rational recreation and visuality as truth acquired fresh meaning. Culturally attuned to the magic lantern tradition, colonial settler communities of Australasia formed a ready-made audience that, nonetheless, had particular concerns which inflected their reception of the magic lantern as a vehicle for 'rational recreation' and 'useful knowledge.' The sense of participation in direct experience, even if it was based on an illusion, had a heightened significance for audiences who were keenly aware of their spatial and temporal separation from their cultural homelands. One of the major concerns for middle-class colonists lay with the maintenance of cultural links with their imperial centre, and with combating a perceived cultural void in colonial life. Particularly in the early years of colonisation in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the practice of rational recreation promised an antidote for anxieties about the onset of cultural and moral malaise. These sights and stories ensured cultural continuity, the play of visual images in a darkened room 'almost succeeded in annihilating' the challenges of 'space and time' Australasian colonists routinely faced.⁶⁰

Twentieth century discourses: The Medium is the Message

My approach to this study of the magic lantern has also been shaped by concepts formulated by several twentieth century commentators on nineteenth and twentieth century social, economic and communication phenomena, notably Marshall McLuhan, Guy Debord, Jonathan Crary and Tom Gunning. These commentators approach visual technology from differing interpretative and political positions.⁶¹ Nevertheless they would broadly agree that, historically, the audience as a consumer of illusions has been at the same time as much 'consumed' by the illusions, in the sense of being fundamentally transformed by the technology.

The particular perceptual transformation with which Tom Gunning is concerned in his paper 'Renewing old technologies: astonishment, second nature and the uncanny in technology from the previous turn of the century'

⁵⁹ For example: 'The limelight as a means of blessing is not to be under-estimated, for it has been conclusively proved that men's hearts can be reached through eye-gate as well as eargate.' *The War Cry* 28 July 1894 p. 10.

⁶⁰ *Lyttelton Times* April 1, 1889, p. 1.

⁶¹ For example, Benjamin revelled in 'the fleeting ephemeral character of modern metropolitan existence.' (Christina Britzolakis 'Phantasmagoria: Walter Benjamin and the poetics of modern urbanism' in Peter Buse & Andrew Stott *Ghosts: deconstruction, psychoanalysis, history* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999 pp. 72-91, p. 73). Debord and Chanan on the other hand take a moralistic stance, exposing the corrosive effect of mass media and commodification.

(1998)⁶² is the shift in populist reception of new technologies from spectacular and astonishing at their introduction to 'convenient and unremarkable.'⁶³ Graeme Davison, in his study of impact of chronometric practices in Australia the nineteenth century, has described comparable processes of adaptation to and assimilation of technology in the Australian colonial context. 'The sense of amazement and disorientation that accompanied the arrival of new inventions usually passed quickly,' Davison observes, for 'in a period of rapid technological change people simply got used to being amazed.'⁶⁴ This thesis similarly argues that a process of assimilation of the visual technology of the magic lantern in the Australasian colonies took place over the second half of the nineteenth century.

The trend in magic lantern reception in the colonies identified in this thesis reveals the transition from the technology as spectacle through a process of increasing familiarisation and assimilation. Promotional material and responses to colonial public lantern exhibitions of 1840s and 1850s typically highlighted the wondrous and spectacular nature of the technology and performance. By the 1870s and 1880s, however, there is evidence that audiences had become 'habituated' to image projection technology and as a consequence their attention to it dulled.⁶⁵ The medium thus became, metaphorically, 'invisible.' This is not to say however that the technology was, nor did it have to be, literally concealed.⁶⁶ Invariably, in contemporary illustrations of public and private exhibitions the lantern, its operator, and the beam of light from the projector streaming past the audience are prominently depicted. Olive Cook relates that an English professional lanternist of 1858 recommended having 'the lantern as showy as a possible to make a good impression.'⁶⁷ Indeed, as Susan R. Horton explains, 'spectators at nineteenth century magic lantern shows could *see* the mechanical device, often being seated on the same side of the screen as the magic lantern, so part of their enjoyment was the making of the spectacle itself.'⁶⁸

This paradoxical situation demanded a perceptual transformation on the side of the spectators, giving rise to a situation Horton describes as 'being a spectator occupying two places at once: the double experience of *having* an experience and of *watching* that experience from the outside.'⁶⁹ Similarly

⁶² Tom Gunning 'Renewing old technologies: astonishment, second nature and the uncanny in technology from the previous turn of the century' paper delivered to forum *Aesthetics of transition* February 24-26 1998, MIT.

http://media-in-transition.mit.edu/articles/index_gunning.html

⁶³ Gunning 'Renewing old technologies.'

⁶⁴ Davison *The unforgiving minute* p.4.

⁶⁵ Gunning 'Renewing old technologies.'

⁶⁶ Crary *Techniques of the observer* p. 132. Crary cites a passage from Theodor Adorno on 'the occultation of production.'

⁶⁷ Cook *Movement in two dimensions* p. 94.

⁶⁸ Susan R. Horton 'Were they having fun yet?: Victorian optical gadgetry, modernist selves' in Christ & Jordan *Victorian literature* pp. 1-26. p. 8.

⁶⁹ Horton 'Were they having fun yet?' p. 8.

Crary has commented that the 'techniques of illusion transform each observer into simultaneously the magician and the deceived.'⁷⁰ In a more recent study of visuality he has re-articulated this as a process of selective suspension of perception. 'Western modernity since the nineteenth century,' he writes, 'has demanded that individuals define and shape themselves in terms of a capacity for "paying attention," that is, for a disengagement from a broader field of attraction, whether visual or auditory, for the sake of isolating or focusing on a reduced number of stimuli.' This, he continues, 'is not a "natural" condition but rather the product of a dense and powerful remaking of human subjectivity in the West over the last 150 years.'⁷¹ The negotiation of this paradoxical situation, of learning how to 'pay attention' becomes strikingly evident, for example, in the responses of juvenile colonial audiences to the magic lantern described in chapter three of this thesis.

Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan has identified the way in which technology has brought about this remaking in his famous dictum 'the medium is the message.' Writing about North American culture in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, McLuhan was primarily concerned with contemporary mass media and television in particular. His analysis is equally applicable, nevertheless, to magic lantern practice in the nineteenth century. 'The form of each medium,' McLuhan explained:

is associated with a different arrangement, or ratio, among the senses, which creates new forms of awareness. These perceptual transformations, the new ways of experiencing that each medium creates, occur in the user regardless of the program content. This is what the paradox, "the medium is the message," means.⁷²

Similarly, this thesis takes from McLuhan the idea that the message brought by the magic lantern to nineteenth century audiences in Australia and New Zealand was the call to learn the language and vocabulary of a new medium. The successful negotiation of this perceptual transformation bestowed what can be termed 'visual technological literacy.'⁷³ Thus the title of this thesis, 'Consuming Illusions,' recognises that consumers of the new technology were at the same time 'consumed' by it in the sense of being reconfigured and fundamentally altered by the experience.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Crary *Techniques of the observer* p. 133.

⁷¹ Crary *Suspensions of perception* p. 1.

⁷² Writing in the 1960s McLuhan was concerned particularly with the, then, new medium of television. In 1964 he also claimed a wider application for his observations: 'Any study of one medium helps us to understand all others.' Eric McLuhan & Frank Zingrone (eds.) *Essential McLuhan* London : Routledge, 1997, p. 3, 276.

⁷³ More recently, Gunning has drawn attention to the importance of being able to 'read' visual technology when he commented that the magic lantern was the first medium to contest the printed word as primary mode of information and instruction.' Mannoni *The great art of light and shadow* p. xxxvii.

⁷⁴ Rosalind Williams has drawn attention to the etymological and semantic ambiguity contained in the term *consumption*. Rosalind H. Williams 1982 *Dream worlds: mass consumption in late nineteenth century France* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 4-7.

Magic lantern practice was not only a vehicle for the introduction and dissemination of new forms of visual and technological literacy, it was also implicated in the formation of a matrix of cultural attitudes and expectations, and social practices. A number of twentieth century social, cultural and media critics, including Michael Chanan, Benjamin, McLuhan, Debord, and Crary, have critically examined the broader social, economic and political transformations accompanying the proliferation and dissemination of visual technological media. Crary has located 'the 'observer' of new visuality as a constituent of commodity culture, 'a product of, an effect of a system of discursive, social, technological, and institutional relations.'⁷⁵ In his appraisal of twentieth century culture from the 1920s onwards Debord identified this wider phenomenon as 'the society of the spectacle' wherein 'the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images that are superior to that world yet at the same time impose themselves as eminently perceptible.'⁷⁶ McLuhan, too, in his idiosyncratic way alerts us to the social and psychological consequences of new media. A new medium not only affects us individually in 'the very way in which we use our senses in response to the world,' he wrote.⁷⁷ The 'total environmental situation,' he has claimed, 'the cultural matrix' is fundamentally reorganised, in the same way, for example, that a cultural transformation was effected by the introduction of typography in the fifteenth century.⁷⁸ Michael Chanan directly addresses visual media and 'the development of cultural forms and popular entertainment during the nineteenth century' in *The dream that kicks: the prehistory and early years of cinema in Britain* (1980). He identifies some of the performance practices and social practice which evolved around technocentric media and their 'legacy which created a dominant series of attitudes and expectations which audiences brought with them to the first films.'⁷⁹

Applied to the magic lantern these theories mount a challenge to the dominant approach of locating the magic lantern in a cul-de-sac off the main road to the modern cinema industry. Intrusive and inefficient mechanics, melodramatic narratives, and unpolished performances mark it out as an extinct, even aberrant, predecessor in cinematic evolution. However, like other forms of projected image during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the magic lantern wrought changes upon the culture in which it operated. I do not contend that the perceptual and cultural transformations effected by the magic lantern in colonial Australasia were universal or instantaneous. I

⁷⁵ Crary *Techniques of the observer* pp. 5-6; see also pp. 3, 11, 14, 19.

⁷⁶ Guy Debord, trans Donald Nicholson-Smith, *The society of the spectacle* New York: Zone Books 1994 Thesis 18, html version

<http://www.spunk.org/library/writers/debord/sp000542.txt>.

Debord *Society of the spectacle* (1994) Thesis 36.

Debord *Society of the spectacle* (1994) Thesis 4.

⁷⁷ Cited in John Rowan *The structured crowd* London: Davis Poynter, 1978 p. 65.

⁷⁸ McLuhan & Zingrone *Essential McLuhan* p. 153.

⁷⁹ Michael Chanan *The dream that kicks: the prehistory and early years of cinema in Britain* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980 p. 7.

would argue, nevertheless, these transformations are clearly articulated in responses to the medium over the nineteenth century.

Time and Place

The six decades from the 1850s to the early 1900s encompassed by the thesis coincide with the rise and fall of magic lantern practice in the Australasian colonies: from its sporadic use at mid-century, through its rise to prominence in the 1890s, to its eclipse in the public entertainment sphere at the beginning of the twentieth century. Geographically the thesis ranges across locations in two countries which, although separated by two thousand miles of ocean, are closely related politically, socially, demographically and historically within the British Empire. Throughout the period magic lantern practice maintained an evolving position within an intercolonial network of touring entertainments, through which it played a particular role in the reinforcement of commonality, understanding and rivalry between the colonies.

Despite this close relationship, most histories of Australia or New Zealand have been undertaken without reference to each other.⁸⁰ Any investigation into popular culture on either side of the Tasman Sea, however, quickly reveals a marked pattern of exchange and interaction which locates the two countries firmly within the same cultural frame. The mid-point of the nineteenth century marked the onset of an upsurge in free settlement and growth in both Australia and New Zealand resulting from pastoral expansion, planned settlement ventures based on the Wakefield model, and accelerated by the gold-rushes. Concurrent with the mushrooming of vigorous social and economic communities in the colonies was a period of ascendancy in the industrial and commodity driven culture of Victorian Britain and the British empire. A burgeoning population with discretionary income, leisure and an appetite for novelty intersected with new forms of mass production and new avenues of mass consumption.⁸¹ The surge forward in colonisation coincided also with a convergence of factors that ushered in a new visuality. By the time the lantern was in usage in the colonies in the 1840s, slide production in England had already been industrialised for around twenty years resulting in the medium's increasing accessibility for both commercial and private use.

⁸⁰ There are of course some notable exceptions to this. They include: Donald Denoon & Philippa Mein-Smith *A history of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000; Hugh R. Jackson *Churches and peoples in Australia and New Zealand 1860-1930* Wellington: Allen & Unwin; Port Nicholson Press 1987; James Ewan Bennett 'Redeeming the imagination: a trans-national history of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1890-1944' Ph.D. Thesis University of Melbourne, Department of History, 1997; Adrienne Simpson 'Opera in the Antipodes: a forgotten aspect of the nineteenth century trans-Tasman entertainment industry' in *The New Zealand journal of history* vol. 27, No. 1, April 1993.

⁸¹ For a discussion of the blossoming of consumer culture in the nineteenth century see Williams *Dream worlds*.

The colonies of Australia and New Zealand had these factors in common. They were further linked by a busy circle of trade and communication, and family and business connections across the Tasman Sea. Indeed, in an era when sea travel was dominant, this stretch of ocean functioned as a 'highway' rather than an obstacle.⁸² The colonial centres of south-eastern Australia from Adelaide to Brisbane enjoyed much closer social, political and economic relations with the New Zealand provinces than with communities on the west of the continent. In fact, their political distinction as independent nations was not fully formulated until the Australian colonies became united at Federation in 1901, a union which New Zealand had eventually decided to decline. This close trans-colonial and then trans-national connection was embodied and perpetuated in numerous business and institutional arrangements, such as in the administration and practice of the Australasian Salvation Army at that time. As this thesis will demonstrate, links between Australia and New Zealand were close, exemplified the intercolonial routes of itinerant lantern practitioners and in the circulation of the same images. The thesis thus provides an intercolonial model of cultural exchange which complicates a dominant model of influences flowing from the imperial metropolis to the colonial periphery.

The timeframe of the thesis thus incorporates the development of a vigorous inter-colonial culture with most of the benefits of the new industrial age, and the development of responses to new technology. This study concludes with the first decade of the twentieth century, which was marked by two cultural shifts. On the political stage, Australia and New Zealand had emerged as independent nations. On the screen, a new visual technological entertainment, the kinematographe, was emerging to take the place of the magic lantern as a major public attraction.

Sources

The existence of a sustained magic lantern practice in the Australian and New Zealand colonies is supported by a large body of material evidence in local archives and museums, and by documentation in primary sources. The methodology employed in this thesis was dictated in part by the nature of the evidence. The original intention at the outset of my research was to focus on selection of images, practitioners or genre more in the manner of an art historical study.⁸³ In only a few instances however did the fragments of evidence coalesce into a comprehensive picture of a single exhibition or individual practitioner.

⁸² The concept and metaphor are used by Jackson in *Churches and peoples* p. 2.

⁸³ As for example Richard Crangle's thorough analysis of the formal qualities of life model photographs and their relationship to early narrative cinema direction, in 'Hybrid texts: modes of presentation in the early moving picture and some related media in Britain' Ph.D. thesis, Exeter University, 1996.

An initial search of the Australian Museums and Galleries national database of museum objects yields around 100 entries representing projection apparatus, single slides and large sets of slides.⁸⁴ Beyond that, public archives and museums in Australia and New Zealand reveal holdings of thousands of slides and associated paraphernalia. Uncatalogued and therefore often of unmanageable proportions, these holdings of arcane apparatus and fragile glass slides – of missionary scenes, Biblical subjects, travel and history topics, fragments of indecipherable moralistic melodramas, in monotone photographic images occasionally luridly hand-coloured or, less occasionally, the result of artistic skill – resting on dusty, cobwebbed shelves leave a strong impression that the magic lantern is indeed a ‘dead medium.’⁸⁵

Primary sources such as local newspapers reveal a detailed picture of lantern practice in the public sphere and contemporary discourses which surrounded it. There is much potential for further structured and thorough scrutiny of these sources to build a more comprehensive picture of colonial practice. Of necessity, these would have to be highly localised and detailed, as exemplified by the work of R. J. Noye in South Australia, published on his website.⁸⁶ Instruction books published specifically for amateur lanternists, and suppliers’ catalogues typically listing dozens of models of projectors and hundreds of commercially produced slides for private purchase, can be still found in the older public libraries. Regional histories, such as Valda Cole’s *Western Port: pioneers & preachers* (1975), have also contributed to mapping the extent of lantern practice.⁸⁷ The value of such works lies in the concentrated research drawing on local newspapers, municipal and personal records within a small geographical area, and the inclusion of oral histories which may include details otherwise regarded as inconsequential.

To construct the layered, multidimensional picture of magic lantern practice contained in this thesis it has been necessary to go beyond published and publicly accessible sources. Some of the most valuable investigations have been conducted by private collectors and enthusiasts who rarely make their archives publicly available. Here can be found an abundance of artefacts, domestic lanterns, slides, suppliers’ catalogues, and instruction books, as well as press clippings and documents not obtainable elsewhere.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Australian Museums On Line - http://amol.org.au/collection/collection_index.asp

⁸⁵ It must be acknowledged however that not all collections are in such a condition. The quality of curatorial treatment of lanternalia is a consequence of both financial constraints in the face of more obvious and pressing needs, and a lack of understanding of the significance of the artefacts.

The magic lantern has come to the attention of U.S.-based *The Dead Media Project* and included in their ‘ad hoc database of the deceased, the slowly-rotting, the undead, and the never-lived media.’ <http://www.deadmedia.org/>

⁸⁶ Noye, ‘Photohistory SA’

⁸⁷ Valda Cole, *Western Port: pioneers & preachers* Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1975.

⁸⁸ Notably Melbourne lantern enthusiast and practitioner Dr Ian Edwards and New Zealand photographic historians William Main, Les Cleveland and Hardwicke Knight who generously allowed me access to their collections.

Unpublished diaries and letters, educational institutions and church archives and records are sources of further information which remain to be fully exploited. However, in practice references to the magic lantern in diaries and personal journals are infrequent and frustratingly elusive. The diaries of the Auckland family of Rev. Vicesimus Lush were only readily accessible because much of this material has been transcribed and published or scrutinized by a local magic lantern enthusiast.⁸⁹ Another journal entry from the diary of Anna Spencer came to light fortuitously when I happened to visit the Hawke's Bay Museum just as the manuscript was in the process of being transcribed into digital format and could be word-searched. Invariably the tone of these first-hand reports indicates that, while a lantern show continued to be regarded as a special event, the place of the magic lantern in material culture and the domestic realm was, without exception, recognised and thoroughly understood by the colonists. Melbourne cinema historian Chris Long provided the groundwork in one important institutional archive. His research on the Australasian Salvation Army's Limelight Department for a series of articles on 'Australia's first films' for the Melbourne journal *Cinema Papers* resulted in a collection of primary material deposited with the Salvation Army Heritage Department.⁹⁰ This archive provided the starting point for chapter seven of this thesis.

Together these published and unpublished works, public and private archives form a rich substrate of primary sources drawn on in this thesis. The bulk and range of this material was unexpectedly large but also fragmented, characteristic of its ephemeral nature. Archives disgorged unprovenanced slides here, press reports there, catalogues, names and dates and titles, brief references and hints. Domestic lanterns and their collections of slides have been broken up, dispersed, and thus separated from their provenance. Surviving collections typically present as an incoherent jumble, dusty boxes full of slides frequently cracked, grimy and unlabelled. Even when provenance is available there is little to explain the meaning behind the images and the use to which the slides were put. Occasionally a sheet of notes is included. Slides and lanterns are typically regarded as having little significance outside of folk museums and private collectors of juvenilia who, on the other hand, even go to the extent of publishing the images

⁸⁹ William Main provided me with references from unpublished manuscripts belonging to the Lush family.

⁹⁰ Chris Long 'Australia's first films: facts and fables:

Part 7: Screening the Salvation Army' *Cinema Papers* April 1994 No 97/98

Part 8: *Soldiers of the Cross: Milestones and Myths*' *Cinema Papers* June 1994 No. 99.

Part 10: Federation' *Cinema Papers* October 1994 No 101.

Part 12: The royal visit films of 1901' *Cinema Papers* March 1995 No 103.

Part 14: Our first producers abroad' *Cinema Papers* August 1995 No 105.

Part 15: *Under southern skies* (1902)' *Cinema Papers* October 1995 No 106.

Part 16: New light on the Limelight Department' *Cinema Papers* December 1995 No 107.

Part 17: Australia's first producers in Europe 1904' *Cinema Papers* February 1996.

electronically.⁹¹ Similarly there are dozens of lanterns and apparatus in collections and museums. Despite the existence of liberally illustrated manufacturers' catalogues it is still difficult to identify these mostly unlabelled artefacts which rarely match the illustrations, descriptions or titles exactly. This is not therefore a technological history concerned with precise mechanical details, or, for example, the development, innovations and inventions in the apparatus in the colonies, successions of models, or types of illuminants. Nor does this thesis offer a comprehensive catalogue of relevant holdings in public and private collections, although it does look at many.⁹² Instead it is from an aggregation of empirical data, that a compelling and coherent picture emerges of the main aspects and scope of a widespread and multifarious magic lantern practice existing the Australasian colonies.

Overview of the thesis

The challenge of structuring this thesis from the fragmentary primary and secondary data should not be underestimated. My solution has been to trace a series of paths through the material based on the broad social categories of the public, the private and the institutional. Within this framework, the content is ordered roughly chronologically.

The first two chapters survey the magic lantern as public entertainment over five decades from the late 1840s, and consider the content of exhibitions, practitioners and their differing agendas. In chapter one, covering the 1850s and 1860s, the centrality of rational recreation is examined, and its significance in the colonial context in maintaining colonial culture's enrolment in the imperialist world vision. The second chapter considers the adoption of magic lantern practice from the 1870s by the numerous itinerant and local practitioners throughout the Australasian colonies. The shift in colonial audiences' reaction to the visual technology of the magic lantern from amazement to habituation is thrown into relief at this point by the chronological nature of the survey.

The focus of chapter three is the private realm of the home, and the wider domestic sphere encompassing community events, Sunday school and day school, where the lantern was held to be of value as rational recreation particularly for children and young adults. This expands the picture of the extent and variety of magic lantern imagery and practices. The more intimate view of colonial life afforded by private journals and diaries, though scarce, provides evidence confirming a shift in perception as the technology was assimilated into everyday life and the 'message of the medium' absorbed by even the youngest children.

⁹¹ For a selection of website addresses see **Appendix**.

⁹² As in European publications such as: Laurent Mannoni, *Le mouvement continue: catalogue illustré de la collection des appareils de la Cinémathèque française* Milan; Paris: Mazzotta; Cinémathèque française; Musée du cinéma, 1996; Crompton et al. *Servants of light* 1997.

Chapter four identifies the commercial infrastructure and social networks in the colonies which supported colonial professional, amateur, public and private practice and consumption of the magic lantern, the growing body of manufacturers and suppliers of lantern slides and apparatus and the network of international and colonial clubs, societies and journals.

The chapters discussed above focus on the role of the magic lantern in public and domestic entertainment where the medium, though imbued with the ideology of rational recreation, was categorised primarily as a leisure activity. The following three chapters consider the application of visual technology in the colonies in the two broad institutional contexts of the educational and the evangelistic. Institutional practitioners recognized the power of visual spectacle as a compelling and persuasive means of communication to achieve specific outcomes within a prescribed set of ideological aims and objectives.

Chapter five surveys the use of the magic lantern as visual aid in educational contexts ranging from clearly defined pedagogical applications, such as the teaching of history, geography and science in public schools and universities, to more general courses of instruction offered to the public, to informative slide lectures presented in colonial lunatic asylums to aid patients in the recovery of their mental health.

Chapter six demonstrates the integration of visual technology into spiritual, and moral and social improvement projects in the colonial context. Whereas educational applications favoured factual and literal content, religious users frequently exploited and developed the more spectacular and affective qualities of the medium for their purposes. Chapter seven focuses specifically on the practice of the Australasian Salvation Army's Limelight Department which over two decades developed the colonies' most sophisticated visual technology production and distribution network. Educational and religious institutional use contributed substantially to the dissemination and consolidation of visual technological literacy in the colonies. Lantern practice in this context contributed significantly to the widening dissemination of visual technology through social levels and geographical locations in the colonies. The deployment of the magic lantern in these two areas rose into prominence in the 1890s, to form a significant proportion of slide production, import and practice which saw the medium become even further integrated into the visual culture of the Australasian colonies.

With the broad picture of colonial magic lantern practice having been established, chapter eight considers the extent to which this powerful medium was used by local practitioners to construct and project local stories for local audiences.

As the first comprehensive overview of magic lantern practice in nineteenth century Australasia, this thesis sheds light on the existence of a more varied and dynamic sector of popular visual culture than has been hitherto been acknowledged in histories of colonial Australia and New Zealand. The thesis

aims to demonstrate the breadth and variety of practices and rich repertoire of the magic lantern, and the extent to which the technology was taken up throughout Australasia, supported by the nineteenth century colonial conditions of transport and communication, the growth of centres of population and a taste for novelty and modernity. The thesis will show that the rapid and thorough integration of the magic lantern into everyday colonial life gave rise to a visually and technologically literate audience able to participate in a global network of modern technological and visual cultural practices. Further, this powerful visual medium of instruction and illusion empowered colonial audiences by affirming their identity as imperial subjects, thereby giving special significance to the Victorian project of rational recreation within which the magic lantern was routinely deployed. At the same time, a significant body of locally produced slides, circulating through intercolonial cultural exchange networks countered the notion of a visual technological culture saturated with imported product. The thesis will demonstrate ways in which the magic lantern enabled colonial magic lantern practitioners and audiences to visualise and participate in a range of localised identities.

Chapter One

‘Calculated to blend instruction with amusement’: the magic lantern as public entertainment, 1850-1870

*to gratify the learned and the unlearned – refresh the memory of the scholar –
and afford the general auditor a magnificent display.*

Sydney, April 1848.¹

Charting the progress of public magic lantern practices and reception in the Australasian colonies from the late 1840s to the 1860s, this chapter will reveal the diversity of magic lantern repertoire and the hybrid nature of its performance within the realm of public entertainment. This will be achieved through the interweaving of documented accounts of a series of individual practitioners, entrepreneurs and opportunists, with fragments and details drawn from a range of sources. Out of this comes a picture of the way in which public magic lantern practice enrolled colonial audiences into a globally shared visual and technological culture.

This early period was characterised by a sporadic but significant level of public magic lantern entertainments in the colonies as itinerant entertainers joined the many other commercial ventures drawn to areas of settlement and mining. Alongside this descriptive overview, consideration will be given to contemporary conversations in which the practice was located, the notion of rational recreation and the privileging of visuality in Victorian culture. More specifically in the colonies it can be seen that, as an increasingly powerful visual technology and medium of intellectual amusement, the magic lantern was deployed to allay anxieties that circulated around a perceived cultural void, within the context of public amusements in particular and in British culture in general.

An important application of the magic lantern as an imaging technology was the representation and dissemination of nineteenth century scientific knowledge. The final section of this chapter explores the use of scientific demonstration as spectacle in the context of public amusement in the colonies; the advances in imaging technology propelled by the alliance of photography and projection; and the impact of photography in the extension of content to include the topical and the local.

The early years

*The latest discoveries of the elder European nations now find their way with
inconceivable rapidity over the antipodean regions of the globe.*

Sydney 1848.²

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald* Supplement, April 19, 1848.

² *Sydney Morning Herald* March 14, 1848, p. 2.

As Melbourne writer Marcus Clarke recalled in his column in *The Age* in July 1879, there had been 'among middle class Londoners but four places of amusement for holiday boys' of the 1840s. They were 'the Natural History department of the British Museum, the Zoological Gardens, Madame Tussaud's Exhibition, and the Polytechnic Institution.' The last in this list, The Royal Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street, London, was, Clarke claimed, 'the glory and delight of all good little cockney schoolboys,' a place of 'whirring wheels, and darkened rooms, where a magical procession of pictures swept onwards in self-lighted splendour,' and 'benevolent voices spoke out from the gloom and discoursed weird secrets in nature.'³ But the purpose of the Polytechnic was more than just to amuse and terrify young children. This renowned institution was founded on the great Victorian principle that social improvement would be achieved largely by the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge among the masses. Their method of mass education embraced the concept of rational recreation where instruction and entertainment were combined to make the acquisition of useful information as painless as possible. Through his childhood years in London, Clarke's appreciation of the Polytechnic grew. 'The gorgeous pictures became an historical lesson, and the benevolent voices out of the darkness instructed as well as entertained. The microscope was revealed. The marvellous secrets of nature's forces were secrets no longer. Priceless was the discipline of the eye, invaluable the knowledge acquired so easily and so pleasantly.'⁴

The magic lantern as an instrument of rational recreation was at least a notional if not physical part of the cultural and technological baggage of colonists at mid-century. In Melbourne, for example, in the years following separation and even more dramatically after the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, the colony's population had exploded with immigrants from Britain and mainland Europe. Many sailed from London where venues such as the Royal Polytechnic Institute, the Adelaide Gallery and the Colosseum were widely known and well-patronised by the middle-classes as part of the burgeoning practice of exhibitions which presented natural, technical and scientific phenomena as public entertainment.⁵ Yet, despite evidence of a lively popular culture flourishing in colonial centres such as Melbourne and Auckland, the magic lantern did not hold as prominent a place in public amusements as it maintained in London. Magic lantern exhibitions appeared only sporadically in reports and advertisements in the Amusements and Public Notices columns of colonial newspapers. Sparsely spread settlements could not support professional magic lantern shows and their purpose built venues. The spectacular shows of London, which employed multiple lanterns and a team of operators creating spectacular effects with light, colour and sound effects, existed only in the memories of many colonists.

³ *Age* July 24 1879 [p. 3]

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ See Altick *The shows of London*.

Early practitioners of the magic lantern in the colonies included entrepreneurs attracted to the growing settlements of south-eastern Australia and New Zealand whose population and prosperity were boosted by gold rushes and the development of agricultural production. Characteristically of a gold boom, not all the wealth was made from mining but from providing services and goods to a population with large amounts of cash and not a lot to spend it on.

J. W. Newland, Sydney, Hobart and Launceston in the late 1840s

One such entrepreneur was J. W. Newland, a professional daguerreotypist.⁶ Newland arrived in Sydney in early 1848 after travels through South America and the South Pacific photographing the local people and landscape. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* of April 1848 he advertised a 'Beautiful Scientific Exhibition of Dissolving Views' boasting of apparatus 'of the most splendid and costly description, being of a scale never before introduced in the colonies,' and, if his claims are to be believed, projected images of up to 250 square feet (figure 1.1).⁷

Little is known of Newland outside of his short period in the colonies and he seems not to have settled for any length of time in the lands he visited.⁸ This pattern and these activities place Newland in a nineteenth century tradition of itinerant artists, such as Augustus Earle (1793-1838) and George French Angas (1822-1886), who travelled through the European colonised territories of America, Africa and Australasia, making visual records of the land and people. Often venturing into regions remote from colonial settlements and little-known to European explorers, both these artists, at some later point, returned to England to write and publish illustrated descriptions for the British market. While these projects, as well as family finances, went some way to support them in their travels both Earle and Angas relied to a large extent on the short term painting commissions they obtained through a network of connections with influential colonists. Like Earle and Angas, Newland was an entrepreneur but one who stood on the cusp of a different era in his use of the most recently developed technology to make his images, employing not a brush and pencil but modern image making methods and

⁶ The daguerreotype was the earliest form of commercial photography, developed and patented in the late 1830s by Louis Daguerre. The technique produced a crisply defined, positive image on silver-coated copper plates, highly suitable for portraits. In the 1840s British licensees brought the medium to the colonies. Although hugely popular in its time the daguerreotype was quickly superseded by wet plate glass processes, using albumen (1848) or collodion (1851), from which multiple images could be produced. See Stefan Richter, *The art of the daguerreotype* London: Viking 1989; Briggs *Victorian things* p. 123ff; Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye*.

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald supplement* April 19 1848 p. 1. The advertising copy indicates '10,000 square feet of illuminated scenery,' spread over forty views.

⁸ Evidence of similar practitioners in South Australia in the late 1840s has been uncovered by photohistorian R. J. Noye. See R. J. Noye *Early South Australian photography* Saddleworth, S. A.: R. J. Noye, 1968 p. 18; and his website.

projection technology. These he employed in a range of money-earning ventures at each landing place and thereby supporting himself on his travels.

Soon after his arrival in Sydney in March 1848, Newland opened a portrait studio at the corner of King and George Streets selling daguerreotype miniatures ranging from £1 1s to £5 each to the 'ladies and gentlemen of Sydney and its vicinity.'⁹ To generate interest and attract business he exhibited a collection of several hundred daguerreotypes in the Daguerrean Gallery. These images, made on his travels, included 'the only correct likeness of Pomare, Queen of Otaheite, the King, the Royal Family, Chiefs, and several other Natives, Beautiful specimens of the New Zealanders, Feejeans, Peruvians, Chilenos, Grenadians, &c, Panoramic View of the City of Arequipa, Peru, &c.'¹⁰ In early May the lantern exhibition ran for five nights. Two weeks later Newland announced the impending closure of his studio 'owing to the many engagements of the proprietor.'¹¹ Having exhausted the local market for his costly portraits and needing to find new custom, he was forced to take his camera and his lantern further afield. In late September he left Sydney for Hobart, where again he set up the portrait studio and the Daguerrean Gallery, and from his studio window took the first photograph of Hobart.¹² He gave a benefit lantern performance at the Theatre Royal in December 1848 but soon moved on to Launceston where he gave lantern shows in February and March 1849.¹³

Newland's photographic collection formed no part of the lantern exhibition. The daguerreotype was capable of producing only a single image on a metal surface, and the technology of photographic slide production had not yet been developed. Instead his repertoire was drawn from the range of high quality 'copper-plate sliders' first manufactured in England in the 1820s by Carpenter and Westley (figure 1.2). Copper-plate sliders represented a major advance in the application of engraved images onto glass, opening the way for the mass-production of slides with the detail and accuracy necessary for scientific illustrations of natural history. From the 1840s moderately priced copper-plate sliders were widely available in sets with accompanying lecture notes.¹⁴

Newland's program reveals a combination of instruction and amusement characteristic of rational recreation, alternating scenic views with special visual effects and optical and scientific demonstrations. The dissolving view technique was employed, requiring the operation of a pair of lanterns as described by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The exhibition commenced with a view of the *Ponti Rotti[sic], Rome*, projected by the first lantern onto the screen,

⁹ Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p.10.

¹⁰ Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p.12.

¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald* May 23, 1848.

¹² Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p.12.

¹³ Long, *Tasmanian photographers* p. 83.

¹⁴ Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 56-57; 77.

while a second lantern, containing the slide of *Hammersmith Suspension Bridge*, was aimed at the same screen, but kept dark.¹⁵ As the first lantern then dimmed and the image faded out, the second was illuminated to take its place on the screen (figure 1.3). In typical lantern show tradition the dissolving view technique was applied to the transition even between unrelated scenes, so that *Hammersmith Suspension Bridge* ‘dissolved’ to a *Colonnade, Venice*, and from there to *Sligo Cathedral, Ireland*. But the technique was seen at its most impressive with the use of specially paired slides depicting different versions of the same scene.¹⁶ *Mount Vesuvius by day* gave way to *Mount Vesuvius on fire by night*; *Rustic View – Summer*, changed to *Rustic View – Winter*.

Volcanic eruptions were immensely popular as subjects for the special characteristics of the dissolving view technique. From the eighteenth century the volcanoes of the Italian peninsula had come to be regarded by those with a taste for the sublime as superlative examples of the ferocity and power of natural forces, inspiring an ongoing enthusiasm for depictions of volcanic activity.¹⁷ The volcano as aesthetic subject came close to constituting a genre in nineteenth century exhibition painting. As art historian Mary Mackay has observed, ‘Views of their craters belching fire and pouring lava over the countryside erupted on the walls of the Royal Academy.’¹⁸ The magic lantern and dissolving view technique added a new dimension to the genre and colonial audiences were able to enjoy several finely painted lantern slides of volcanoes.¹⁹

Interspersed within the succession of scenic dissolving views was the chromatope, billed as a ‘newly discovered Optical Instrument.’ This optical effect was created by two overlaid glass discs on which intricate geometric designs were applied, using Carpenter & Westley’s copper-plate technique, and hand coloured. Set in a wooden frame and operated by an arrangement of strings and pulleys, the two discs rotated separately and in opposite directions projecting ‘dazzling,’ kaleidoscopic patterns onto the screen (figure

¹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald* May 4, 1848, p. 1.

¹⁶ An example of paired slides from Mannoni suggests effect and gives an indication of the fine detail possible in Carpenter and Westley copper plate slides.

¹⁷ For example Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797) *Vesuvius in eruption, with a view over the islands in the Bay of Naples* c.1776-80. Heart stopping astonishment and terror were the hallmarks of emotional response to the ‘sublime’ as defined by eighteenth century theorist Edmund Burke (1729?-1797) in *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful* (1757), James Boulton (ed) London: Routledge & Kegan, 1958.

¹⁸ Mary Mackay ‘Sleeping tigers of the south: volcanoes and the sublime’ in *Australian journal of art* vol. XIII, 1996 p. 93-113, p. 93; Valenciennes is cited in Mackay p. 94.

¹⁹ Extant examples: *Mt Hecla* fragment at Canterbury Museum, Christchurch; *Mt Erebus* at Macleay Museum; *Vesuvius* at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. As Mimi Colligan has shown, volcanoes were a feature of Melbourne’s entertainment landscape during the 1850s and 1860s. Their representation in other media, significantly outdoor modelled panoramas and fireworks, is discussed in detail by Colligan in her thesis ‘Canvas and wax’ pp. 137-8 and chapter five of her more recent publication *Canvas documentaries: panoramic entertainments in nineteenth century Australia and New Zealand* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002.

1.4).²⁰ The earliest chromatropes, produced commercially from around the 1840s, were titled 'artificial fireworks' or 'Chinese fireworks' in an attempt to give a familiar name to an entirely abstract visual effect.

A further segment was devoted to 'Illuminated Natural History!' 'interesting specimens from the oxy-hydrogen microscope introducing an immense variety of Insects, Animals &c.' This primarily scientific instrument, representing an improvement on the solar microscope of the previous century, combined the microscope with the intense illumination of the oxy-hydrogen light, to project onto the screen a magnified view of an insect or a drop of water for example, for detailed examination. In the context of public entertainment such a demonstration was offered and received as both horrifying spectacle and scientific instruction.

Throughout the programme the juxtaposition of scenes and effects were orchestrated to startle and amaze rather than preserve any semblance of geographical or thematic order. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius which followed *Sligo Cathedral* was in turn succeeded by the Chromatrope.

Neither the dissolving view, the chromatrope, the oxy-hydrogen microscope nor the lantern itself were always easy to operate successfully. Although the mechanisms were finely crafted, the level of technology has to be appreciated in its contemporary context. The processes were often still close to the experimental stage: developments and improvements were achieved through trial and error, and expectations of efficient, trouble-free operation were low. The operator's problems were no doubt exacerbated at public exhibitions where the delicate equipment was exposed to the curious and inexperienced. In Sydney, Newland was obliged to move the projector from the pit to the stage 'in consequence of some person maliciously injuring the apparatus.'²¹ It is a credit to his skill that he was able to demonstrate the microscope at each performance as promised, an achievement that eluded operators even in later decades.

Newland's progress through the colonies, including New South Wales, Tasmania and possibly New Zealand, was instrumental in bringing appreciative colonists up to date with the arts and science of their British cultural sources. The technological advances represented by the dissolving view exhibition and the daguerreotype, though minimal by present day standards, were the height of modernity for the period. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* commented, with regard to the Daguerrean Gallery:

few will venture to assert that at all events, the application of art and science, within the last twenty-five years, to the interests, the uses, the

²⁰ Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 67; John Barnes 'Classification of magic lantern slides for cataloguing and documentation' in Crompton et al. *Magic images* pp. 75-84.

²¹ A small notice preceding the main advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* May 4, 1848, p. 1.

improvement of society at large, has not exceeded that made in the course of previous centuries.²²

Newland's exhibitions were welcomed as instructive, superior, modern additions to the life of the colony from Europe, its cultural centre and source of all intellectual and cultural progress. The rational side was promoted to that aspect of colonial society that aspired to higher culture: the learned and the scholarly. At the same time populist taste, that of the 'general auditor',²³ was appealed to with racist caricatures, a 'Congo Minstrel' performing 'Negro Life in Kentucky after 'de labor ob de day'. This mingling of instruction in arts and science with low humour reveals the carnivalesque and opportunistic nature of such an enterprise and demonstrates the dual functions of the magic lantern as a medium of both spectacle and instruction.

Drawn to the areas of settlement and economic development in Australia and New Zealand through the 1850s and 1860s, magic lantern entertainers joined 'the supporting cast' of entertainers and entrepreneurs who continued sporadically to offer light relief to settlers and opportunists trying to make their way in a frontier environment. An advertiser in the *South Australian Register* in October 1853 made this a selling point for 'a Phantasmagoria (or superior Magic) lantern, (just imported)' 'to speculative gold-diggers, publicans, and others.' 'Landlords desirous of rendering their houses attractive' were also urged to consider purchasing the apparatus.²⁴ Other shows in the early 1850s have left only a trace. Fleeting reports suggest that lantern shows were not in fact particularly noteworthy in colonial public life. A 'Magic Lantern & Music Evening' was advertised to take place at the Athenaeum & Mechanics' Institute in Wellington in September 1855, but passed without attracting further attention.²⁵ In Melbourne in the same year this brief announcement appeared on two occasions in the columns of the *Argus*.

Dissolving views exhibition at 16 and 17 Queen's Arcade, comprising Scenes in the Arctic, Regions, Turkey, Italy, Netley Abbey, Walmer Castle, Wellington Chamber, &c Day Exhibition, half-past twelve and three. Evenings, seven, eight, and nine. Admission 1s: Children, 6d.²⁶

Although the advertisement promised five showings a day, the lack of press coverage suggests that such expectations were not realised.

'A public exhibition of a very superior Phantasmagoria Lantern' in Auckland in September 1857 offered a standard repertoire, 'the pictorial illustrations are of the most comprehensive character – historical, scriptural, sentimental, and comic,' it also included the inevitable chromatropes.²⁷ Unlike the commercial

²² *Sydney Morning Herald* March 14, 1848, p. 2.

²³ *Sydney Morning Herald* Supplement, April 19, 1848.

²⁴ *South Australian Register* 21 October 1853 in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

²⁵ *Wellington Independent* September 27, 1855. (Press cutting in private collection, Wellington.)

²⁶ *Argus* April 25 & 27 1855 p.8.

²⁷ *New Zealander* September 26, 1857. (Press cutting in private collection, Wellington.)

ventures already described, this exhibition was a one-off performance to raise money for a community project. The profits from an admission of 2s. 6d., children 1s. 6d. were 'in aid of the fund for erecting the new School-house at Onehunga.'²⁸ Significantly the main feature on the bill had a particular resonance with the local environment; 'a representation of Mount Vesuvius in Eruption, with the Destruction of Pompeii.'²⁹ It is not revealed whether the marvellous lantern slide volcano inspired New Zealand settlers to examine local geography with greater interest. The whole of the Auckland province is studded with the weathered mounds of extinct volcanoes, and from Auckland city and the out-lying settlement of Onehunga the symmetrical cone of the volcanic island Rangitoto would have been clearly visible in the 1850s.

In 1866 photographer and importer Bernard Goode, of Rundle Street, Adelaide, called the attention of 'hawkers, photographers and others,' to 'a safe investment' in the form of a 'first-class dissolving view apparatus, with the best set of slides in the colony, consisting of views of London and other parts of Europe, moonlighting scenes, moving figures, comic slides, chromatropes, with Adieu and Goodnight in the centre, etc.' Goode promised that the newly imported apparatus, a pair of lanterns with dissolve mechanism and slides, would, at a cost of £30, 'be a good speculation for a person travelling in the country.'³⁰ If Goode was alluding to a tradition of itinerant lanternists whose European lineage extended back beyond the previous hundred years, then the suggestion would not have been lost on the fortune hunters who crowded the colonies. At least a few either premeditatedly or spontaneously took a chance on making their living in this way, joining the procession of itinerant men and women who plied their trades and brought entertainments to outlying areas. Although only scattered evidence of their practice remains it is clear that a number of commercial operators worked a colonial circuit based on the network of sea and land trade routes.

Itinerant practitioners frequently made inflated claims to promote their shows but their careers were generally short-lived and left little impact individually. In Auckland in 1863, for example, Mr. Chas. Roland's 'Grand Entertainment of Dissolving Views' was advertised, through his agent E. C. Cameron, to be presented in St Paul's Schoolroom, at 2 shillings admission, half price for children. Roland also gave notice that his entertainment was available for private hire with 'a great reduction offered to Schools and Families.' Within a few weeks he had extended out into the province and was exhibiting at Onehunga Institute and the Criterion Hotel at Otahuhu.³¹ But there is no

²⁸ *ibid.* September 23, 1857.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *South Australian Register* June 1866 cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

³¹ *New Zealander* February 10, 23, 1863. *New Zealander* February 25, 1863. (Press cutting in private collection, Wellington.)

further record of his enterprise. Similarly, when Mr. J. L. Stanley advertised in the Amusements column of Dunedin's *Otago Daily Times* of March 5 1868, he boasted that over 2000 school children had already seen his programme in Christchurch. This 'remarkable Exhibition' combined diorama, dissolving views and mechanical scenes to represent the Overland Route from Europe to India³² Although it was potentially powerful visual experience for his colonial audience, Stanley's exhibition escaped any further attention from the press in Dunedin, as it had in Christchurch.³³

The slides mentioned in Goode's 1866 advertisement suggest the kind of program that might be offered by an itinerant lanternist. For audiences of mixed ages, colonial public lantern shows combined more instructive subjects such as history, natural history and astronomy with the spectacular, comic slides and mechanical effects.

Lanternists in the public amusement industry promised much, as a poster from the period shows (figure 1.5). Printed in Auckland in the late 1860s, it was intended for a touring show, with blank spaces for time, place and admission charge. The poster's use extravagant use of multiple fonts, vertical inscriptions, and inset illustrations was a hyperbolic strategy designed to impress and entice, characteristic of contemporary posters and handbills. It describes an extensive repertoire from which would be made: 'A choice selection from the above, and numerous other subjects of illustration - varied for every entertainment.' Ephemeral material of this nature, a significant feature of colonial urban life, is only rarely preserved and is one of the few indications of the range of topics then available to colonial magic lantern audiences. Around fifty different titles are listed and described: from history to current events; travel and description; fable and legends; science and technology; and even a small proportion of local content. Such a programme would have ensured that the colonies would just about keep pace with the sites, sights and science generated at the imperial cultural centre.

However, it is doubtful that a magic lantern was 'a safe investment' in the colonies in the 1850s and 1860s. Despite its rapid growth over those decades, the colonial population was small and too dispersed to support professional permanently urban based lanternists whose main occupation and source of income was derived from their practice. Plagued with technical problems arising from unreliable and inefficient apparatus, the magic lantern show, despite its huge popularity in England and Europe, may have been regarded with suspicion as an unreliable form of entertainment, in contrast to the usual

³² The Overland Route from Europe to India and the southern hemisphere was so named because it traversed the land bridge linking Africa to Asia, thus shortening the journey from Britain to India from 16,000 miles, by way of the Cape of Good Hope, to only 6,000 miles. First used as a trade route by the British in 1843, it brought Victorian travellers in contact with the peoples and cultures, and desert crossing which provided rich visual material.

³³ *Otago Daily Times* March 5, 1868, p.1.

parade of competing attractions, local theatricals, balls, public lectures, musical evenings, touring vaudeville acts and even dioramas.

The medium nevertheless maintained its precarious presence in the colonial public amusement realm. If the early level of public magic lantern activity in the colonies was sporadic and opportunistic, then the next phase is characterised both by an increasing frequency of public shows and by the appearance of more systematic, and to some extent, regular tours. The itineraries of several touring entrepreneurs can be traced by the appearance of their names in local press reports across the region, sometimes over extended periods of time and considerable distances.³⁴ Some, based in the colonies returned to the same rural and urban districts over a number of years, others visited the colonies as part of a global circuit linking the new and old worlds. They responded to an appetite to public entertainment which even in the larger centres was irregularly served.

The programs described here illustrate the eclectic repertoire characteristic of public magic lantern shows both in the colonies and in Europe. Practitioners were typically itinerant entertainers or merchants attracted to populated centres of affluence or else they were short-lived enterprises. Early lantern practice articulated its position within the culture of rational recreation by addressing itself, as Newland did, to both the scholar and 'the general auditor.' At same time the location of these exhibitions within the context of public entertainment was clearly signalled by an eclecticism which belied the vaudevillian, populist nature of these itinerant, commercial ventures.

Here then is evidence of the hybrid place of the magic lantern in visual and popular culture in the Australasian colonies in the 1850s and 1860s: on the one hand instructive and rational, with an inherent moral superiority resting both on its technological origins as a scientific instrument and demonstration of optics and on the instructive content of the images and information presented; on the other hand embracing the genre of public entertainment, the spurious, the novel, and the spectacle. In this way the magic lantern provided colonial audiences with access, at a populist level, to a rapidly developing international visual technological culture.

Urban magic lantern practice of the 1850s and 1860s

'as respectable and discerning [an] audience as we have ever seen assembled at any place of amusement.'

Melbourne, 1855.³⁵

³⁴ Much research remains to be done in this area and this inter-colonial survey relies to some extent on the individual pockets of research undertaken by photographic historians such as Noye in South Australia, William Main, Les Cleveland and Hardwicke Knight in New Zealand.

³⁵ *Argus* May 16 1855.

The connotations of respectability and middle-class elitism carried by the magic lantern show were increasingly mobilised by public practitioners of the 1850s and 1860s, such as James Smith in Melbourne and H. T. Watts in Auckland, within an agenda of social improvement for the colony in response to a perceived cultural void. In this regard the magic lantern exhibition played a significant role in maintaining connections with the geographically distant British and European cultural centres. Contemporary responses to magic lantern exhibitions also demonstrated an appreciation by local critics of a newly emerging discourse of visuality.

James Smith, Melbourne in the 1850s

Melbourne journalist, critic and arts patron James Smith (1820-1870) is not widely recognised as magic lantern practitioner. Although his life and the significance of his contribution to the cultural life of early Melbourne have been the subject of several thorough and detailed examinations, his involvement with the popular entertainment industry has been overlooked.³⁶ It is not clear why Smith decided to leave a secure position as editor of the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, but it is certain that he was not greatly impressed with conditions he found in Melbourne on his arrival in late 1854. A few months after his arrival he described the physical environment for his former readership in Salisbury in a series of letters to the *Journal*:

Take two or three square miles of the most undulating part of Salisbury Plain; scalp it of its turf, denude it of everything like a tree; leave just as much surface soil on the rocky sub-stratum as will make a good mud-pudding in winter, and a thick layer of volatile dust in summer; Stake out this area, into five streets of great breadth, . . . all running in a direct line from East to West . . . intersect these streets by half-a-dozen others running North and South . . . and you have the rudimentary site of Melbourne. Erect upon this site the most heterogenous [sic] collection of buildings that were ever grouped together – linen-drapery establishments (at a rental of £4000 and £5000 per annum) worthy of Ludgate-hill, – taverns with palatial facades, – substantial warehouses of brick, stone, and iron, – wooden houses containing a basement story only, – tenements of corrugated zinc, weather-boarding, canvass, calico, sheet-tin and old packing cases, – sprinkle it with churches, chapels, theatres, barracks, a post-office, a prison, and other ‘evidences of civilization’ and you have a rough outline of the capital of Victoria.³⁷

Strongly conservative in his taste, Smith, as Ann-Mari Jordens observes, ‘embodied the values of colonial Melbourne.’³⁸ From the outset he put a great

³⁶ Lurline Stuart, *James Smith: the making of a colonial culture* Sydney: Allen & Unwin 1989; ‘James Smith’s private library’ in *The Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand* Vol 6, No. 1, 1982, pp. 23-39.

³⁷ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* 19 May 1855 p. 3, cited in Stuart *James Smith* p. 3.

³⁸ Ann-Mari Jordens in Geoffrey Serle, Russell Ward (eds) *Australian Dictionary of Biography* Vol 6, 1979 pp. 145-6.

deal of effort into developing the cultural and intellectual life of the colony: as a journalist, public lecturer and art, literature and theatre critic; in the establishment of cultural clubs and societies; in the instigation of the founding of a National Gallery; and as a trustee of the Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria. Among Smith's earliest endeavours was a magic lantern exhibition first advertised on Friday April 20 1855 concurrently with the short lived Dissolving Views Exhibition at Queen's Arcade, Melbourne, which had ambitiously promised five showings a day.³⁹ Unlike its competitor, however, Smith's *Cosmopoligraphicon* (figure 1.6) sustained a six-week season from May 1 to June 15 and attracted lengthy newspaper reviews which shed light on the role of the magic lantern as a channel for the export of British culture to the colonies, the ways in which the lantern exhibition articulated the cultural constructs on which it was based.

Smith's expertise with the magic lantern was attested to by a reviewer for the *Argus*, 'the exhibition has been recently brought from England by a gentleman who has had extensive experience in such matters.'⁴⁰ Its operation demanded a level of familiarity with, and manipulation of, a number of technical and chemical processes. The full extent of James Smith's involvement with the magic lantern prior to his arrival in the colony is unclear. As an experienced public lecturer, he had already made use of the medium in his lectures, particularly a series on a tour of Europe which he had produced in collaboration with miniature painter, Walter Francis Tiffin.⁴¹ In 1852 Tiffin collaborated with Smith in the organization of a county exhibition sponsored by the Salisbury Literary and Scientific Institute, one of the first of many provincial exhibitions inspired by the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁴² The pair then embarked on a long-awaited, but in the end truncated, tour of Europe, traversing the essential 'objective points of observation' of the traditional Grand Tour – the natural scenery, picture galleries and architecture of France,

³⁹ *Argus* April 20, 21 p. 5, April 25 & 27 1855 p.8.

⁴⁰ *Argus* April 21 1855 p. 5.

⁴¹ Tiffin (c1819-?) followed family tradition as a painter. In the late 1840s he shared a studio on West Strand, London, with Henry Tiffin, landscape artist, and James Benjamin Tiffin, also a painter, who may both have been his brothers. All three exhibited in the Royal Academy between the mid 1840s and 1870. His mother was also a miniature painter, included as 'an honorary exhibitor' in the Academy of 1799. Ulrich Thieme & Felix Becker *Allegemeines lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, Vol. XXXIII, 1939 p. 165; Algernon Graves *The Royal Academy of Arts: a complete dictionary of contributors and their work from its foundation in 1769 to 1904* (1905) Wakefield; Bath: S.R. Publishers; Kingsmead Reprints, 1970; Salisbury Cathedral 1851 Census, p. 11, Wiltshire H.O. 107/1846 <http://www.rootsweb.com/~cotswold/salisburycathedral51.doc>

Known to have been working in Salisbury between 1844 and 1867, Tiffin provided the illustrations and wood engravings for two publications by Smith *Wilton and its associations* (1851) and *Light and shadows of artistic life and character* (1852)

⁴² *Age* January 20 1855, p. 5.

Switzerland and Italy.⁴³ Their agenda was clearly to collect visual and literary records of iconic sights and sites, to supply the British taste for travel and description.⁴⁴ As well as works on paper and canvas, high quality painted lantern slides were well within Tiffin's capabilities. As a miniaturist he had the training and technique necessary to produce tiny images on a smooth surface (glass or ivory) with the detail and clarity to withstand magnification from a few square inches to 15 feet in diameter. It is likely to be Tiffin's slides that the *Age* remarked on here:

The excellence of their workmanship is most exquisite, both as to composition, effect and colouring; and they are, it may safely be asserted, of a character infinitely superior to anything that has been exhibited on this side of the equator.⁴⁵

The combination of Smith's skill with words and Tiffin's skill as a miniaturist would have resulted in an exemplary lantern slide performance. Local critics, invited to preview the *Cosmopoligraphicon* in late April, called upon colonial readers' familiarity with magic lantern exhibitions, and placed the exhibition in the context of the state of the art in London with these remarks:

Such of us as have lately dwelt in the modern Babylon have most pleasant reminiscences in connection with these sources of recreation, and we feel a glow of unfeigned pleasure in the opportunity that is now presented of renewing these yet vivid impressions of enjoyment, and in comprehending new joys of a like nature.⁴⁶

... [for] those of us who retain a vivid recollection of the wonders of the London Polytechnic, this exhibition will not in any way suffer by comparison. ... to those who have not had an opportunity of observing the immense improvement which has been effected in this branch of art during the last few years, these pictures will appear truly astonishing.⁴⁷

Bearing in mind that Smith had been recently in the employ of both of Melbourne's daily papers, it is not surprising that his venture was consistently received with unanimous enthusiasm in the press. The *Age* carried two lengthy columns filled with flowery prose extolling the aesthetic and affective qualities of the opening night program. Notwithstanding any personal bias they may contain, much can be gleaned about this particular magic lantern show from the language of these descriptions and responses.

⁴³ John Ingamells 'Discovering Italy: British travellers in the eighteenth century' in Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignami (eds) *Grand tour: the lure of Italy in the eighteenth century* London: Tate Gallery, 1996 p. 29.

⁴⁴ In Salisbury in October 1853 Smith had presented a public lecture on Venice, illustrated with Tiffin's sketches. He repeated this lecture in Melbourne at the Mechanics' Institute January 19 1855 *Age* January 20 1855 and included it in a series of articles 'Recollections of travel' published over the next thirty years.

⁴⁵ *Age* May 3, 1855, p. 6.

⁴⁶ *Age* May 3, 1855 p. 6.

⁴⁷ *Argus* April 30 1855 p. 6.

The *Cosmopoligraphicon* mimicked the itinerary of a Tour of Europe and the East (figure 1.7). Encoded in the fictional tour and its representation, with its rich and emotive combination of image, text and music, are some of the central ideologies of Victorian Britain's relationship with the world and the defining discourses of Art and Culture. The concept of a 'flying tour through Europe,' followed by a 'visit to the East,' is predicated on a notion of 'armchair travel.' The practice of travel as a leisure activity for the British upper classes sprang out of the tradition the Grand Tour for the aristocracy and wealthy aspirants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A lengthy tour, of months, sometimes years, by young adults, accompanied by their tutors, to the sites of classical and renaissance culture, bestowed a full and proper education by first hand experience.⁴⁸ From this practice arose the discourse of tourism, that is, recreational travel with specific expectations based on cultural constructs which prescribed the tourist's itinerary and responses. Paul Carter has called this a 'cult of places', in which 'the process of travelling became subsidiary to the visual report of distant locales.'⁴⁹ It was to those informed by this discourse that the *Age* addressed these remarks:

What need of travel, when the results of travel are brought to your own door? Why endure the dust, heat, fatigue, vexations and extortions, the short sleep and the long bills of foreign inns, the garrulous twaddle of the ciceroni, and 'all the thousand ills which travellers are heir to,' when you can sit in a cosy seat, in a comfortable room, see all the best 'bits' of continental scenery produced before your eyes.⁵⁰

This passage also raises one of the wider Victorian cultural discourses in which magic lantern practice was located, privileging the visual and supporting the notion that a visual experience alone could stand in for the original. It asserts that the benefits of travel distilled down to 'the best bits' with the same 'results' could be achieved through a visual technological simulacrum and that the travel itself can be dispensed with. An appreciation by local critics of this discourse of visibility was evident. In introducing the *Cosmopoligraphicon* to its readers, the *Age* explained part of its effectiveness:

The language of which pictures are the written words is one which is understood by all nations. Ideas communicated by such characters are comprehensible by the world's population.⁵¹

If Newland's erratic journey, ordered by considerations of spectacle alone was a caricature of the cult of places, the *Cosmopoligraphicon* exhibited a geographically determined logic and a considered, processional tone. Establishing the Anglocentric orientation of the tour travelling from West to East, and imbuing a sense of formality, the exhibition opened with 'medallion

⁴⁸ For a fuller discussion see Wilton & Bignami *Grand tour*.

⁴⁹ Paul Carter 'Invisible journeys: exploration an photography in Australia, 1839-1889' in Paul Foss (ed.) *Island in the stream: myths of place in Australian culture* Leichhardt, NSW: Pluto Press, 1988 pp. 47-60, p. 52.

⁵⁰ *Age* May 9, 1855 p.6

⁵¹ *Age* May 3, 1855 p. 6.

portraits of the Emperor and Empress of the French.⁵² Like Newland, Smith employed the dissolving view technique, with the difference that, from the first, the dissolving transitions had a degree of coherence and narrative which kept at bay the sense of carnival pervading the earlier exhibition. Smith's first view was the church of St. Hilders, Paris, shown empty:

a general air of repose diffused throughout the whole edifice; a shadow and a dimness passes over it, the pealing organ is heard reverberating through the long-drawn aisles, which are now seen to be alive with people – the priests in their episcopal robes, and the congregation paying their reverence to the host.⁵³

Smith further enhanced the illusion by back-projecting: the lantern was operated from behind the screen, projecting the image onto a 'white transparent ground,' thus obscuring the means of production from the audience's view.⁵⁴ The first part of the tour came to a logical and spectacular conclusion with the eruption of Mt Vesuvius, a standard piece of dissolving view showmanship Smith was not averse to including in his otherwise refined and sedate performance. A pair of matched slides were manipulated to show:

[t]he Bay of Naples, smiling in the serenity of sunshine, with Vesuvius at rest lowering grandly in the distance Clouds and thick darkness come over the scene, and the volcano belches forth its red fires and gloomy vapours, and the effect produced is really admirable.⁵⁵

After the serious cultural content of the first part of the program, ruptured by the spectacle of the volcano, 'A Visit to the East,' embodied the demarcation between the Anglocentric cultural and geographical categories of high culture of the West and the spectacle of the visited East. It introduces one of the most powerful of Western tropes, white Christian supremacy. The rhetoric of nineteenth century Orientalism is clearly discernible in the reviews' flowery prose and tone of supercilious voyeurism which replaced the mood of veneration and reverence that permeated the European section of the tour.⁵⁶ The reviewer for the *Age* had this to say:

⁵² *Age* May 9, 1855 p. 6.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ *ibid.* Smith would have needed at least one assistant to operate the lantern behind the screen so that he could take up a better position from which to deliver his lecture.

⁵⁵ *Age* May 9, 1855 p. 6. See also Colligan 'Canvas and wax' chapter three, and *Canvas documentaries* chapter five.

⁵⁶ Orientalism has been defined by Edward Said as a Western construct of non-Western peoples and cultures in terms their unchanging racial and/or cultural characteristics; their essential difference from West; and the absence of positive (Western) qualities by which their 'otherness' is defined. For further reading on the nineteenth century passion for Orientalism and its expression in visual media see: John M. MacKenzie 1995 *Orientalism: history, theory, and the arts* Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; St. Martin's Press; Timothy Mitchell, 'Orientalism and the exhibitionary order' in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.) *Colonialism and culture* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1992 pp. 289-317; Homi K. Bhabha 'The other question: the stereotype and colonial discourse' *Screen* Vol. 24, No. 6, Nov-Dec 1983 pp.

There were the graceful minarets and the ponderous domes, the amphitheatrical array of the palaces of the luxurious Turk, and the flotillas of many coloured craft, that seemed to be possessed of motion; and the blue waters of the Bosphorus appeared to ripple in the light of an oriental sun. But a moment, and as if transported by the wand of the enchanter, we are wandering in the long vistas of shops of a Turkish bazaar, where are seen displayed all the rich merchandise that Eastern magnificence and the warm temperament of the Mussulman have contrived to surround himself withal; by another wave of the magician's wand we are carried into the solemnity of a Mahomedan mosque, where the soft light falls lazily on the inlaid floor, and the bright garments of the prostrate devotees, contrast strongly with the sombre coloring of the massive columns. . . .

[Then to the] placid bosom of the Bosphorus among a group of pleasure-seeking Turks, who are casting indolent glances at the glowing scene before them and sipping the while their fragrant coffee.⁵⁷

Despite the ostensibly masculine public life described, a gendered construct of the East as sensual, feminised and decadent prevailed, emphasising opulence, luxury and indulgence. The luxurious Turk was at once derided for his passivity and hedonism, while his imagined life and customs were presented as objects for a voyeuristic, fetishising gaze.

'A Visit to the East' also negotiated an inherent problem, for western Christendom, of Christianity's eastern roots. Once again, the language of newspaper reviews revealed the strategies of this negotiation. The mood of hedonism and sensuality surrounding the luxurious Turk is abruptly terminated when '[w]e are wrenched to the roof of a house in Jerusalem,' wrote the *Age* from which heightened viewpoint the spectacle is metaphorically and pictorially raised out of the decadent:

a brilliant blue sky sets off in high relief the white forms of the mosque of Omar and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, while the crumbling remains of the architecture of the Saracen rear themselves in the foreground. Early teaching and sacred association add their interest, and the feeling of veneration is increased as we suddenly find

18-30. Orientalism has been further analysed as a gender construct, see: Lisa Lowe, *Critical terrains: French and British Orientalism* Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1991 in particular Chapter 3 'Orient as woman, Orientalism as sentimentalism: Flaubert' pp. 75-101; Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: race, femininity, and representation* New York: Routledge 1996; Paul Starkey & Janet Starkey (eds) *Travellers in Egypt* London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998.

An earlier intersection of the magic lantern and the high art genre of Orientalism is recorded by John Jones in 'David Roberts: a Victorian traveller and painter' in Crompton et al *Magic images* p. 62. Jones notes that dissolving views taken from series of drawings and paintings made by Roberts (1796-1864) during his 1838 journey to Palestine, Egypt and Syria, and published as *The Holy Land* were shown at the London Polytechnic Institution in 1848.

⁵⁷ *Age* May 3 1855 p.6

ourselves before the tomb of Christ, surrounded with all the accessories which contribute to augment the solemn awe with which sacred history and tradition have invested the hallowed spot; nor is this feeling removed as we behold before us the place to which the inspired chronicler points as that of the birth of the Redeemer.⁵⁸

'Early teaching and sacred association' were evoked by the lecturer, described at this point as an 'inspired chronicler.' A 'feeling of veneration' is invoked as sacred Christian sites are screened; architecture, artefacts and landscape are now described as 'hallowed' 'sacred' inspiring the spectator with 'solemn awe.'

After a successful run of ten days, a fresh subject was added to the *Cosmopoligraphicon*, 'A Life on the Ocean Wave,' a short narrative series representing a sea voyage:

Setting off from London, we are carried along through calm and storm – half terrified at a vivid representation of a shipwreck – wholly delighted when the crew and passengers reach shore in safety in a frail boat or on a still frailer raft.⁵⁹

The marine theme, from placid harbour scenes to dramatic shipwrecks, constituted a popular genre in nineteenth century literature and visual arts (figure 1.8). As well as reflecting a fascination with the powerful forces of nature in general, the concern with the sea was symptomatic of its importance to the Empire for transport and communication. The increasing frequency of travel to and from the new world as well as within the old, and a coastline littered with shipwrecks, all meant that fear of disaster at sea was frequently in the foreground of attention and a source of anxiety for emigrants. Their own travel experiences, the fears, joys and the achievement of safe passage after the long sea journey, was reflected in a concern which pervaded nineteenth century culture.

Smith's repertoire extended beyond travel and description to include, as Newland had, demonstrations of optical discoveries, lending both scientific and educational connotations to the spectacle.

There are marvellous combinations of shifting forms and colours, whose symmetry of outline and tint is alike interesting to the geometrician and chromatist. There are comical heads with moving eyes, and all the magnified wonders of a drop of water.⁶⁰

The *Cosmopoligraphicon* was, as the *Argus* reviewer proclaimed, 'more than an amusement,' and situated firmly within the discourse of rational recreation, moral improvement and useful information.⁶¹ The rational, quasi-scientific nature of the spectacle was reinforced both by Smith's avoidance of the term

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Age* May 16 1855 p.6.

⁶⁰ *Age* May 3 1855 p.6.

⁶¹ *Argus* April 30 1855 p.6

magic lantern and by the greek nomenclature he contrived to replace it. The title, *Cosmopoligraphicon*, translated as 'the world in many pictures', was his own invention, as was 'megaphonicon', applied to 'an instrument combining the power of the organ with sweetness of the piano', most likely more commonly known as the harmonium.

The *Age* reviewer could thus justifiably claim that:

... there is instruction, too, in all this; there is much to learn, and it is learned in the easiest because the pleasanter way: we go for amusement, and we come away wiser. We think to pass an hour in laughing idleness, and we find ourselves unconsciously acquiring knowledge.⁶²

The exhibition achieved that aim and attracted 'as respectable and discerning [an] audience as we have ever seen assembled at any place of amusement in Melbourne.'⁶³

In June a new mid-winter programme was introduced into Smith's performance:

"a new scenic, musical, and descriptive entertainment entitled, 'Miss Pilkington's evening party' which consisted of an ingenious interweaving of well selected readings from Hood, &c., into the fabric of a sort of musical and pictorial reunion.'⁶⁴

'A highly select and appreciating audience' responded enthusiastically to the parade of Anglo-cultural icons, from the great English cathedrals and castles, the geological wonders of the Giant's Causeway and the Giant's Cave, and the modern wonder of the Crystal Palace, to 'the dropping-well at Knaresborough, with the river winding by, and the single arch spanning its murmuring stream, and those hills (dear Yorkshire hills!) rising grandly behind.'⁶⁵ Scenes such as these must have contrasted cruelly with the real life experience of their audiences if the bleak picture of Melbourne recorded by Smith for his English readers is to be believed.

Concerned as he was with elevating the culture of the colony, Smith took care in how he positioned and presented his exhibitions. The deliberately and self-consciously elitist agenda was founded on the notion of class, a tenet central to imperial British culture and one which Smith adhered to throughout his career. In contrast to the vaudevillean tone of Newland's touring exhibition, Miss Pilkington's Evening Party was an idealised upper middle-class social ritual, cast in the mould of a 'salon,' and a model of refined social interaction and cultural exchange for the edification of a community which located itself on the margins of imperial civilisation. The exhibition distinguished itself from the repertoire of entertainment that was widely available in gold-rush

⁶² *Age* June 8 1855 p.5.

⁶³ *Argus* May 16 1855.

⁶⁴ *Age* June 8 1855 p. 5.

⁶⁵ *Age* June 8 1855 p. 5.

Melbourne and its apparent success, compared with Newland's exhibition for example, suggests the presence of a viable market of middle-class consumers in the city at that time.

The winter of 1855 also saw an increase in venues and entertainments in the same price bracket. Theatrical entrepreneur George Coppin opened his new Olympic Theatre on June 11, with 'The Great Magician and Ventriloquist – Monsieur Jacobs – The Wizard of Wizards and the Monarch of Necromancy,' charging 3s for the Pit and up to 7s 6d for a seat in a private box. There was an Opera at the Queen's Theatre, and itinerant performers ranging from horse-riders and gymnasts, such as Mde. Della Casa, tight rope walker; to assorted magicians, a conjurer Prof. Anderson; to Miss Anna Maria Quinn, child prodigy; and well-known English performers, Pablo Fanque with the 'Flower Girl of Paris' and the 'Wild Indian of the Far West', and Tom Barry, 'the great English clown' at venues with names like Astleys' Amphitheatre copied directly from the great halls and theatres of London; assorted balls, soirees, exhibitions; and, offering free admission, a panorama of the Mississippi River consisting of 3 miles of canvas (no doubt rather tatty by now) toured the colonies.

Some colonists were, however, less than satisfied with this array of entertainments, the *Age* noted that the *Cosmopoligraphicon*, 'supplies a void in our list of public amusements.'⁶⁶ In contrast to the short-lived and anonymous Dissolving Views programme a few weeks earlier, Smith's exhibition continued to attract lavish praise in the press. The *Age* noted approvingly that:

The *Cosmopoligraphicon*, as a place of entertainment, is a most valuable addition to our places of amusement. There is nothing in the attractions it offers that the most refined taste can object to, but on the contrary, much that will help to compensate our fellow-colonists for the elegant places of public entertainment to which they relinquished their opportunities of access when they quitted Europe.⁶⁷

Miss Pilkington's Evening Party not only offered intellectual stimulation but aroused such strong emotions from the critics as to imply that the viewing of Anglo-cultural icons had the capacity to sustain and nourish emotionally. 'Some of [the views] called up pleasurable recollections of the past, and revived associations that memory has made very dear,' the *Age* commented.⁶⁸ Accompanied by Smith's readings of popular English writers, even scenes 'that we had not beheld' such as 'the Lake of Killarney, which every poet and every artist has been charmed to depict in song and picture'⁶⁹ evoked floods of memories and nostalgia for places whose familiarity rested on centuries of deification by artists, poets, and folk-culture. The reminiscences inspired by

⁶⁶ *Age* May 9 1855 p. 6.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Age* June 8 1855 p. 5.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

this imagined tour of Britain offered, the *Age* argued, an antidote to the soul-corroding torpor of colonial culture. The *Age* continued passionately:

How humanizing – how soul-purifying, and how it wakes from torpor our better nature, and makes us divest ourselves of the selfish cynicism with which we are prone to enwrap ourselves. Who, we ask, could see that old village church, with its winter dress, and not think of the bright calm December Sunday morning that he has walked up the pathway to the portal with some dear form that now lies cold beneath its walls? The hymn that seems to peal from the open latticed windows is the one in which he has so often joined, and, anon, as night steals over the coldly quiet scene, and the light streams from the diamond panes, he thinks himself in the old pew in the corner and forgets that sixteen thousand miles of ocean are rolling between him and that beloved spot he never may see again?⁷⁰

But if Miss Pilkington's Evening party was a colonial 'salon,' the cultural 'exchange' was just one way from the Empire to the colony, an alluring monologue which could only reinforce the degree to which the local culture, like the frontier townscape Smith described to his Salisbury readers, fell short of the ideal.⁷¹

Despite intentions that the exhibition would become a long term attraction and Smith's claim to have obtained a good supply of subjects, the *Cosmopoligraphicon* closed abruptly in mid-June, the last advertisement appearing in the *Age* on Friday June 15, 1855. Smith's self-conscious attempt to raise the cultural and intellectual tone of the community through this genteel and rather self-important entertainment had little impact on the majority of Melburnians in 1855 who preferred to lose themselves in 'laughing idleness' at the vaudeville.

H. T. Watts, Auckland in the 1860s

A decade after Smith's *Cosmopoligraphicon* closed a similar discourse of cultural improvement circulated around the reception of a series of lantern exhibitions in Auckland.⁷² Like Smith, the exhibitor H. T. Watts was not a showman but a middle-class professional, a 'practical chemist,' who for one season at least turned his skills to public entertainment.⁷³ A public-spirited

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ In this way the *Cosmopoligraphicon* evokes Debord's remarks on the 'spectacle:' firstly that 'the spectacle is the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue;' and secondly 'the world the spectacle holds up to view is at once here and elsewhere; it is the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience.'

Debord *Society of the spectacle* 1994, thesis 37.

⁷² *New Zealand Herald* June 14, 1865, p. 1. (Press cutting in private collection, Wellington.)

⁷³ In 1859 he erected the building known as Gillman's Medical Hall on the corner of Church and Queen Streets, Onehunga, Auckland, the premises of Mr. T. Gillman, a chemist and druggist, but still owned by Watts in 1866. *Auckland Scrap Book* (Auckland City Library) November 1958, p.10; April 1963, p. 222. Watts was operating in Auckland city as a chemist into the 1870s. His name appears irregularly in *Wise's* directories, the 1872 edition, p.24, lists

businessowner with a long standing association with the Auckland province he, also like Smith, had an interest in cultural improvement. His Dissolving Views exhibitions at the Odd Fellow's Hall in Auckland in June 1865 received enthusiastic reviews. 'The interest was not allowed to flag during the attractive and instructive entertainment, and each pictorial illustration was highly appreciated', said *The Daily Southern Cross*.⁷⁴ The more sober *New Zealand Herald* intoned that:

The series of English, French, Italian, and Swiss photographic scenery now exhibited at the Odd Fellows' Hall are worthy of the support of the inhabitants of Auckland. . . . It is hoped that as considerable labour and expense have been bestowed in rendering this exhibition worthy of the support of the public, that it will not fail to receive it as a reward for the merit which it certainly possesses.⁷⁵

The *Herald* drew attention to the significance of viewing European cultural icons for the population of native-born colonials who had missed out on first hand knowledge of British culture.

There are numbers of the juvenile population of this city, who, having been born in the colony, have, of course, never witnessed any of the places or objects now brought before their view, and the only knowledge which they may have acquired of them has probably been culled from books or from oral description from their parents; but these dissolving views form in themselves a series of instructive lessons which cannot fail to elevate the mind of every youth who may witness them.

Although the local papers did not indulge in quite the same florid praise accorded to the *Cosmopoligraphicon*, there was the same insistence on the value of viewing a similar parade of Anglo-centric cultural icons, places and personages. 'The representations,' wrote the *Southern Cross*:

vividly and truthfully portrayed [*sic*] the principle [*sic*] places and edifices in London and Paris, including the abodes of Royalty and distinguished personages, a number of Shakespearian views, also scenes of celebrated places in Italy and Switzerland.⁷⁶

him as a chemist in Upper Symonds Street. See also: Main 'The lanthorn that shews tricks' pp. 45-54; 'The magic lantern in Aotearoa (New Zealand)'.

The poster (figure 1.5), referred to earlier, has been attributed to Watt. The poster was printed in Auckland, and can be dated not earlier than 1864, but it can not be linked irrefutably to Watts. Watts' programme and newspaper advertising bear little resemblance to the poster in terms of the language used (Watts does not call his show a *Phantasmagoria* for example) and repertoire, even though the poster represents an extensive list of possible subjects, there are telling differences.

⁷⁴ *Daily Southern Cross* 16 June 1865, p. 4

⁷⁵ *New Zealand Herald* June 24, 1865 p. 5.

⁷⁶ *Daily Southern Cross* 16 June 1865, p. 4. (Press cutting in private collection.)

These were consumed not merely for entertainment but as a remedy for a perceived cultural void in the antipodes which must impact on the unfortunate native-born population.

In addition to the instructive and socially elevating cultural content of Watts' show, the technology itself was a significant component of the spectacle. Firstly, Watts made extensive use of photographic slides, rather than copper-plate printed and painted, the greater verisimilitude of these images enhancing the power of the illusion and thus the value of the cultural lessons. Secondly, Watts' scientific interests meant the successful deployment of improved illumination technology, the oxy-hydrogen light described in detail in the press:

The principal detraction which has been hitherto experienced in exhibitions of this kind, especially those in this colony, has been the great difficulty in obtaining a sufficiently intense white light that possessed the power of throwing a clear and well defined shadow. The gas which is made for commercial use is totally inadequate for that purpose, and the only light which has been found to produce the outlines of an object in a sufficiently clear and bold manner is that which is known as the lime light, discovered by the late Lieut. Drummond, and which consists of two parts hydrogen and one part of oxygen gas, acting in flame together upon a cylinder of lime. The light produced by this combustion is most intense and extremely white. The illuminating properties are equal to 153 wax candles . . . The size of the disc upon which the shadows are thrown is sixteen feet square, and thus affords ample room for the various scenes to be largely magnified.

The combined technologies of photographic slides and superior illumination meant not only an uninterrupted show, but also resulted in screened images of far greater clarity, size and immediacy and therefore a more convincing illusion. The *Herald* reported that:

The illuminating process in this exhibition having now been rendered perfect, the various scenes depicted are placed before the view of the spectators in a most clear and satisfactory manner, and when it is known that they have all been taken by the aid of photography, it can be imagined that the original scenery and objects delineated are in reality in sight.⁷⁷

This illusion of direct experience, 'that the original scenery and objects delineated are in reality in sight,' was an important characteristic of the magic lantern show which it shared with other optical illusory public entertainments such as the panorama and diorama. Furthermore as Watts had 'personally visited many of the scenes exhibited,'⁷⁸ his narration not only framed and contextualised the spectacle but ratified its authenticity.

⁷⁷ *New Zealand Herald* June 24, 1865, p. 5.

⁷⁸ *New Zealand Herald* June 14, 1865, p. 1.

Unfortunately the Auckland public failed to appreciate the show's merits. Price reductions, from a relatively expensive 4s and 2s, were announced on June 19 and 24, the June 21 exhibition was cancelled, and in the end only four performances took place before it dropped from sight.⁷⁹ Other less elevating attractions flourished; the Prince of Wales Theatre, for example, offered in one evening a petite comedy, a sensational nautical drama, and a 'screaming' farce. Despite its lack of commercial success, Watt's venture signalled the imminent importance of photographic images mediated by the lantern projector.

The 1850s and 1860s were characterised by a sporadic but significant level of public magic lantern entertainments in the colonies as itinerant entertainers joined the many other commercial ventures drawn to areas of settlement and mining. While itinerant entrepreneurs continued to promote the magic lantern as spectacle and novelty, with hyperbolic advertising and eclectic repertoire, practitioners such as James Smith exemplified a counter-tendency to deploy the medium's associations with the 'rational,' and middle-class respectability, as an answer to the perceived cultural void in colonial leisure activities. Contemporary responses demonstrate the value of visual communication especially in the colonial context. That value was greatly increased by developments in imaging technology, the most far reaching being the application of photography to slide production.

Science and spectacle

The latest discoveries of the elder European nations now find their way with inconceivable rapidity over the antipodean regions of the globe, and are there appreciated with the facility of an almost natural instinct.

Sydney Morning Herald March 14, 1848.⁸⁰

Improvements and innovations in imaging technology, particularly photography, also aided the dissemination of scientific knowledge was accompanied and aided by. For colonial audiences, geographically, if not culturally, removed from the centres of Western scientific advancement, imaging technologies facilitated their acquisition of the new bodies of scientific knowledge, from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic. These technologies enabled them to keep up to date with the new visual technological literacy and conventions of spectatorship which were increasingly informing European public audiences. Furthermore, in the hands of colonial practitioners the rapid developments in photography, photographic lantern slide production and projection technology made possible the extension of content to include the topical and the local.

The value of the lantern exhibition, as an instrument of rational recreation, depended not only on the allegedly instructive content of the images but also

⁷⁹ Chronology, Main collection.

⁸⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald* March 14, 1848, p. 2.

upon the inherent and overt, scientific and technological aspects of the medium. Firstly, the lantern projector had originated and been developed as a scientific instrument, the result of investigations and experiments in optical principles. In the midst of the new industrial age it retained its close connection with scientific and technological progress and modernity.⁸¹ Secondly, by the 1840s overt scientific demonstrations had become an integral component in the repertoire of public lanternists in the colonies.

Michael Chanan has commented that the magic lantern brought science with 'a safe and tame appearance' before the 'general audience' in nineteenth-century Britain.⁸² The following section will affirm Chanan's observation by demonstrating the ways in which the magic lantern was applied to the representation and dissemination of nineteenth century scientific knowledge. Within the context of public amusement in the Australasian colonies, this draws attention to the blurring of boundaries between entertainment and instruction which characterized rational recreation.

The chromatrope, referred to earlier in this chapter as part of J. W. Newland's repertoire in Sydney in 1848, epitomised the combination of science and spectacle. (see figure 1.4). Even if spectators lacked a complete understanding of the science and technology behind the effect, they could participate in and marvel at a modern visual technological illusion.

The oxy-hydrogen microscope further extended the potential of the magic lantern as a scientific instrument or medium for the demonstration of other principles or phenomena. In the context of public entertainment, however, such a demonstration was offered and received more as horrifying spectacle than scientific instruction. Watts' enlargement of a drop of local water in Auckland in 1865 met with this response:

an amusing representation of the animalculae [sic.] contained in the water we use ... was not calculated to produce a pleasing sensation when the audience thought of the quality of that beverage to be procured from the wells in Auckland, which does not require any magnifying powers to enable us to disclose its lively denizens.⁸³

Although demonstrations such as this were increasingly relegated to a purely educational context, devices such as these frequently had a place in the repertoire of public magic lantern shows through the nineteenth century. In particular the chromatrope, varying in size and complexity, was an essential element in an evening's entertainment, an overt reminder of the intersection between science and spectacle embodied in the magic lantern exhibition.

⁸¹ For a discussion of the shifting meaning of the term demonstration, the image as demonstration and the use of the magic lantern in the scientific context see Hankins & Silverman *Instruments and the imagination*, in particular Chapter Three 'The magic lantern and the art of demonstration' pp. 37-71.

⁸² Chanan *The dream that kicks* p. 14.

⁸³ *Daily Southern Cross* 16 June 1865, p. 4, cited in Main 'The lanthorn that shews tricks,' p.50.

At the same time, more sophisticated imaging and projection technologies led to improved representation of scientific knowledge to a populist audience. Carpenter & Westley's copper-plate sliders, for instance, substantially increased the quality and quantity of scientific slides. The oxy-hydrogen light produced the stronger more intense light necessary to project a clear image from these finely detailed transparencies.

Extant remnants of such slide sets in local collections indicate that the sciences, from astronomy and entomology, were just as fascinating to colonial audiences as those in Europe. A group of Carpenter & Westley copper-plate sliders bearing astronomical diagrams are located in the Hardwicke Knight collection. These rectangular glass sliders, 80 mm wide and set in wooden frames, each bear two, three or four images to be projected in succession as the slider is drawn through the lantern. The sliders illustrate the constellations – the mythological figure delineated in translucent blue etching on an opaque black ground, the stars are picked out as transparent points of light⁸⁴ – and correspond to an English publication of 1825 by R. Ebsworth, a London mathematical, optical and scientific instrument maker. This collection of lecture notes to accompany the slides bears the lengthy title *A popular treatise on astronomy intended to accompany a new series of astronomical diagrams as made and sold by R. Ebsworth, optician; to be conspicuously exhibited by the magic lantern, in the form of a familiar lecture, both pleasing and instructive, on that sublime science.*⁸⁵

Writing at the end of the era of the phantasmagoria and prior to the rise of the great lantern venues of London, such as the Royal Polytechnic Institution, Ebsworth bemoaned the state of the current lantern practice, 'that so ingenious an Optical Instrument as the Magic Lantern should be almost exclusively devoted to the exhibition of subjects that are extremely trifling, and in some instances absolutely nonsensical.'⁸⁶ 'To obviate this evil,' he continued, 'I have prepared a new series of Astronomical Diagrams, with Telescopic views of the Planets, displaying the various phenomena of the science in a manner at once pleasing and demonstrative.'⁸⁷ Ebsworth's concern was with the public demand for instructive amusement not the purely educational, and his treatise was a marketing device which included a price list with a range of sizes and optional extras. Large size sliders with the

⁸⁴ Similar to illustration g. in Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 57.

⁸⁵ R. Ebsworth *A popular treatise on astronomy intended to accompany a new series of astronomical diagrams as made and sold by R. Ebsworth, optician; to be conspicuously exhibited by the magic lantern, in the form of a familiar lecture, both pleasing and instructive, on that sublime science* London: [the author] 1825. Hocken Library. Sliders 3 and 4 listed p. 6. Ebsworth recommended exhibiting the slides in the manner of the Phantasmagoria, that is, back projection onto a translucent screen.

⁸⁶ Ebsworth *Treatise on astronomy* 1825 p. 3. See also Henry Mayhew's frequently quoted interview with London toymaker, first published as 'Labour and the poor,' Letter XXXIX in *Morning Chronicle* (London) February 28 1850, cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* entry 202F pp. 111-2.

⁸⁷ Ebsworth *Treatise on astronomy* 1825 p. 3.

best lantern could be purchased in England for £9 to £11 with a cheaper version at £4 4s.⁸⁸ In this way Ebsworth's *New Astronomical Sliders* embodied the dual concerns of the public dissemination of scientific knowledge, and the scientific explanation as entertainment mediated by the continuing advances in imaging technology. Although the dates and locations of any performance of Ebsworth's astronomy lectures are yet to be ascertained, the presence of these slides in Dunedin collections indicates receptive colonial audiences at mid-century.

Seeing stars: Meluish and Mundy

Evidence of this interest and of developments in imaging technology for scientific exegesis can however be found in the late 1860s when several public lantern shows included astronomical slides. In January 1868 photographer Daniel Louis Mundy (1826?-1881) offered Christchurch audiences a 'ROYAL POLYTECHNIC ENTERTAINMENT' consisting of 'Scientific Lecture, Theory of Astronomy, Magnificent Pictures of Home, Foreign, and Local Scenery, Marvellous Optical Delusions, Mechanical and numerous other subjects. The *Lyttelton Times* noted that 'rotatory diagrams of the heavenly bodies.'⁸⁹ 'illustrating the movements of the celestial bodies, their rotation, and position in their orbits.'⁹⁰ Six weeks later in Dunedin, Mundy's colleague William Meluish (c1822-1888) advertised a similar program (figure 1.9). Although the photographic work of both Mundy and Meluish during their years in New Zealand has become widely appreciated, their involvement with colonial magic lantern practice has not.

William Meluish maintained a photographic studio in Dunedin from the late 1850s to 1864 when Mundy took over the business. Meluish continued with a number of other commercial interests in Dunedin until his return to England in 1870. These included operating a central city hotel and the importing of photographic equipment including lanterns, slides and slide-making materials.⁹¹ In March 1868 he put on a lantern exhibition himself, using the most up to date equipment, advertised in the *Otago Daily Times* of March 11, 1868. ⁹² Meluish's extensive programme created a stir in Dunedin and, although initially advertised as a single event, was shown almost every night for the next three weeks.

The *Times* of the following day was greatly impressed, proclaiming that 'nothing of the kind has before been seen in New Zealand, and nothing better

⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 5.

⁸⁹ *Lyttelton Times* February 1, 1868, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Lyttelton Times* February 3, 1868, p. 2.

⁹¹ Jane Thomson (ed.) *Southern people: a dictionary of Otago Southland biography* Dunedin, N.Z.: Longacre Press in association with the Dunedin City Council 1998 p. 338; Knight *New Zealander photographers*; Main & Turner *New Zealand photographers* p. 8. These sources contain some inconsistencies regarding Meluish's activities during the late 1850s.

⁹² *Otago Daily Times* March 11, 1868, p. 1.

of the kind has been seen in Australia, if there has been anything to equal it.' The *Times* went on to describe the astronomical demonstration:

The modern mode is to show the planets, &c, as illuminated bodies, on a dark surface, the relative motions of each being preserved; and the effect is infinitely more striking than that of an orrery ever could be made.⁹³

The orrery, dismissed by the *Times* as a 'rather clumsy arrangement', was a three dimensional mechanical device capable of modelling the orbital movement of the solar system, and demonstrating the rotation and relative position and size of the earth, sun, moon and planets. The astronomical slides used by Mundy and Meluish were regarded as an advance on both the orrery and Ebsworth's static images, combining elements of both imaging technologies.⁹⁴

Along with chromatropes and other mechanical slides in the scientific genre, including the microscope and the tank slide (see figure 5.6), these mechanical slides in 'the modern mode' represented 'state of the art' methods of visual representation of current scientific knowledge commercially produced for and marketed to a mass audience. In this way the magic lantern as a medium of public amusement and instruction in the colonies assisted the dissemination of 'the latest discoveries of the elder European nations ... over the antipodean regions of the globe.'⁹⁵

Photography and projection

Science and technology were not only the subjects of the spectacle; the medium itself was a demonstration of science and technology. The most long-reaching technological innovation was the mid-century achievement of photographic transparencies on glass.⁹⁶ It has been shown that professional photographic practice and lantern practice overlapped in the colonies; Newland is a case in point. This positioned colonial photographers to take advantage of the alliance of photography and projection which would revolutionize lantern practice. In 1854 the latest advances in photographic slides were exhibited in Hobart when photographer C. Knight advertised a 'lime light' display of photographs taken at the funeral of the Duke of Wellington.⁹⁷ Although this was not recent news, the funeral had taken place in 1852, the technology was right up to date. The following section details the

⁹³ *Otago Daily Times* March 17, 1868, p. 4.

⁹⁴ For a further discussion of these imaging technologies see Günther Holzhey "'World machines' and world views' in *The new magic lantern journal* Vol 9 No 4 2003, pp. 54-57.

⁹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald* March 14, 1848, p. 2.

⁹⁶ The Langenheim brothers of Philadelphia, USA produced their Hyalotype slides commercially from 1850. British photographer Frederick Scott Archer devised a wet collodion process used by manufacturers from 1851. Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 230-232.

⁹⁷ Long, *Tasmanian photographers* p.70.

uses to which photographic lantern slides were put in the work of colonial photographers of the 1850s and 1860s.

'Photographic views of life in Japan' and 'Scenes and incidents of the war in America' were the main features of an exhibition at the Oddfellows Hall, Wellington in March 1865, which the operator advertised, mistakenly, as New Zealand's first exhibition of dissolving views.⁹⁸ His program was groundbreaking, nevertheless, in its content; both the American Civil War (1861-1865) and Japan were highly topical subjects. The execution of Shimezoo Seiji at Yokohama 28 December 1864 for the assassination of Major Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird of H. B. M.'s 20th Regiment was reported in detail a few weeks after the slide show opened.⁹⁹

These two subjects may indeed not have been seen in New Zealand before, but the three night Wellington season at the Oddfellows Hall was paid less attention to by the *Evening Post* than the technical problems of the opening night:

Those who visited the Odd Fellows' Hall last night were delighted with the treat offered. Unfortunately the proprietor has not visited Yankee Land lately, consequently was rather short of 'gas,' and for want of a good supply of the acriform fluid, the exhibition came to an untimely end.¹⁰⁰

The following day, however, the *Evening Post* indicated that the exhibition was well-received:

The dissolving views last night were well received. Some very striking scenes of the American War were exhibited. A life like view of the Princess Alexandra appeared on the canvas and was received with enthusiastic plaudits. They are to be again exhibited tonight.¹⁰¹

Photography was not only significant as a means of recording people and events from life. Another important application of the technology was the conversion of engraved, drawn or painted illustrations to glass transparency. In the early days of his photographic career in South Australia, photographer Nicholas John Caire (1837-1918), operated the lantern for others, prepared views, lectured and toured. Like his New Zealand contemporaries Mundy and Melhuish, Caire is held in high regard now for his photographic records of colonial life and the aesthetic value of his images, but his lantern practice has largely been ignored, while his previous occupation as a hairdresser is faithfully recorded.¹⁰² In September 1868 Caire exhibited 'a number of very

⁹⁸ *New Zealand Advertiser* March 9, 1865 p. 2; March 13, p. 3.

⁹⁹ *Evening Post* May 2, 1865, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Evening Post* March 14, 1865, p. 2.

¹⁰¹ *Evening Post* March 15, 1865, p. 2.

¹⁰² Although attention is given to his early occupation as a hairdresser, his interest in lantern slides merits only a brief mention by his biographers: Anne and Don Pitkethly *N. J. Caire: landscape photographer* Rosanna, Victoria: [the authors] 1988. More evidence of Caire's work

beautiful dissolving views, which had been specially prepared for the purpose', to illustrate a lecture entitled 'Dark Deeds of the Middle Ages' given by the Rev. H. E. Merriman. The lecture was first presented at the New Connexion Methodist Church Bazaar, a sort of festival over several days which included performances from choirs, elocutionists, bell-ringers and a dwarf, and sale tables of photography, valuable plants, rare fossils and minerals. 'Dark Deeds' was not the only lantern lecture at the Bazaar, as the chief attraction a few days earlier had been the Rev. J. Maughan's lecture on 'The Ascent of Mount Blanc,' popularised by the British lecturer Albert Smith.¹⁰³

Caire 'specially prepared' the slides for 'Dark Deeds' by photographically copying engraved illustrations of 'martyrs and scenes from Christian history' as selected by Merriman. Thus Merriman, with Caire's collaboration, was able to compose and illustrate his own lecture, in contrast to being tied to commercial, mass-produced slide sets like, for example, Maughan's 'Mt Blanc.' For a time Caire continued his collaboration with both these lecturers and with the magic lantern: as lantern operator for Maughan in December 1868 for a lecture on 'Earthquakes, Volcanoes and Tidal Waves' where his 'valuable aid tended greatly to lessen the lecturer's heavy work;' and in March 1869 with Merriman for a repeat of 'Dark Deeds' at the Norwood Town Hall.¹⁰⁴ He even marketed the slide series with an accompanying lecture booklet entitled *The dark deeds of the Dark Ages with new and beautiful dissolving view illustrations : a lecture specially designed for Sunday schools and Christian congregations* obtainable from Caire's Hindley St. premises 'and from all booksellers'.¹⁰⁵ Soon after, with his photographic business faltering in the economic downturn caused by recent drought, Caire decided to cut his losses in the city and test the marketability of lantern shows in the rural hinterland as an itinerant lanternist.

Over the next six months Caire toured the country towns of South Australia, from Clare, north of Adelaide, to Mount Gambier on the south east coast exhibiting his 'Grand Polytechnical Entertainment' with 'a pair of powerful magic lanterns' and a collection of 'excellent dissolving views' based on slides

with the magic lantern has been brought to light by R. J. Noye's painstaking survey of primary sources. Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹⁰³ *South Australian Register* September 3, 1868, p.2, September 4, 1868, p.2.

Having learnt his craft from the American photographer Townsend Duryea whose family held a significant place in the trade in South Australia for over fifty years, Caire was then in his own studio at 97 Hindley Street Adelaide, where carried out 'all descriptions of photographic work.' David P. Millar in Joan Kerr, *Dictionary of Australian artists: painters, sketchers, photographers and engravers to 1870* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992 pp. 125-6; *South Australian Advertiser* 4 December 1866.

¹⁰⁴ *South Australian Register* September 3, 1868, p.2.

¹⁰⁵ *The dark deeds of the Dark Ages with new and beautiful dissolving view illustrations : a lecture specially designed for Sunday schools and Christian congregations*. To be had from Mr. N.J. Caire, photographer, Hindley St., and from all booksellers, 1868. (SLV RARELT 204 SO87 (Vol. 3))

already used by both Maughan and Merriman.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the tour country folk were regaled with the scenes from 'Dark Deeds of the Dark Ages' depicting 'the early persecution of the Church, and ... some of the horrible tortures to which Christians were subject in the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Mary.' Apart from these few of his own production Caire's lantern slide repertoire was composed almost entirely from the catalogues of British slide manufacturers. Imported standard slides included 'A Tour Through Switzerland,' 'The Ascent of Mont Blanc,' shown at Bugle Ranges in August, and 'Doctor Livingstone's Travels in Africa,' and 'a large number of comic and other interesting pictures were exhibited.'

However Caire's had some surprising supporting acts in his program. The *Mount Gambier Standard* noted that 'Shocks' were administered to those of the audience who desired it by means of a galvanic battery.' Along with pyrotechnics, hot air balloons and the like electric shocks were part of a bag of tricks borrowed from current scientific demonstrations and discoveries. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as Iwan Rhys Morus has pointed out, 'Londoners were enthralled by a strange fluid called electricity.'¹⁰⁷ In the wake of Michael Faraday's discovery of the means to produce an electric current, and the subsequent development of the induction coil, such demonstrations had become part of the repertoire of the London's halls of popular science. Traveling showmen and lecturers in Britain and America also became fond of the induction coil when they discovered how much audiences enjoyed watching shocks administered to volunteers. This dubious form of amusement spread quickly to the Australasian colonies. Caire's program of science and spectacle was further amplified with a lecture on phrenology illustrated with model heads and busts, and even the skulls of Aborigines.

Despite these innovations Caire's career as a lanternist and touring entertainer ended abruptly.¹⁰⁸ His last reported exhibition in South Australia was in December 1869. Three months later he had married and settled in Talbot, Victoria, where he reestablished his photographic business, first in the lucrative portrait trade then specialising in the scenic views in which he excelled.

Although a short-lived experiment, Caire's magic lantern practice illustrates the new possibilities opened up by the alliance of photography with lantern projection. These were: the expansion of the content of the slides; the versatility of either reproducing graphic images or projecting photographic

¹⁰⁶ *Mount Gambier Standard* November 23, 1869, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹⁰⁷ Iwan Rhys Morus *Frankenstein's children : electricity, exhibition, and experiment in early-nineteenth-century London* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, c1998. See also Richard Altick *The shows of London*.

¹⁰⁸ Although the slides and lanterns may have retained for private use, it appears that he no longer practiced professionally. An auction notice for the contents of his studio, prior to his move from Talbot to Bendigo in 1876, makes no mention of anything relating to lantern slides.

images; and the ease, speed and greatly reduced cost of production of slides which led to the massive increase in lantern slide production and use over the following decades.

All aspects of the widely available photographic slide repertoire were deployed by William Meluish in his public exhibitions and merchandise in Dunedin in the 1860s. His imported photographs of 'Classical groups of marble statuary' were much admired in the *Otago Daily Times* :

... there is perhaps nothing in which the marvellous beauty of the effect of so showing photographs is evidenced, than when the subjects are products of the sculptor's art. There is all the roundness and prominence of the marble, much relief of light and shade which cannot always be obtained when a group of statuary is looked at; and the exhibitor at pleasure shows the pure white of the subject surrounded by a blue or brown tint, the melting of one into the other producing a most charming effect.¹⁰⁹

One of the less desirable consequences of the ease of production of photographic view slides might have been the temptation to inundate the audience with too many views in too short a time to allow them to be appreciated. This may have been the problem found by the *Otago Daily Times* with 'Views of public buildings in London, and of the Thames; of several parts of Paris; of scenes in Switzerland; in Venice, Rome, and Milan,' the *Otago Daily Times*' only complaint being that the slides were shown too rapidly and that it would be 'more satisfactory if Mr Meluish would, in future, show six or eight views less, if only he would show each of the others for a minute longer.'¹¹⁰

Of particular significance in the colonial visual cultural context, dominated as it was with imported images, was the potential photography provided for depicting the local and topical on public stage. Both Meluish and Mundy exploited this potential in their exhibitions in Christchurch and Dunedin. Meluish's photographic views of colonial scenery brought an enthusiastic response.

'A Tour from Dunedin to Hokitika over the Southern Alps.' Starting with a capital picture of Cobb's coach office, and the Empire Hotel, there were views at Waikouaiti; of Oamaru, including the [---], and bits of the town, notable being the handsome Masonic Hall and adjoining hotel; of Timaru beach, of the town and above, and of a nice looking block of buildings; Lyttleton and Christchurch (two of each); and four or five of magnificent scenery on the road from Christchurch to Hokitika, including Porter's Pass. Gibson's Quay, Hokitika; the Kaneiri diggings; and the Greymouth, followed; and then there was a return to

¹⁰⁹ *Otago Daily Times* March 17, 1868, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

Dunedin jetties, and two or three admirable perspectives of Princes Street.¹¹¹

While firmly foregrounding local content, Meluish's tour combined all the attributes of a successful magic lantern arm-chair tour: the audience's communal experience in 'real time'; the compression of represented time; the literality and veracity of photography; the scale of the image; and a persuasive bridging commentary. At the end of March Meluish introduced an item of colonial news, with a 'A new picture of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, taken in Melbourne.'¹¹² The colonies had recently been thrown into consternation over reports of an assassination attempt on the Duke and the portrait would have provided a moment for the audience to collectively express their loyalty and their indignation. The colony as a whole was on tenterhooks in anticipation of the first royal visit to New Zealand, as it had been suggested that his party might now shorten the tour by bypassing the colony and heading Home directly.¹¹³

The combination of the topical and the local mediated by the magic lantern constituted a form of instant reportage. This was exemplified by D. L. Mundy earlier that year when he photographed 'instantaneous pictures from twelve different points of view' of Christchurch in flood and showed them as slides on the following evening at the Theatre Royal, Christchurch (figure 1.10).¹¹⁴ Views of this major flood which had engulfed the city, leaving many roads and bridges unpassable, and debris and damage throughout the Province, astounded audiences.

Mundy was typical of photographer entrepreneurs who quickly took up opportunities to increase their trade. Like Caire, Meluish and others, he soon moved from his origins as a portrait photographer to outdoor photography, and travelled extensively throughout New Zealand building a large body of images of the landscape and the people. In 1874, he exhibited his New Zealand views on an up-to-date Sciopticon model lantern while in London.¹¹⁵ Returning to the colonies in 1875, Mundy practiced as a photographer in both New South Wales and Victoria, and visited New Zealand with illustrated lantern lectures in the late 1870s.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² *Otago Daily Times* March 30, 1868, p. 1.

¹¹³ Although expressions of loyalty flowed freely not all New Zealanders felt the same way. The *Otago Daily Times* reported that 'It is suggested by the *Argus* that the news of the mock funeral of the Duke at Hokitika ... may ... have determined the Duke to take another route Home.' *Otago Daily Times* April 1, 1868, p. 4.

¹¹⁴ *Lyttelton Times* February 6, 1868, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ The Sciopticon was an improved lantern first produced in the USA and introduced into Britain in 1872. See Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 273.

¹¹⁶ Knight *New Zealander photographers*; Main, 'Mundy, Daniel Louis 1836/27?-1881' in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* Vol. II p. 340; Main & Turner *New Zealand photographers* p. 8; Davies & Stanbury *Mechanical eye in Australia* 1985 p. 203 have him at 16 Bridge Street, Sydney, in 1880.

The majority of professional lanternists were not solely reliant on that practice for their livelihood. Colonial magic lantern shows were, in the main, staged as adjuncts to, or extensions of other commercial interests, such as a professional photographic studio, or the sale of related chemical or optical instruments and supplies. Like the daguerreotypists before them, many colonial photographers employed the magic lantern as part of a commercial arsenal of technological money-making devices. Whereas the work of photographers such as Mundy and Melhuish in New Zealand, James Beattie and Joseph Check in Australia, is valued and celebrated as documentation of colonial life and times, their magic lantern practice has almost entirely escaped attention.

The alliance of photography and projection revolutionised lantern practice. Photography and mechanical photographic reproduction slides resulted in both an increase in the variety and quantity of images and a decrease in cost of slides, with a substantial effect on the lantern entertainment business as a whole. With slides now cheaper and more varied in content, exhibitors had greater flexibility in the construction and selection of their repertoire; and colonial audiences delighted in this increasingly effective and accessible visual link with imperial culture. In addition to the traditional repertoire of travel and description, and hand painted or copperplate slides, colonial viewers could enjoy crisply clear, and accurately detailed views of their own culture and environment on the big screen. The potential of this development for production of images of local identity will be considered further in chapter eight.

Magic lantern, as a medium of public entertainments in the Australasian colonies, projected a rich and multifarious imagery, of subjects and genres ranging from earnest instruction to spurious spectacle, from low humour and high melodrama to scientific exegeses on astronomy, physics and entomology, from informative lectures on history and travel to sensationalistic illusions. In the colonial context, as in contemporary European practice, this diversity was melded together under the ideology of rational recreation, merging amusement with instruction, juxtaposing the rational with the spurious, and in the process serving the aims both of commerce and of social improvement. The eclectic character of public magic lantern exhibitions was evident in the colonies, from the earliest practitioners, Newland, Smith and Watt.

Out of this survey of public magic lantern entertainment of the 1850s and 1860s certain key factors arise, for the dissemination of 'useful' knowledge as a worthwhile form of amusement had additional local significance. Firstly, the repertoire of images and visual experiences, largely originating from the great slide manufacturers of England and Europe, ensured colonists' continued participation in imperial visual culture. As reception of Smith's exhibitions clearly articulated, this shared world vision, which contrasted so strongly with lived experience on the margins of empire, empowered and

enriched colonial communities, both culturally and morally, by shrinking the perceived distance from the imperial centre. Secondly, the magic lantern initiated colonial audiences into a rapidly emerging global culture of visual technology.

Chapter Two

'Modern Magic Lanterns:' public entertainment from the 1870s

some notes ... will give the readers some idea of how lantern lecturers get on in the antipodes.

Invercargill 1896.¹

Professional and amateur, itinerant and occasional magic lantern entertainers made this visual technology increasingly available to urban, rural and regional audiences throughout the colonies. Among the many trades- and show-people servicing rural and outlying regional areas in the colonies, itinerant magic lanternists contributed to the building of visual cultural networks by circulating the multifarious repertoire of images for public consumption. As the visual technology penetrated more deeply culturally and geographically through the Australasian colonies, over the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, the impact of the medium on viewing practices became increasingly apparent. This chapter identifies a transition occurring around the 1870s in the reception of magic lantern entertainments from novelty and spectacle to commonplace and unremarkable. This transition ushered in an era of 'Modern magic lantern' practice at the end of the century, characterized by specialized and polished performances delivered by international and intercolonial touring lecturers and raconteurs.

Itinerant lanternists of the 1870s

Ongoing access to visual technology was not confined to those in the colonial urban centres. Through the 1860s and 1870s there was a marked increase in the number of professional lanternists touring the colonies taking instruction and amusement to rural and regional audiences. Among them were Charles Dooner and his wife,² who toured the south-eastern settled areas of South Australia and Victoria regularly for over two decades from 1861 to 1882.³

¹ *OMLJ&PE* May 1896, vol. 7, pp. 83-85.

² Although Mrs Dooner is rarely mentioned in reports, it is probable that she played an equal role with her husband in the work of touring and exhibiting.

³ Noye has established these dates as follows:

A reference to Charles Dooner in the *Advertiser* in January 1878 states that he had been 'an exhibitor of panoramic representations in these Australian provinces for the last 17 years,' that is, since 1861. Charles Dooner was still entertaining people living in South Australian country areas in the early 1880s. The report of his showing at Virginia in May 1881 called his programme a phantasmagoria, and by the time he reached Strathalbyn and Macclesfield in June 1882 he had changed its name from the difficult to pronounce Pantechnatheca to Panorama. The last reference to Dooner that I have is for his Panorama being presented at Clare [South Australia] in October 1882.

Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

The Dooners: on the rural circuit in the 1870s

The views were magnificent, the variety was immense, and the audience appeared highly delighted with the exhibition. The only regret was that Mr Dooner's stay in town was only for one night.

Northern Argus 1878 ⁴

The magic lantern exhibition grandly titled *Pantechnatecha* was received with delight by rural communities 'off the beaten track.' From the small South Australian township of Meadows, although less than 20 miles (30 km) from Adelaide, it was reported that in May 1867:

the dullness of this place was considerably enlivened by the arrival of Mr Dooner with his grand *Pantechnatecha*. He exhibited it in Mr J. S. Jones schoolroom, which was crammed. The views, which are of a character to suit all tastes – sacred, historical, landscapes, zoological and comical – not only impart useful information, as Mr Dooner explains them all, but likewise a considerable amount of amusement.⁵

The term 'Pantecnatheca' apparently appealed to other purveyors of visual spectacles. As Mimi Colligan has shown, a panorama bearing the title 'Pantecna-theca' toured the Australasian colonies in the 1860s under the management of Messrs Cressy and Ayers, appearing in Adelaide in 1864.⁶ Any connection with the Dooners is unclear. Cressy and Ayers' *Pantecnatheca* was based on the diorama technique and their programme was quite different from that presented by Dooner throughout his career. Cressy and Ayers' production was well received in Christchurch and ran for a couple of weeks. The programme was largely of American subjects and presumably originated there. Cressy and Ayers also attracted audiences with a kind of lottery at each performance with prizes of silver tea services, sewing machines and such things. Lines of transport and communication increasingly brought American trade and culture to Australasia, particularly New Zealand.

The wide range of subjects, from the spectacular to the topical, shown in the *Pantechnatecha* was continually modified, and as well as typifying the eclecticism of the medium it also provides a chronological sample of what was on offer 'to suit all tastes' and how that was deployed and modified over the years within one practice. In 1867 the Dooners arrived in South Australia with only forty views, most likely a package such as that described by Adelaide dealer Bernard Goode in 1866.⁷ But within a few weeks they were showing about one hundred views encompassing 'subjects to suit all tastes –

⁴ *Northern Argus* August 6 1878, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

⁵ *South Australian Register* June 1 1867.

⁶ Colligan *Canvas documentaries* pp. 667–69.

⁷ That is 'views of London and other parts of Europe, moonlighting scenes, moving figures, comic slides, chromatropes, with Adieu and Goodnight in the centre, etc.' *South Australian Register* June 1866 cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

sacred, historical, landscapes, zoological and comic.' The programme was described at Tungillo as follows:

The exhibition, which is of a superior kind, comprised scenes in Palestine and British and Continental views. The explanations given by the exhibitor were interesting and instructive, as well as amusing. The comic views exhibited towards the close were fully appreciated by the younger portion of the audience.⁸

The Dooners regularly returned to tour the tiny townships of South Australia, through to the 1880s, building up expectant audiences from year to year. At Inman Valley in May 1869, they set up in the small schoolroom, where '[t]he attendance was very large, the room being crammed, some of the young men even seating themselves on the tie beams.'⁹ The Dooners returned to South Australia in 1871, to rave reviews such as this in October at Mintaro:

During the weekend we had Dooner's Pantechnathecra here, it was well attended; much better, I may say, than is usual in this locality. The views exhibited, upon the whole, were exceedingly good, the comic scenes causing roars of laughter, especially from the juveniles. The finale, which consisted of what Mr. Dooner termed Chinese fireworks, was worth the entrance money alone. He has promised another visit, and no doubt he will meet with encouragement.¹⁰

The Dooners further commended themselves to their audience by contributing to local fund-raising. Promising a share of the takings to the Sellick's Hill School Improvement Fund ensured that the show was well patronised, sixty people attended 'besides youngsters.' Little townships like Watervale, South Australia, in 1871, for example, were crying out for entertainment, especially over the winter:

We have nothing in the shape of amusements during these winter months. We have a nice hall but it is seldom in use. I should think we might be favoured with one or two entertainments during the dull months, which would cause a little stir.¹¹

Anticipating that audiences would not be content with too much repetition, even of the optical effects which were a speciality of the medium, the Dooners increased and renewed their repertoire. As they returned to the rural centres of south-eastern Australia, over the next two decades the Dooners continued to supply the inhabitants of the rural frontier with visual representations of scenes and events from the colony and the wider Empire. While the special effects were still an indispensable item on the programme, it is clear that the Dooners were quick to include increasing numbers of both reportage images

⁸ *South Australian Register* circa July 1867 (reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

⁹ Cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA,' (reference not provided).

¹⁰ *Northern Argus* October 20, 1871, p. 3. Noye suggests that the Dooners may have been touring in Victoria from late 1869 to early 1871.

¹¹ *Northern Argus* September 29, 1871, p. 2.

and the continually improving and accessible photographic slides, to which audiences responded favourably. When the Pantechnatecha screened in 1876 for the first time in Bevilaqua's store, Millicent, the *South East Ensign* remarked that 'the exhibition is of a style calculated to impart excellent ideas of scenes and places known only by report to the generality of Australians.'¹² By late 1869 the programme had already filled two and a half hours and the Meadows correspondent to the *South Australian Register* had this to say:

The views, about 200, are first class, and the exhibition affords instruction and amusement to old and young. The lover of antiquities is gratified by views of some of those magnificent ruins that adorn the old country. English, Irish, Scotch, Swiss, Asiatics and Africans have their minds refreshed with scenes of their native lands, while the comicalities are most fun-provoking. The changes were effected so quickly, and the explanations of various scenes were so much to the point, that the interest was kept up throughout the evening. The representations of the Abyssinian war and panorama of Melbourne are deserving of special notice.¹³

The new slides that had been added since their last visit – the Abyssinian war, Prince Alfred's Royal Visit and a panorama of Melbourne – brought an element of reportage on current events both overseas and in the colonies. The reviewer's observation that the programme addressed not just British subjects but also Swiss, Asian and African viewers, suggests that a multi-cultural audience was envisaged. Reportage of European events predominated and was understandably of high interest to a community which understood itself to be at the margins of the Empire. In 1871 the Dooners again brought news from Europe with slides representing the European war between France and Prussia.

The pictures of the Russians driving horses over the Danube were considered very pretty, as was also the engagement with two frigates, and the following – Russian torpedo boats escorting provisions through the Dardanelles, Russian gigantic battery before Plevna, wild boars, dogs, and birds feasting on dead bodies, survivors of the Cospatrick, &c.¹⁴

By 1876 the Dooners had added scenes of Dr Livingstone's expedition in Africa and, of local interest, the wreck of the steamship Gothen[b]urg which had plied the route from Europe to the colonies for several years.¹⁵ At Virginia, South Australia, in February 1878, the *South Australian Register* reported that:

¹² *South East Ensign* 1876, (full reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹³ *South Australian Register* 1869 Meadows correspondent, (full reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹⁴ Koolunga correspondent for the *Northern Argus* 1878 (full reference not provided), quoted in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹⁵ The departure of SS Gothenburg from Adelaide had been featured in the *Illustrated Australasian News* June 17, 1873.

The excellence and vividness of the pictures, illustrating the disastrous war between Russia and Turkey, and the fluent and impressive style in which they were described by Mr Dooner, kept the audience in rapt attention for a considerable time, and I am quite sure they were thoroughly appreciated by all present, juveniles inclusive, which speaks well of the exhibition.¹⁶

There was also an ongoing appetite for views of the colonies and colonial events. The Dooners had supplied this when they introduced some local photographic slides in 1874 while touring north of Adelaide, at their exhibitions at Clare in July, at Gladstone in September, and at Moonta in October, where 'the photographs were admired, especially one of the Wesleyan Church recently erected, which view was put on the screen in good style.'¹⁷ In 1877 the Dooners were at Meadows, Farrell Flat, Hoyleton, Georgetown, Yarcowie, and Burra, where it was said that:

the views comprise scenes of current interest and subjects from the adjacent colonies. They are well painted, and being shown by a powerful limelight, a sight of them conveys an excellent idea of the subject illustrated.¹⁸

In Strathalbyn in April 1879, the proprietor's advertising promised two hours of amazement, wonderment and delight, conveying instruction and amusement to old and young that cannot be obtained from any other source. The pictures are really well painted, and a faithful representation of what they purport to be.¹⁹

Local reports such as these indicate that Dooners' exhibitions were received not only as an amusing distraction and relief from monotony. Small rural colonial communities were evidently as conversant with the notion of instructive amusement and as appreciative of pictorial accuracy as urban audiences. Impressive as they may have been to some, the photographic views themselves were not always received uncritically. The Dooners' Kingston exhibition in 1876 did not satisfy a reviewer for Mount Gambier's *South East Ensign* who wrote that:

¹⁶ *South Australian Register* February 1878 (full reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

¹⁷ Cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA' (source not provided).

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*

As Noye has observed, references to 'well-painted' images suggest the use of traditional hand-painted slides. Although hand-painted slides of colonial views and events had been produced in limited quantities in the colonies since the 1860s at least, it is doubtful that such rare and expensive products were in use in this instance. A more likely explanation is that hand-coloured photographic slides were used. Methods for colouring and tinting slides were described in manuals or even invented by the adventurous, and the results varied according to the artist's skill and the quality of the materials used. Professional photocolorists, most of whom were women, who contracted to portrait photographers, performed a similar craft to the miniaturists who had been superseded by photography. The coloured slides offered at a higher price in suppliers' catalogues were their work.

Dooner's Pantecnatheca exhibited on Monday and Tuesday nights at the Mechanics' Institute. Several new views were introduced, amongst others one of your Mount Gambier streets and your celebrated Blue Lake, neither of which 'your own' recognised, although no stranger to that locality. Defective vision, I suppose.²⁰

Although isolated rural audiences rejoiced to have entertainments like the Dooners' Pantecnatheca despite such perceived deficiencies, city populations were harder to please. The *South East Ensign's* Kingston correspondent distanced himself from 'our country cousins' in the small town audience and threw scorn on 'Dooner's unpronounceable entertainment' even though it was well received in Kingston. 'I can only conjecture' the Kingston critic continued,

that the patronage it received is more owing to its suitability for juvenile audiences than to any enlightenment a grown person can get out of it, but the taste of some places in the way of amusement is, to say the least, peculiar.²¹

The Dooners seem to have made only one foray into Adelaide's main urban area in July 1869 embarking on a circuit of one-night stands in suburban halls and schoolrooms, but avoiding the larger and more significant venues in the city centre. Their modest advertisements in the Amusements column of the *Register* contrast with the prominent and inflated notices for other entertainments offered.²² The Dooners continued faithfully to ply their trade around the network of small rural communities and where they were welcomed, as in Virginia in February 1878, as 'an old favourite.'²³ It was in that context that their 'usual graphic and homely style' of presentation was appreciated.'²⁴

Clifford's 'Mirror of the World:' an urban lanternist of the 1870s

Also making his way around the Australasian colonies at the same time as the Dooners was a certain Mr Clifford with his 'Mirror of the World.' Clifford, however, did not seek his audience in the Dooners' terrain of rural townships whose routines were punctuated by little else. Like James Smith twenty years earlier he exhibited this up-to-date version of Smith's 'World in Many Pictures' in colonial urban centres.²⁵ In late June 1877, working his way northward through New Zealand after a tour of Australian cities and towns,

²⁰ *South East Ensign* February 1876 (full reference not provided) Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *South Australian Register* July 6, 17 1869.

²³ *South Australian Register* February 1878 (full reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

²⁴ Press report from Dawsey, South Australia 1878, (reference not provided) cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

²⁵ The lanternist may have been professional photographer Samuel Clifford (1827-1890) based in Hobart from c1859 to 1878 and known in New Zealand. Kerr, *Dictionary of Australian artists* pp. 164,5. Further research is needed.

Clifford staged a week-long season at Wellington's Oddfellows' Hall with a programme that was clearly addressed to Anglocentric middle-class tastes and interests. The opening night offered views of London, illustrating over twenty different sites and monuments from The Docks and the Railways to Westminster Abbey and the Crystal Palace, 'splendid statuary' and 'A peep at the Colonies.' A reviewer enthused over the 'magnificent' views and the lecture 'explanatory of the views, delivered in an easy and attractive style by Mr. Clifford,' noting that, 'To those unacquainted with London, these scenes will prove especially interesting.'²⁶ After a second evening of London views, Scotland was showcased on the following two evenings a move calculated to appeal to the large proportion of immigrants from that region who had settled in the southern provinces of New Zealand. For the fifth exhibition horizons were expanded with 'Rambles around the World: Here there and everywhere,' which encompassed 'New York, Niagara Falls, Paris (before and after the war),' the 'Great Temple of Ipsambul [*sic*]' and a grand conclusion of two dissolving view classics a 'real snow storm' and the ubiquitous 'Vesuvius in Eruption'. The last night's program returned to England for views of 'the beautiful scenery of the Thames,' Oxford, Windsor Castle and London.²⁷

What distinguished Clifford's repertoire was the inclusion of views of Melbourne, Dunedin, Invercargill and Christchurch. The *New Zealand Times* noted, 'The views of scenery, in Australia and New Zealand are also very accurate, and give a good idea of the places represented.' Clifford intended to take views of the colonies back to Britain to illustrate the progress of settlement, declaring that:

his chief object in collecting these views was to take them Home and exhibit them there for the enlightenment of the English people; because he had been astounded to find what curious ideas were entertained in the old country, by the majority of the people there, as to the character of colonial life one of strange adventure, and wanting in civilisation. No doubt Mr Clifford slightly exaggerated for fun's sake, but we can quite understand that many people in England would be astonished to find what immense progress across the Australasian colonies has been made during the past half century.²⁸

Just as colonists were able to access clear and truthfully portrayed views from Home, so British audiences would now be able to see how progressive colonial life truly was through the powerful visual medium of the projected photographic lantern slide.

Just as significantly, however, local practitioners and itinerant lanternists used the magic lantern to maintain a strong visual connection both between the individual colonies of Australasia, and between the colonies at the margins of the empire and their cultural centre.

²⁶ *New Zealand Times* June 30, 1877 [p. 1].

²⁷ *New Zealand Times* July 6, 1877 [p. 1].

²⁸ *New Zealand Times* July 2, 1877 [p. 1].

On the road in Australia and New Zealand

The Dooners and Clifford were part of a population of itinerant lanternists who together ensured the availability of magic lantern exhibitions to audiences in country townships as well as urban centres. First-hand accounts by some of the more or less successful touring entertainers who took the medium to outlying communities in Australia and New Zealand in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide further insight into conditions specific to colonial practice. Itinerant lanternists faced not only economic and practical difficulties, but also geographical and metrological extremes, the dangers of travel, and unpredictable reactions from isolated communities and unruly rural audiences.

The threat of bushrangers had been a danger for travellers since the earliest days of colonisation, and one for which the resourceful Mrs Dooner was prepared. This incident in June 1871, one of the few in which her presence is acknowledged, reveals her forthright manner:

This quiet neighbourhood was visited the other evening by Mr Dooner with his Exhibition. His plan of announcing the performance is by beating a big drum violently, and to add discord to such hideous sound some young men or boys began beating old tins. This so exasperated Mr and Mrs Dooner that the lady so far forgot herself as to bring out a revolver, and using violent language, pointed it at the head of one musician and threatened to blow his brains out, Mr Dooner at the same time threatening. A disgraceful scene was the result, and the affair is to be brought before the Bench at Willunga. The Dooners carry three revolvers with them a matter which ought to be known.²⁹

The three revolvers in their possession signify the need for weapons of self-defence by such a conspicuous and vulnerable target as a small group of travelling entertainers on the open road between isolated communities. The incident at MacLaren Vale was, however, entirely unrepresentative of the reputation the Dooners had built up over the years. Until that time, as Noye points out, 'every country correspondent had praised his[sic] performances and not one negative word had been written about him[sic].'³⁰ The *Pantechmatecha's* success was undoubtedly due to effective collaboration in the laborious and intricate technical processes of setting up, operating and transporting the lantern in addition to the usual tasks of managing a travelling show and entertaining the public. 'The very superior views, developed by two powerful lanterns, so cleverly manipulated as to merit the appellation of dissolving views,'³¹ the Dooners were using in South Australia in the late 1860s would have been impossible for a single operator to achieve, and difficult enough even for two as constant attention had to be paid to the

²⁹ *South Australian Register* June 1871 cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA' (full reference not provided).

³⁰ Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

³¹ *South Australian Register* 1867 cited in Noye 'Photography SA' (full reference not provided).

illuminants as well as to the insertion and removal of slides in swift succession through two lanterns, in time to the speaker, all in a darkened room.

The assimilation of the new technological and visual literacy was not accomplished smoothly and automatically in every instance. Audiences could not always be relied on to respond in the prescribed manner and lantern shows did not always deliver what was promised. When the *Callopticon* arrived in Adelaide in 1864, the proprietors Messrs Seymour & Gordon claimed to be fresh from an eighteen-month-long tour of Victoria, Sydney, and New Zealand with 'some of the most wonderful optical effects ever produced in the Australian Colonies' which had been 'attended with immense success and crowded houses.' However the meagre audience drawn to what appears to have been little more than a program of photographic views of Europe, was, the *South Australian Register* reported:

not very large and consisted entirely of occupants of the pit and the gallery who, being unable to appreciate the nature of the entertainment, created such confusion that it was with great difficulty that the exhibition was gone through. The views were good; but the descriptive part was rendered inaudible by their noise.'³²

Even the well-loved Dooners sometimes failed to gain control of their audiences as illustrated by Mrs Dooner's recourse to her revolver at MacLaren Vale. The problems of trying to educate as well as entertain are highlighted by the *South East Ensign's* correspondent supercilious comment that: 'Our country cousins made themselves conspicuous again by their talking and striking matches to light their pipes, just at a time when some of the best views were shown. I will supply their names the next time they transgress.'³³

Travelling lanternists also had to contend with technical difficulties inherent in the intricate, volatile and sometimes experimental equipment. The danger of explosion was always present when gases and flames were in close proximity, for example 'blowback' of the flame into a gas bag or the accidental mixing of oxygen and hydrogen.³⁴ Queensland correspondent to *Optical magic lantern journal and photographic enlarger* McCulloch described the problem of 'pops' caused by the reduction of gas levels after an hour or more of projecting, which so frightened his audience that they could not be convinced to stay for the rest of the exhibition. He also encountered difficulties with gas bags which burst in the Queensland heat. To deal with the immediate issue of loss of light, he already had an oil lamp 'in readiness and was able to go on with the exhibition.'³⁵

³² *South Australian Register* October 20, 1864, [p. 1]; October 26, 1864, [p. 2]

³³ *South Ensign* February 1876, cited in Noye 'Photography SA' (full reference not provided).

³⁴ See 'Explosions' in Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 110.

³⁵ W. J. McCulloch 'Lantern matters in Australia,' Correspondence, *OMLJ&PE* vol. 4 1 September 1893, p. 139.

While some itinerant lanternists struggled to maintain control of their temperamental apparatus and their exuberant audiences, others lost control of their finances as well. In New Zealand the *Wairarapa Standard* of June 16, 1874 related a humorous anecdote about Mr. McEachern, an itinerant dissolving view operator, who left town without paying his bills.³⁶ By the 1890s itinerant lanternists along with entertainers, hawkers and labourers of all descriptions were crossing paths with each other all over the colonies.³⁷ In 1895 a touring amateur from Invercargill faced a 'not very pleasing prospect' on arrival in an Otago township on the heels of a rival show which had left no goodwill in his prospective audience. 'Three men had hired a small hall, and had given a magic lantern show,' it was explained, 'Their audience consisted of nine small children at sixpence each. The entire plant, lantern and pictures, would be dear at £5. They left very early, forgetting in their hurry to pay their hotel bill, or the rent of the hall.'³⁸

In 1893 C. Mountford Allen articulated further the particular conditions for itinerant lanternists in the colonies in a letter to English periodical *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger*. He observed that, because travelling in Australia was difficult and uncomfortable, a good oil-lamp was 'the most convenient form of illumination' to use in the lantern. The writer stressed that lanterns were unnecessarily large and hoped that more compact models would be introduced. He concluded:

It may be interesting to readers to learn that there are a great many travelling lanternists in the Colonies. They get permission from the State school committees for use of schoolrooms free, and from all accounts make a fair living. All makes of lanterns are in use – principally oil for convenience of travel, as often several miles have to be journeyed on foot from one settlement to another, when the 'kit' is necessarily reduced as much as possible.³⁹

A few months later W. J. McCulloch alluded to the variable quality of itinerant lantern practice, observing that: 'The lantern is not used so largely here as it might or should be, and as a form of entertainment is looked down upon, chiefly through the inferior quality or class of entertainment given by many of the travelling lanternists of days gone by. Things are better, however,

³⁶*Wairarapa Standard* June 16, 1874, p.2.

³⁷ Some aspects of this vanished culture are described in the chapter 'Barney Whiterats, roadside entrepreneur' in John A Lee *Roughnecks, rolling stones & rouseabouts: with an anthology of early swagger literature* Christchurch: Whitcoulls, 1977 pp. 69-73. Barney Whiterats, was a familiar sight on the roads of southern provinces of the South Island of New Zealand from the early 1880s at least into the late 1890s. Although his principal attraction was a troupe of performing white mice, at one stage in his career, Lee tells us, he also carried a magic lantern (p. 69). Les Cleveland, Wellington, kindly drew my attention to this article.

³⁸*OMLJ&PE* May 1896, vol. 7, pp. 83-85.

³⁹ C. Mountford Allen 'Lanternists in Australia' in *OMLJ&PE* London. 1 January 1893, vol 4, p. 15.

than they were five or ten years ago, the class of entertainment is very much better and the light is better also.⁴⁰

Amateur lanternist W. H. Mathieson of Invercargill, New Zealand, claimed to have presented over a hundred lectures and exhibitions 'at almost every township of any importance throughout Southland and Otago.' A member of the affluent colonial middle-class, Mathieson turned to lantern lecturing out of enjoyment and community service rather than economic necessity.⁴¹ His repertoire of slides was procured on his recent world trip and included 'good views of all the principal places visited' supplemented with 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' 'Mary Queen of Scots,' 'The Village Blacksmith,' 'Sailing,' and 'Rock of Ages.'⁴²

In the columns of *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarge* of May 1896 Mathieson complained of 'a rather trying time ... had while travelling around the gold-fields of Otago, last year,' but largely boasted of his prowess as a lantern lecturer. His was a well-organised and premeditated tour with advance bookings, and an elaborately orchestrated performance using back projection, and drawing on the services of a lantern operator, a pianist and even the local choir. In one township he was met by 'hundreds of well-dressed people - men, women, and children - crushing at the door, eager to get in.' Mathieson deployed his skills as a raconteur to appease 'the most critical audience that I had ever spoken to.' In his article he cited the testimony of 'an old man [who] came up, and warmly grasping my hand, said 'He [sic] was delighted. I have ridden thirty-two miles my boy to hear you, and if you will play to-morrow night I will come back again.'

As a retired businessman, Mathieson had the luxury of not being financially dependent on his lantern practice. His contemporary Joseph Check, a lanternist and photographer who worked the country towns of northern New South Wales, was totally reliant on his ability to operate his practice as a business, which included bringing his audiences content and novelty to suit their tastes and interests (figure 2.1). In this way Check continued the tradition established by earlier practitioners like the Dooners well into the twentieth century.

For his outback rural audiences Check's repertoire consisted of standard, imported material, 'the most Brilliant Gems of Art, from the Leading Academies of the World. Famous Paintings, Statuary etc., and a general view

⁴⁰ *OMLJ&PE* 1 September 1893, vol 4, p. 139.

⁴¹ *Stone's Otago and Southland Directory* 1893.

Having prospered as a coach builder and proprietor of the 'American Carriage Factory' in Invercargill and at Gore, Mathieson was making good a promise to raise funds for his local church St Paul's Presbyterian, Invercargill, by lecture on his world travels to audiences throughout the province. *OMLJ&PE* May 1896, vol. 7, pp. 83-85. *OMLJ&PE* 1896 unannotated photocopy provided by Bill Main, Wellington.

⁴² *OMLJ&PE* 1896, unannotated photocopy provided by Bill Main, Wellington.

of the Beauties of the World, and the Battles of the 19th Century.’⁴³ But he also catered to broader tastes, and, unlike the Dooners, he enlisted a small troupe of supporting performers to travel with him. In the summer of 1897/8 he toured the Richmond River district, as J. Check’s Popular Variety Company, with: W. C. Tremayne, mechanist and electrician; Fred Bartlett, musical director; ‘Screamingly Funny’ Alf J. Bartlett, ‘the great English ventriloquist and Burlesque Artist;’ and Ed Lennox, ‘the Popular Baritone and Descriptive Vocalist.’⁴⁴ Edison’s latest improved cinematographe, newly acquired and making a first appearance in the district, was billed as the main attraction. According to the *Richmond River Herald*, however, ‘the special attraction’ for the Coraki audience, out of a programme rated as only ‘up to par,’ was a series of local views taken by Check during his stay in the town.⁴⁵

To judge from the greater frequency of advertisements in the amusement columns of colonial newspapers for drama, vaudeville, panoramas, soirees and other entertainments, the number of commercial magic lantern enterprises of this scale touring the colonies was relatively modest. This more transportable technology, with low labour requirements and high impact, succeeded, however, in extending into regions beyond the viable reach of larger and more cumbersome ventures such as theatrical companies, panoramas and waxworks. Many like the Dooners, Clifford, Caire, and Check toured their shows along the web of country roads of the colonies, which connected tiny isolated settlements from the Otago goldfields to central Queensland with larger settlements and beyond that to the wider world, bringing to them reminders and updates of the imperialist culture they looked to as the centre. At the same time they contributed to the dispersion and dissemination of the latest visual technology to audiences outside of urban mainstream middle-class locations and engendered a tradition of ‘going to the picture’ as a social focus. The perseverance and occasionally near heroic efforts of these men and women to take the medium to the remoter areas of the colonies, whether to make a living or with more altruistic intentions, ensured the visual technological experience became familiar throughout the colonies and not just a novelty confined to urban centres.

Maturity of the medium – the 1870s and 1880s

Concurrent with increasing levels of distribution of this visual technology throughout the Australasian colonies came a subtle shift in audience response to the medium. The wavering reception of Clifford’s ‘Mirror of the World’ draws attention to a problem for magic lantern practice in the 1870s, that is, the extent to which audiences had become over-familiar with lantern exhibitions. In the 1840s and 1850s promotional material and responses to

⁴³ *Richmond River Herald* September 24 1897 p. 5.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*; January 7 1898 p.5.

⁴⁵ *Richmond River Herald* January 28 1898 p. 2. The significance of these views is discussed further in chapter eight of this thesis.

public lantern exhibitions typically highlighted the wondrous nature of the technology as spectacle in a loosely structured medley of 'views' and optical effects. By contrast, in 1877 the *New Zealand Times* admitted to bringing 'the expectation that it is, to a certain extent, of a stale character,' to Clifford's advertised program of scenic vistas.⁴⁶ A hint of disenchantment with the medium as a novelty was already discernible in the late 1860s when, despite inclusion of the latest innovations, D. L. Mundy was 'failing to attract the good audience expected' to his lantern evenings in Christchurch in 1868. Although the new instantaneous local views were much appreciated by those who did attend, the varied and fulsome program, in the hands of an efficient operator, was met with indifference. A lessening appeal of the medium as public entertainment in urban centres through the 1870s may also have been a factor in the Dooners' poor reception at Adelaide venues and their continued preference for loyal, less sophisticated, small town audiences. And, at the end of this decade, in September 1880, Auckland retailer C. W. Dennes advertised a 'Grand Vocal Competition and Limelight Exhibition,' in which the technological showpiece of the event was not the magic lantern but a modern domestic innovation, the sewing machines donated as prizes by Mr. Dennes:

Four Hand Sewing Machines made by the now world-renowned White Company. The Challenge Machine of the World that casts the Singer, Domestic, and all others in the shade, price £3 10s.⁴⁷

The limelight views, 'all new and beautiful photos of Paris and the Paris exhibition of 1878,' were now relegated to a supporting act filling a few minutes at the interval. While the content met with 'great acceptance' and 'repeated applause' the medium was apparently taken for granted. No longer an attraction on its own the magic lantern was the medium which served to make visible a more modern and prestigious spectacle – the world of the exhibition and the modern city of Paris. For colonial audiences of the 1870s projection the technology itself no longer fulfilled inflated expectations of spectacle in the same way it had two or three decades earlier. Spectators were less impressed with the novelty of projection and optical effects than with the innovation of photographic views which created the illusion of scenes 'as if in reality in sight.' The attraction thus lay more completely in an illusory world created by technology, a world that was not directly perceptible but could, allegedly, be experienced through the technology. This is precisely the role of the 'spectacle' later identified by Debord: 'the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images that are superior to that world yet at the same time impose themselves as eminently perceptible.'⁴⁸

As colonists became habituated to the innovations in visual technology, and the magic lantern became a metaphorically 'invisible,' the attraction of the medium rested more heavily in the content and quality of the images

⁴⁶ *New Zealand Times* July 2, 1877 [p. 3].

⁴⁷ *New Zealand Herald* September 21, 22, 1880.

⁴⁸ Debord *Society of the spectacle* 1994 Thesis 36.

themselves and the quality of simulacral experience engendered.⁴⁹ For the visually and technologically literate the medium became a window through which could be seen an artificial, imaged world allegedly corresponding to and standing in for a real world. Audience attention focussed increasingly on the crispness, clarity and veridicality of the projected image enabled through improvements and innovations in imaging technology, illuminants, apparatus, and photographic methods of slide production. The visual technological illusion produced by the lantern was increasingly received and taken on as a new form of reality. To adapt McLuhan's description of the newspaper medium, the viewer accepted the projected image: 'not so much as a highly artificial image having some correspondence to reality as he [*sic*] tends to accept it as reality itself. Perhaps the effect is for the media to substitute for reality just in the degree to which they become virtuosos of realistic detail.'⁵⁰

An English lanternist in the Antipodes: Professor Pepper

At the end of this decade a major figure in nineteenth century international magic lantern culture and history made the journey from the British imperial centre to the colonies. As Professor of Chemistry and Director of London's Royal Polytechnic Institution for almost a quarter of a century, John Henry Pepper (1821-1900) had achieved near legendary status for his spectacular optical illusions on the Polytechnic stage in the 1860s. In the winter of 1879, Pepper arrived in Melbourne accompanied by his family and entourage, to stage one of the last of the big shows in the grand manner of the Polytechnic. *The Illustrated Australian News* wrote that:

The fame of the wonderful optical illusions invented and purchased by [him] of course had preceded him; the ghost, the metempsychosis, the magic limner, with the wonderful dissolving views, the marvels disclosed by the oxy-hydrogen microscope all being well known, if not from actually seeing them in London, at least by reputation.⁵¹

This is a moment which cannot be ignored in an account of the magic lantern in the colonies because of pivotal Pepper's role in the history of the medium. It also serves to underscore the transition of the medium from a special effects machine, a spectacle in its own right to an invisible medium of communication.

By then however the Polytechnic was in its final decline as a major attraction. Pepper's famous ghost illusion⁵² had already restored the Institution's

⁴⁹ This is the phenomenon Gunning identifies as 'the cinema of attractions.' See Tom Gunning "'Now you see it now you don't': the temporality of the cinema of attractions' in *The velvet light trap* No. 32 Fall 1993 pp. 3-12.

⁵⁰ McLuhan 'Media as "The New Nature"' in McLuhan & Zingrone *Essential McLuhan* p. 272ff.

⁵¹ *Illustrated Australian News* August 2 1879, p. 122

⁵² Described in the *British Journal of Photography* August 1863, the technique of the ghost illusion which Pepper quickly patented, was relatively simple. A concave mirror, powerful

flagging fortunes in 1862 and seventeen years later it appears that he had tried to perform the same trick with a new repertoire of improved optical illusions using illumination and reflection. Pepper's declared agenda as an advocate of mass education and rational recreation was 'not to believe all that you see.' But as an entertainer he played upon a tangle of connotations around science and spectacle.

Advance publicity and early reviews proclaimed the visit as the event of the season and located Pepper's practice firmly in the scientific realm. *The Illustrated Australian News* reported that Pepper was 'met by a number of gentlemen interested in scientific matters, as well as others who, while not being scientists themselves, acknowledged the value of the presence in Melbourne of such an excellent medium as our visitor.'⁵³ 'Professor Pepper does not come as a mere showman,' the *Age* declared. The opening night of 'Pepper's Scientific Festivals' was pronounced 'one of the most scientific exhibitions that it has been the privilege of a Melbourne audience to attend.'⁵⁴ Beginning with 'a lecture on light,' the Professor explained the modern theory of light as vibratory motion comparable to sound in a straightforward and literal manner (figure 2.2). There followed 'a practical demonstration of the manipulation of light' – in fact a magic lantern show – consisting of 'painted views shown on 400 square feet by a new and costly triunial dissolving view apparatus made expressly for this tour by Messrs Ottway and Son London,' showing narratives of 'thrilling events which have lately occurred in Europe, Asia and Africa,' and concluding with 'The Dancing Skeleton.'⁵⁵ This eclectic mix of scientific lecture and spectacle was characteristic of the London Polytechnic exhibitions and consistent with the genre of rational recreation and instructive amusement promoted by the Institution from its inception.

As the season progressed, however, an already evident sensationalist agenda came to the foreground and the tone of an scientific instructive lecture receded. Increasingly elaborate and sensationalistic illusions and conjuring tricks using mirrors and bright lights were brought out. Every few days a new selection of 'Wonders' was announced in *The Age*, for example:

illumination and a large, well polished glass plate were arranged to cause the reflection of a live actor (concealed from the audience) to appear to float on the stage. (*The British journal of photography* August 1 1863, pp. 306-308) Pepper's ghost caused a sensation in London. It ran for 15 months at the Polytechnic, seen by 250,000 including a Royal command performance in May 1863. It then transferred to other London theatres, and internationally to Paris, New York etc (Hecht: p. 311, 445 B/1). In September 1863 it was reported from Philadelphia, USA, that the ghost 'is "all the go", and is drawing full houses everywhere.' (Coleman Sellers, Philadelphia in *BJP* September 15 1863, p. 375.) 'A man who patents a ghost is a man to be respected' commented the Melbourne *Age*.

⁵³ *Illustrated Australasian News* August 2 1879, p. 122.

⁵⁴ *Age* July 14 1879, p. 3.

⁵⁵ *Age* July 12 1879, p. 1

Professor Pepper is invisible – his voice only is heard; he then comes out apparently from nothing. ... [he] commands tea, water, animals, and a living beauty to appear, and come out of a glass vessel.⁵⁶

Later in the week:

By means of the stage apparatus Professor Pepper managed to transform a basket of oranges into an equivalent number of pounds of marmalade all nicely done up in tin cases. Other marvellous changes were effected.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding the mundane nature of these demonstrations, emphasis was laid on 'wonderful illusions,' publicity for the show veered markedly towards the language and hyperbole of the vaudevillean variety show, and the subjects and tropes employed shifted into the realm of the mystical, psychomancy, and occultism. Over the following weeks an 'entire change of program' proceeded with 'New and wonderful effects' including inanimate figures apparently brought to life, illusory decapitations, a final 'Monster Programme' with, 'A la Baba The Wonderful Automaton Cornet Player,' and 'Tremendous Mystery, Fiends, Sprites, Ghosts, Demonology.'⁵⁸ This spectacular combination of science, spiritualism and sensationalism culminated in the 'Metempsychosis,' an illusion Pepper and a colleague had devised and produced at the Polytechnic earlier that year.⁵⁹

The way in which Pepper's show used technology as spectacle, in the mode of the fairground, belonged to an earlier mode of deploying science and technology in the realm of public entertainment. Although he had recently refreshed his repertoire with newly devised props and scripts, Pepper's premise belonged to the era of the Polytechnic, one which was drawing to a close.

Pepper stayed on in the colonies for another five years, taking up a position as government analyst in Brisbane. On his return to Britain he would have had it confirmed that his style of 'illusionistic novelty,' as Altick has described it,⁶⁰ as scientific instruction for the masses was largely superseded by more sedate and pragmatic public demonstrations.

Changing reception to the projected image around the 1870s in the colonies confirms Davison's observation that people 'simply got used to being

⁵⁶ *Age* July 17 1879, p. 1.

⁵⁷ *Age* July 21 1879, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Age* August 20 1879, [p. 4]

⁵⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'metempsychosis' as 'transmigration of the soul; passage of the soul from one body to another; chiefly, the transmigration of the soul of a human being or animal at or after death into a new body.' *The Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. Pepper's act was intended to represent the shedding of one physical body and the taking up of another. The illusion is described in full detail in J. H. Pepper *The true history of the ghost; and all about metempsychosis* London; New York: Cassell & Co. 1890. See Appendix II.

⁶⁰ Altick *The shows of London*, p. 505

amazed' and lost the sense of wonder and mystery previously evoked by visual effects such as dissolving views and chromatropes. The same period in England saw the final decline of the Polytechnic and its style of spectacular illusions; Pepper's famous 'ghost illusion' slid into disrepute as a cheap circus trick imitated by itinerant entertainers in many countries, not least by the man himself. However, this did not signal a decline in the use of the projected image but rather the opposite. Growing media sophistication on the part of the audience was concurrent with a substantial increase in lantern and slide production, burgeoning practice and a trend towards greater specialisation in content. But by now the magic lantern could no longer succeed as a spectacle in its own right. Instead it had become an invisible mediator: the message of the medium had been absorbed.⁶¹

Modern Magic Lanterns of the 1890s

With the technology having become, as Gunning puts it, 'nearly invisible ... convenient and unremarkable,' public lantern practice from the 1880s showed signs of a shift away from eclectic variety and the self-conscious display of special effects.⁶² Increasingly, the modern magic lantern exhibition of the 1890s consisted of a detailed exposition on a single, specific geographical, historical, literary or artistic subject, presented by an international and intercolonial touring lecturer, who traded largely on the strength of his or her name and fame as raconteur and specialist.

The modern magic lanternist was in a different realm to that of the itinerant showmen and women, who nevertheless continued to peddle a variety of technological novelties, from daguerreotypes or electric shocks to sewing machines, and boast, like the Dooners, of a slide repertoire 'to suit all tastes'.⁶³ The lanternists of the 1890s were also at a distance from Professor Pepper, demonstrator of natural magic, purveyor of ghost tricks.

The emerging stereotype of professional lantern exhibition practice was illustrated on the cover of a British publication of the turn of the century entitled *Modern Magic Lanterns and Their Management* (figure 2.3).⁶⁴ Depicting a biunial or double lantern in rich gleaming brass and glowing varnished timber, attended by a dapper, moustachoed lanternist spruced up in a dinner suit, the cover design is minimalist in comparison to earlier manuals, such as Wood's for example, which were typically laden with extraneous detail. The

⁶¹ McLuhan in McLuhan & Zingrone *Essential McLuhan* p. 3.

⁶² Gunning 'Renewing old technologies.'

⁶³ *Northern Argus* August 6 1878, in Noye 'Photohistory' 1998.

⁶⁴ The title page carries the following:

MODERN MAGIC LANTERNS: a Guide to the Management of the Optical Lantern For the Use of Entertainers, Lecturers, Photographers, Teachers and Others Illustrated Second Edition Revised Throughout by R. Child Bayley, F.R.P.S. (Editor of "Photography," etc) London: L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar Buildings, Drury Lane, W.C. (formerly of 170, Strand); New York: Charles Scribner's sons, 153-157, Fifth Avenue.

No date of publication, Les Cleveland estimates ca. 1900.

image clearly signalled respectability, professionalism (or gentlemanly amateurism) and, most importantly, modernity (figure 2.4).

From around the 1880s onwards, commercial lantern shows were typically more conscientiously marketed and promoted, and generally more proficiently presented than their earlier counterparts. Touring lecturers on specialist subjects promoted their lectures well ahead of time, employing the services of a manager and touring through the colonies supported by a campaign of effusively worded advertisements and a high (whether real or fabricated) reputation. Typically, their skill was in public speaking rather than the technical side of the performance for which the services of a local specialist in lantern operation were engaged. Their public lectures offered a seemingly endless parade of topics within the category of 'useful information' favoured by the middle-class. At the same time, as part of process of becoming more specialised, there was a noticeable tendency to include content of a more staid and factual character, featuring literally descriptive and detailed photographic images, in comparison to the eclectic variety, fantasy and special effects of earlier shows (figure 2.5).

In 1889 for example, Professor Dickinson toured the Australasian colonies with 'his popular lecture, Spain and its Moorish Marvels,' an exhibition positioned within the middle-class elitist discourses of rational recreation, imperialism and orientalism. Slide titles listed in Dickinson's advertising correspond to the works of artists in the academic, orientalist genre which was an important component in nineteenth century European taste from high art to decorative arts, combining highly finished academic treatment, descriptive detail, literality, theatricality, ethnographic accuracy and pervasive overtones of eroticism, to evoke a 'timeless' construct of 'The East' which conformed to Eurocentric stereotypes.

Responses to Dickinson's exhibition also reveal the overlapping of illusionism and reportage that the modern magic lantern could achieve. 'For an hour and a half,' the *Otago Daily Times* reported, 'Mr Dickinson, with his scholarly lecture and his wonderful illustrations, almost succeeded in annihilating time and space.'⁶⁵ This viewer, at least, willingly put aside disbelief, dismissed awareness of their actual surroundings and entered into the thrall of visual spectacle.

'The Empire of Rising Sun; or Japan and the Japanese' was the topic of a lecture illustrated with Limelight views presented by Presbyterian minister the Rev William Gray Dixon (1854-1928) in the City Hall, Dunedin, in August 1895. A respected Asianist, Dixon had, prior to training for the ministry, been appointed Professor of English Language and Literature at the Imperial College of Engineering, Tokyo, a position he held from 1876 to 1880. In 1880 he published an account of the country and the people entitled *The Land of the Morning*. After entering the clergy he retained a keen interest in Japanese

⁶⁵ *Lyttelton Times* April 1, 1889, p. 1.

culture and continued to lecture on the subject well into next century.⁶⁶ At the time of his visit to Dunedin, Dixon was minister of St John's Church, Warrnambool, Victoria, but was temporarily 'occupying the pulpit of First Church' in Dunedin. Despite the lecturer's clerical position, promotion of the event signalled its location within the sphere of public entertainment: an advertisement in the *Otago Daily Times* claimed that over 10,000 tickets had been sold in Melbourne for the same lecture and a standard fee was charged, 'double tickets 2s 6d; single 1s 6d'.⁶⁷

Interest in Japan and a passion for *Japonisme* had been evident throughout the colonies for several decades.⁶⁸ In Dunedin, a Grand Japanese Fair was held in December 1895, and a local department store, touted the latest imports of 'Japanese novelties' as 'specially suitable for presents.'⁶⁹ At the same time anti-Japanese fears were regularly voiced in the colonies within the context of a deeply ambivalent attitude towards Japan.⁷⁰ The lecture could thus be interpreted both within middle-class discourses of rational entertainment and exoticism, and as an aesthetic fashion in the western context. Central to the rational aspect is the documentary nature of the content, was a sort of ethnographic study of human culture. 'The Reverend Mr. Dixon, in his introductory remarks, pointed to remarkable parallelisms in the history of Great Britain and Japan, as imperial powers, as furnishing special reasons why the British should take a special interest in the land of the rising sun,' the *Times* noted.⁷¹ Dixon again lectured on Japan to Dunedin audiences in 1911, just at the time Ponting was entertaining Scott's men in Antarctica with the same subject. In aid of a new pipe organ for the Roslyn Presbyterian church, where he ministered from 1910 to 1921, Dixon staged an exhibition in Dunedin's Art Gallery Hall consisting of 'Over 100 magnificently coloured views of city and country, customs and costumes' with nineteen slides illustrating Japanese courtship and marriage.⁷²

⁶⁶ The connection between the shipbuilding centre of Glasgow and Japan had a strong impact on the many aspects of the culture and the arts in northern England in the nineteenth century and it is significant that that connection was transposed not only to the Antipodes, ironically, geographically closer to Japan, but particularly to Dunedin, an outpost of Scots culture.

State Library of Victoria, GMF: G. H. Scholefield (ed) *A dictionary of New Zealand biography* 1940 vol. 1.; *Cyclopedia of New Zealand* 1902 vol. 2.

⁶⁷ *Otago Daily Times* Monday August 19, 1895, p. 1.

⁶⁸ For further reading on the influence of *Japonisme* in the Australian colonies see Andrew Montana *The art movement in Australia: design, taste and society 1875-1900* Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press; Melbourne University Press, 2000.

⁶⁹ *Otago Daily Times* Saturday November 23, 1895, p. 4; Thursday December 5, 1895, p. 1.

⁷⁰ See for example *Otago Daily Times* Saturday August 24, 1895, p. 6.

For an examination of the relationship between Australia and Japan and Australian attitudes to Japanese culture in the nineteenth century see David Walker *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia 1850-1939* St. Lucia, Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 1999, chapter 5 pp. 50-67.

⁷¹ *Otago Daily Times* Saturday August 24, 1895, p. 6.

⁷² *Otago Daily Times* July 15, 1911, p. 1.

1895, a year brought to a close on Christmas night by a 'limelight display of views of principal cathedrals of the world' at Dunedin's Garrison Hall,⁷³ saw a parade of reverend gentlemen purveying 'lecture entertainments' to the Dunedin public. For his Dunedin lecture season in November 1895, the Reverend Haskett Smith was able to enlist the endorsement of local clergy, Dunedin's eminent Bishop Nevill presided at the first lecture.⁷⁴ Unlike Dixon, however, he was not attached to a church. In fact Smith's visit to the colony was under the management of the 'indefatigable celebrity hunter' Mr. R. S. Smythe. Smythe was renowned for having 'introduced to New Zealand' touring lecturers such as Miss Von Finkelstein, one of the few women on the lecturing circuit, who had given a series of similar 'fascinating' lectures a few years previously.⁷⁵ Another of his protégés was English writer and moralist the Reverend H. R. Haweis, who had visited with his lectures on 'Music and Morals' and 'Garibaldi' earlier in the year.⁷⁶ A long-standing advocate of 'rational recreation,' Haweis had written in the early 1870s that:

our streets are reeking with the abuse of pleasure; our society is rotten with it; our social fabric is crumbling beneath it; our best institutions are being shaken and paralysed by it.⁷⁷

Like the those of Dickinson and Dixon, Haskett Smith's lectures participated in the 'cult of places' of armchair travel. In modern mode however the lecture was not so much a 'Grand Tour' as an extended stopover at one or other location, with two and half hours of 'numbers of deeply interesting photographs taken by himself ...and a wealth of interesting detail.'⁷⁸ The lecture titles all denote a romanticised view of the East - 'The Crescent and the Cross,' 'The Land of the Pharaohs,' 'Myths and Marvels of Modern Egypt,' 'The Eternal City, or the Beauties of Damascus,' 'The City of the Great King and Round about Jerusalem.'⁷⁹ However Smith's lectures reflected another aspect of contemporary orientalist ethnography, that of Christian scriptural fundamentalist interests and concerns which also sought to identify, excavate and accurately reconstruct biblical locations.⁸⁰ His first lecture, 'The Crescent and the Cross,' placed the scriptures into their geographical and historical context:

conducting his audience on a journey illustrated by a series of admirable lantern slides from photographs through the greater part of

⁷³ The lanternist was F. W. Simms, member of the local photographic society, who, two weeks later gave a lecture on Astronomy at St Matthews Schoolroom *Otago Daily Times* December 24 1895, p.1 January 12, 1896 p. 1.

⁷⁴ *Otago Daily Times* November 20 1895 p. 5.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Otago Daily Times* May 20, August 8 1895 p. 1.

⁷⁷ H. R. Haweis *Thoughts for the times* 1872 p. 288. cited in Bailey *Leisure and class* p. 68.

⁷⁸ *Otago Daily Times* November 22 1895 p. 5.

⁷⁹ *Otago Daily Times* November 20 p. 5, November 22 p. 6, November 23 p.5 1895.

⁸⁰ The same passion for literal interpretation of the Bible underpinned the work of Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), see Anne Clark Amor *William Holman Hunt: the true Pre-Raphaelite* London: Constable, 1989.

Palestine, was dealing with a subject which he has literally at his fingers tips, for he has visited the Holy Land more frequently, perhaps, than the majority of the residents of Dunedin have been as far away from home as Oamaru.⁸¹

Although Dunedin residents may not have been well-travelled they were, the *Otago Daily Times* assumed, deeply concerned about matters of Biblical literalism which Smith addressed. If the audience was gratified by 'Mr Haskett Smith's vindication of the geographical descriptions in the Bible, their remarkable accuracy being emphasised by him,' they were also in for some shocks for 'it was his duty to shatter one or two fond romances which earnest, devout people have in the past cherished.'⁸² Juxtaposed with this concern for accuracy and authenticity was a voyeuristic, jocular concern with the strange habits of non-British races tone. 'Many humorous stories, introduced into the lecture, descriptive largely of curious types of humanity encountered by Mr Smith, only increased its attractiveness,' the *Otago Daily Times* remarked.⁸³ Comments such as these draw attention not only to the positioning of British culture as superior to foreign cultures but also to the interplay of instruction and amusement persistently embodied in the modern lantern lectures of the 1890s.

Also touring the colonial public lantern lecture circuit in the 1890s were celebrity lecturers with more populist appeal. British war artist and correspondent Frederic Villiers (1851-1922) visited the colonies in 1895 lecturing on his experiences including his recent trip to Japan to report on the war between China and Japan. In his effusive autobiography Villiers indicated that he was received more as a celebrated visitor to the region than simply an itinerant entertainer. On his journey through the Australian colonies he 'enjoyed the hospitality of numerous colonial governors' and was entertained by the 'artistic coteries' of Melbourne and Sydney. In Tasmania the Legislative Assembly voted to adjourn earlier than usual to give members the opportunity to attend his lecture.⁸⁴ This 'Hero Artist of Nine Campaigns' delighted audiences with illuminated photographs, illustrations and descriptions of 'the thrilling adventures that he underwent on his journalistic mission, the splendid achievements he witnessed of the British arms against

⁸¹ *Otago Daily Times* November 20, 1895, p. 5.

⁸² These were: 'in connection with a view of the Brook of Cherith, the refuge of Elijah, it was explained that the ravens that fed the prophet were not birds, but Bedouins ... Mr. Haskett Smith was also explicit in stating that not Mount Tabor but Mount Hermon ... is now generally admitted to have been the scene of the transfiguration.' *Otago Daily Times* November 20, 1895, p. 5.

⁸³ *Otago Daily Times* November 22, 1895, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Frederic Villiers *Villiers: his five decades of adventure* London: Hutchinson, 1921 Volume II p. 139-145. Two years later Villiers may have been the first war cinematographer when, as he claimed, took a cinema camera to cover the campaign in Greece in 1897. See Steven Bottomore 'Frederic Villiers - war correspondent' in *Sight and sounds: international film quarterly* Volume 49, No. 4, 1980 pp. 250-255.

overwhelming odds, the characteristic traits and the strange customs in manners and dress of the inhabitants of distant countries in the Far East.’⁸⁵

*Life model slides: ‘quite free from Vulgarities’*⁸⁶

Another well received and frequent performer on the colonial public entertainment circuit of the 1890s was British ‘world traveller, entertainer and raconteur,’ George Harry Snazelle (1850-1912), whose repertoire appealed directly to a populist taste for sentimentality and spectacle.⁸⁷ Snazelle brought with him the recent British innovation of ‘life model’ lantern slides then at the height of their popularity. First developed in 1870s, the technique represented another significant result of the alliance of photography and the lantern slide, the shift from the use of solely graphic (that is, painted or engraved) illustrations to a practice of studio-photographed tableaux incorporating posed and costumed human models, props and painted scenery. The resulting slides were identified as ‘From Life-Models.’ Although only a few English makers, most notably Bamforth & Co, York & Son and Riley Brothers, were committed to the production of life model slides, at the height of their popularity in the 1890s hundreds of titles were published and imported into the colonies.⁸⁸ They included popular songs, ballads, recitations, hymns, sentimental and comic narratives. It is said that publishers sent copies of books or songs to lantern slide manufacturers in the hope they would choose to make a set of slides based on them, as this would increase sales. As well as designing their own tableaux they freely appropriated existing graphic images for translation into ‘life-model’ scenes.⁸⁹ The photographer’s family and friends were frequently enlisted as models and scenes might even be set in existing outdoor locations such as the village of Holmfirth near Joseph Bamforth’s studio. A variation of the technique was a montage of photographed elements with painted details and background and the whole rephotographed to produce a slide with more spectacular ethereal effects.

⁸⁵ *Otago Daily Times* August 9 1895 p. 3.

⁸⁶ W. H. Mathieson in ‘The magic lantern in New Zealand’ *Optical magic lantern journal* 1897 cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 300, entry 434 B.

⁸⁷ Chris Long & Clive Sowry ‘Australia’s first films: facts and fables. Part nine: colonial cinema’s conclusion’ in *Cinema papers* No 100, 1994 pp. 60-65, 84-85.

A visit to Melbourne in 1890 by Snazelle was noted *Bohemia* (Melbourne) December 4 1890, p.10. On this occasion Snazelle showed views of the ‘scriptural’ countries accompanied by sacred music for Christmas night carol singing. My thanks to Dr Caroline Jordan for bringing this to my attention.

⁸⁸ For the history and practice of the life model slide phenomenon see also Cook *Movement in two dimensions*; Gordon *By gaslight in winter*; Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern*; Jessica’s *first prayer* and James Fenton ‘The evolution of photographic lantern slides’ both in Crompton et al 1990 pp 54-59 and pp. 38-43.

⁸⁹ Richard Crangle has established the connection between preexisting graphic illustrations and many life model slides. Crangle has further analysed the conventions life model slide production and identified their influence on early cinematic direction, and pictorial and narrative structure. Richard Crangle ‘Hybrid texts: modes of representation in the early moving picture and some related media in Britain’ doctoral thesis, Exeter University 1996.

Finally the slides were mass-produced photographically and sold in sets of around eight to twelve, but occasionally up to fifty, either in black and white or, more expensively, individually hand-coloured to varying degrees from cursory washes of colour to more elaborate and detailed over-painting (figures 2.6, 2.7).

A major source of melodramatic ballads and inspirational and sentimental narratives for interpretation as life model slides was the extensive body of work of English writers such as Alfred Tennyson, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and George R. Sims (1847-1922). Like Dickens, Sims was concerned about the social problems of Victorian English cities, and wrote in the popular press to expose the effects of desperate poverty and social inequity. From 1877 Sims, under the pseudonym 'Dagonet,' contributed to the London journal *Referee* and subsequently published collections of his work as *The Dagonet Ballads* and *Ballads of Babylon*, which sold hundreds of thousands of copies world-wide. They were 'intended for reciters who wanted something dramatic,' Sims wrote in his autobiography, and 'recited at matinees and were particularly popular at professional benefits which were common in those days.'⁹⁰ The vernacular ballad form was adopted by many Victorian writers for populist audiences, and their work was also translated into 'life model' slides. Whereas Dickens is still read, the melodrama and exaggeration of Sims and his colleagues no longer appeal to readers.

Visiting Melbourne in May 1893, Snazelle contributed his entertainment 'Music, Song and Story – illustrated with magnificent limelight views' to the program of a series of People's Promenade Concerts at the Exhibition Building where, it was noted, 'the enormous size of the exhibition enables these grand scenes to be given on a scale of splendour never before attempted in Australia.'⁹¹ His 'magnificent scenes' included the familiar but still impressive elaborate mechanical and dissolving effects of earlier years: 'Mill-Wheel' a revolving mechanical slide; and 'Valley changing to Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter' a set of dissolving views accompanied by Snazelle singing 'In the Sheltered Vale.' The following week he presented 'Silent Fireworks,' the chromatope, and 'Blood curdling scenes, "Mr. Jones's Awful Dream" illustrated by 12 of the worst pictures ever seen.'⁹²

Concurrently Snazelle was presenting a series of 'Rational Sunday Evenings' at the Melbourne Opera House, which continued through until August when he finally departed from the colony. Each of these immensely popular entertainments, explicitly positioned in the genre of rational amusement, focussed on a particular theme, such as the 'old country,' Christmas, or life at sea, expressed in song and visual effects from the magic lantern. Many of the

⁹⁰ George R. Sims *My life* 1917 pp. 183, 184. For more on Sims see also Gordon *By gaslight in winter* p. 82; Calder-Marshall *Prepare to shed them now*; George R. Sims *Ballads of Babylon* London: J. P. Fuller 1880; *The Dagonet ballads* London: J.P. Fuller 1881.

⁹¹ *Age* July 22 1893 p. 12.

⁹² *Argus* May 20 1893 p. 16, *The Argus* May 27 1893 p. 16.

best traditional slide effects were employed from the ubiquitous statuary slides as 'Poems in Marble, scenes of statuary from the Churches and Art Galleries of Europe,' to English scenery 'Pastoral Scenes around the Homes of our Queen at Windsor, Balmoral, and Osborne House,' and dissolving views 'the old Church at Stoke Pogis ... 30 ft in diameter, changing from Day to Night and Winter, the chimes ring out, and the choir will sing "The Evening Hymn."' ⁹³ Mechanical and dissolving effects was liberally employed in elaborate multi-media performances which brought a new dimension to familiar set pieces: 'a magnificent scene of an old English village street in a snow storm ... [where] carol singers appear, sing and vanish,' accompanied by Snazelle and chorus singing the carol 'Oh Christmas Night'; ⁹⁴ and 'a sailing vessel at sea with wave effects, depicting a storm, with lightning and thunder, and a full chorus will sing 'For those in peril on the sea.' ⁹⁵

Snazelle's daughter was also part of the touring company and specialised in singing romantic and sentimental ballads such as *Alice where art thou?* and *Daddy* to life model slides at the Melbourne Exhibition Building (figure 2.6). ⁹⁶ *Daddy* was just one of the inspirational, secular titles available for exhibition in the colonies. Extant slides and catalogues indicate the sentimental and melodramatic tone of these tales of hardship and courage, such as *Alone on the Raft*, *The Little Hero*, *The Newsboy's Debt*, *The Anchor's Weighed*, and *The Toilers* (figure 2.7). ⁹⁷

In mid-May 1893 Snazelle and his company presented Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* illustrated by 'Thirty Grand Scenes from Life Models.' ⁹⁸ Dickens' writings were a consistent favourite for public recitations with or without lantern slide illustration. The engraved works of his illustrators over the century were freely plundered as a source of lantern slide images. Life model sets were also produced in great numbers. ⁹⁹ The 'montage' scenes

⁹³ *Argus* May 27 1893 p. 16.

⁹⁴ *Argus* May 20 1893 p. 16.

⁹⁵ *Age* June 3 1893

⁹⁶ *Argus* May 20 1893 p. 16.

⁹⁷ Pictorial collection State Library of Victoria.

⁹⁸ *Argus* May 20 1893 p. 16.

⁹⁹ Illustrated Dickens readings continued to be popular through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, from 'Gabriel Grubb or The Haunted Sexton' depicted with 'appropriate illusions' at a dissolving view entertainment by Messrs Harper and Smith in Wellington in 1880 (*Evening Post* August 1880, reference supplied by William Main) to Charles Davenport Hoggins (?-1923) of Hobart, lawyer, local politician and raconteur who performed excerpts from Dickens for charity in New Zealand and Tasmania in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth. His obituary noted that; 'As an elocutionist he had few equals and his able exponency of Dickensonian characters caused the New Zealand press a few years ago to designate him as the barrister humourist.' (*The Critic*, Hobart, May 5 1923, p. 3)

A remnant of the slides he used for his lectures survives in the Narryna Museum, Hobart, they are part of several sets of Dickens illustrations, titles include 'Bob Sawyer's Party,' 'Shooting Experiences,' 'Gretna Green,' 'Dotheboys Hall,' 'Copperfield and the waiter.' With them is a miniature watercolour painting (signed D. C. P.) of a lantern exhibition, showing 'Bob Sawyer's Party' to an adult audience in the post WW1 period.

described *A Christmas Carol* would have lent themselves well to projected images. It is suggested that Dickens' may indeed have been inspired by magic lantern effects for these scenes in the Christmas Carol and the story of Gabriel Grubb in *The Pickwick Papers*.¹⁰⁰

On the following Sunday evening Snazelle's Opera House concert finished on an inspirational crescendo: 'Behold I Stand at the Door,' was sung by Mr Snazelle and Chorus and illustrated by 'Holman Hunt's picture of that name,' Miss Snazelle presented 'God Be With You', and finally 'the entire audience, led by the chorus' joined in the hymn *Rock of Ages* 'with its Grand Scenes.'¹⁰¹ The hymn *Rock of Ages*, an emotive allegory of redemption using shipwreck as a metaphor, was a favourite for religious and secular occasions. Contemporary catalogues show multiple listings of several versions ranging from text only to sets of up to twelve slides employing a full range of special lantern slide effects.¹⁰² The most elaborate of these combined dissolving views, life-model elements and painted effects, the subject of much care and skill, depicting a storm beaten rock, a hand emerging from the waves, and the heroine born aloft by angels (see figure 7.6).

In this way Snazelle's multi sensory spectacles brought contemporary popular taste for high melodrama combined with refined sensibility to colonial audiences, thus interconnecting the colonies amongst themselves and with their cultural centre within a common visual technology. In 1892 the *Otago Daily Times* proclaimed Snazelle's program 'has special attractions for the educated portion of the community. It is a distinctly high class entertainment.'¹⁰³ At the same time a New Zealand correspondent to the English *Optical magic lantern journal* named 'the great Snezell [sic] ... the best lantern entertainer who has ever appeared in the Colonies ... quite free from Vulgarity,'¹⁰⁴ and the *Melbourne Telegraph* declared that: 'Nothing more refined and delightful has ever been seen in our 50 year old city.'¹⁰⁵ At the same time a wider audience was addressed. In 1893 in Melbourne when a large proportion of the population were suffering the effects of a major economic depression, 'Working men' were exhorted to:

¹⁰⁰ See Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 175.

¹⁰¹ *Argus* May 27 1893 p. 16. 'Holman Hunt's picture' was *The light of the world* by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). The original, painted in 1851-1853 during the founding years of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, carries an inscription on the frame of an extract from Revelations 3.20 'Behold I stand at the door ...' This immensely popular image acquired iconic status when a copy was brought out to the Australasian colonies for an exhibition tour in 1906-1907 attracting for example 40,000 visitors at the Art Gallery of South Australia alone. Christopher Menz Morris & Co. Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia. See figure 6.5.

¹⁰² For example Alexander Gunn (Melbourne) c.1898 *Catalogue and supplement of Apparatus and Dissolving Views etc* p.5, 2 sets of 3 and 8 slides, p. 6 set of three dissolving effects, p. 7 set of 10 dissolving effects.

¹⁰³ *Otago Daily Times* Saturday April 2 1892, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ W. H. Mathieson 'The magic lantern in New Zealand.'

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in the *Otago Daily Times* March 31 1892, p.1.

[a]ttend in your thousands with your wives and families (but not children in arms). In these times of depression and sorrow you will find some solid comfort in listening to and seeing this sacred and philosophical entertainment.'¹⁰⁶

The performances were also inspirational in other respects. Within a few months of Snazelle's season in Dunedin in April 1892, local 'popular baritone and actor vocalist' William Densem was inspired to launch his own career as a professional entertainer, raconteur and singer with a program of 'Music Art and Song' entitled 'Densem and his Lantern.' Like Snazelle, Densem drew his repertoire from the usual selection of hymns and inspirational ballads, such as *Ora Pro Nobis*, *The Village Blacksmith* and Sim's *The Lifeboat*, illustrated with life model slides. Despite a recommendation that the sombre character of the program needed 'more humorous subjects interspersed' the season was pronounced to be 'a triumphant success.'¹⁰⁷

This is not to say that the 'old-fashioned' magic lantern show was swept aside. There was still a place for the traditional variety programs which were only enhanced by the improved apparatus, the variety of imaging technologies and extensive repertoire available to the modern magic lanternist of the 1890s. In 1895 for example Hobart bookseller and photographer Nathaniel Oldham orchestrated a Limelight dissolving view entertainment, which drew together the latest life model illustrated recitations and stories, ethnographic studies, and local views traditional dissolving effects and mechanical slides.¹⁰⁸ But specialisation, and the professionalism that went with it, were increasingly in evidence in the public sphere. Amongst specialist lantern lecturers and raconteurs the variety was huge, encompassing the topics of travel and description, ethnography, biblical studies, science, the fine arts, and literature ranging from illustrated readings of the work of exalted writers such as Tennyson, Milton and Shakespeare, and more broadly appealing Dickens, to sentimental recitations and high melodrama. As members of a commercially viable international audience for these lecturers and their subjects, Australasian colonists could consider themselves participants in current global cultural discourse.

Though largely neglected in subsequent decades, the practice of magic lantern entertainment in the public domain reveals itself, in contemporary records and documents, to have been extensive and lively throughout the Australasian colonies over the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century.

¹⁰⁶ *Argus* May 27 1893 p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ *Otago Daily Times* September 23 1892 p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Long *Tasmanian photographers*, p. 87. Long includes a reproduction of a poster for this event; an example of colonial lantern practice acknowledged peripherally to the main the business of photography.

While Australasian audiences of the 1850s and 1860s might have been satisfied with an entertaining and generally informative illusion, by the 1870s and 1880s expectations were generally higher and hints emerge of a decline in fascination with public magic lantern. 'A magnificent display' of loosely connected optical illusions was not always guaranteed to draw a crowd – as Davison has observed 'people simply got used to being amazed.'¹⁰⁹ In the 1890s the interest of visually technologically sophisticated colonists was revived by the 'modern magic lanternists' of the turn of the century. They succeeded in attracting new audiences with the hyperreality of the alliance of photography and projection in both reportage and 'life-model' scenes, and the incorporation of optical effects, particularly the dissolving technique, into an fictional yet coherent alternative reality, as in the case of Snazelle's performances. These two chapters have demonstrated the extent and variety of public colonial magic lantern practice and the way in which it initiated colonists into a global visual and technological culture.

¹⁰⁹ Davison, *The unforgiving minute* p. 4.

Chapter Three

‘Family happiness is thus secured’: home amusement

There is probably a little too much gadding about among some of the young people in the evenings, mayhap because there are cases in which the homes are duller than they might be; but it is easy to get over this drawback. Old and young alike should take care to have the winter evenings rendered enjoyable. Very much depends on the mothers; what, indeed, does not depend upon them? . . .

. . . With six o’clock, say, the lamp is lighted, and there are four or five hours – cosy, bright hours – till the time which hints at rural bedtime, in which hours there should be talk, frolic, music, and books. Not all instruction, not all amusement. . . . Family happiness is thus secured.

New Zealand Mail Auckland May 27, 1876.¹

This chapter will describe the extent and variety of magic lantern practice in the private realm and demonstrate the significance of that practice in the adoption and integration of visual technology into Australasian colonial popular culture. Personal responses provide a candid insight into the acquisition process of visual technological literacy. In contrast to the public realm where audiences were largely composed of adult spectators, the private home and local community was the site where colonial children were introduced to visual technology. It was in the familiarity and ease of the domestic realm that acculturation of successive generations occurred, laying the foundations for future patterns of viewing the projected image.

Contemporary reports articulate middle-class discourses of rational recreation and domesticity in relation to domestic lantern practice. Surviving domestic collections encompass a wide range of subjects, genre, media and sources. As Michael Chanan has observed of British practice, ‘the magic lantern reached beyond the confines of any particular class.’² Likewise, in the colonies the medium became commonplace and unremarkable in the lives of households from the wealthiest property owners and industrialists to the labouring classes. While the world view represented in these collections reveals the dominant middle-class values and concerns characteristic of imperial culture, received class boundaries were not a hindrance to domestic lantern practice. Magic lantern practice within the smaller scale and intimacy of the domestic domain thus greatly increased the frequency and informality of opportunities for first-hand encounter with visual technology particularly for the young and for smaller and less affluent communities.

¹ *New Zealand Mail* May 27, 1876, p. 16.

² Chanan *The dream that kicks* p. 22.

Rational recreation in the domestic domain

Blanche, Blannie, Charlie and Martin have gone next door to see a magic lantern sent to Fitzroy Peacocke from England; it is exhibited for the first time this evening. Half the village have gone too.

Vicesimus Lush, Howick, Auckland, 1863.³

Although the Lush family had acquired a lantern of their own some eight years earlier, the excitement engendered in Blanche Lush, her three children and their neighbours by the promise of a show demonstrates the attraction the medium maintained for nineteenth century families (figure 3.1). As well as being an ideal medium for public performance the magic lantern was well suited to being enjoyed in a private context (figure 3.2). It might be found in a middle-class Victorian British or Antipodean home in company with a range of instruments based on the discoveries of optical science from simple thaumatropes and kaleidoscopes, to phenakistoscopes and, with photography, stereoscopes and cameras.⁴ Middle class fondness for these 'philosophical toys,' and the magic lantern in particular, resulted from the ease with which they could be inserted into the conjoined cultural projects espoused by the middle-class: of rational recreation for themselves, within the home and outside it; and of social improvement for the masses.⁵ As early as the middle of the nineteenth century, the medium was promoted in an Auckland daily paper as 'an intellectual recreation for young people.'⁶ (figure 3.3)

As in the realm of public entertainment, anxieties circulated around the lack of suitable leisure activities in colonial homes and the resulting idleness and moral degeneration of the youth of the colony. These anxieties were expressed in May 1876 in a lengthy article in the *New Zealand Mail* on the subject of 'Winter Evenings,' which asked: 'How can these long evenings be most pleasantly spent?' The article went on to warn that: 'Without occupation of some kind they would be very dreary; in fact, people will employ themselves somehow, and if they do not fall upon anything good and useful wherewith to do so, they will assuredly fall upon what is the reverse.' Even 'legitimate amusements,' it was argued, if overindulged in, led to not only mental but moral weakness.

³ A. Drummond (ed) *The Auckland Journals of Vicesimus Lush 1850-63* Christchurch: Pegasus Press, p. 71.

⁴ Descriptions of these optical toys can be found in Constance Ellen King *The Encyclopedia of Toys* London: Quarto Books, 1978 pp. 244-248; G. L. Freeman 'Philosophical toys' in *The magazine: Antique* December 1941, pp. 360-362.

⁵ A fuller discussion of these issues can be found in Bailey *Leisure and class* and Colby 'Rational amusement' referred to in the introduction to this thesis.

⁶ *New Zealander*, October 26, 1859. (Press cutting in private collection Wellington)

The permeation of the magic lantern into nineteenth-century popular culture is attested to in the use of the concept of optical inversion as a metaphor in an early nineteenth-century children's reader *Signor Topsy-turvy's wonderful magic lantern; or, the world turned upside down* (1810) see appendix IV.

A resort to places of legitimate amusement is perfectly proper in a moderate measure, but few things more dissipate mental or moral vigor [*sic*] than dancing constant attendance at theatres or concert-rooms; and the providing of innocent entertainment to supersede the necessity for doing so, and still more to draw men away from the bar of the publichouse [*sic*], is one of the requirements of the colony, not only here but everywhere.⁷

Indeed, even while recommending the establishment of working men's clubs and young men's societies, modelled on those set up by social reformers in England and America as a remedy for the lack of wholesome public activities for youth, the writer insisted that there is 'a little too much gadding about among some of the young people in the evenings.' The conclusion that the solution lay in the home and responsibility with the parents was predicated on an idealised and romanticised notion of home and family life. The drawing room was the setting for the 'cosy, bright hours' of a winter evening in which young colonials under the benign gaze of their parents, protected from the dark forces that lurked outside 'the charmed circle of the fireside,' participated in prescribed activities that fulfilled the central tenet of rational recreation – 'not all instruction, not all amusement'. These carefully orchestrated activities frequently centred on commercially produced instruments and accoutrements provided by responsible bourgeois parents.

... Boys thus trained and cared for, will not readily run away from home to waste their money on bad cigars; or worse, drink about publichouses [*sic*]; and girls brought up in this pleasant way will know how, by and by, to become the centres of such homes themselves.⁸

In this ideological climate it is therefore not surprising that the magic lantern was in use in many colonial homes from the middle of the nineteenth century.

'Cosy bright hours:' Domestic collections

As *Winter Evenings* went on to point out, in rural districts where 'every house is, or ought to be, a home' wholesome amusements for young people were just as important. Indeed there is plenty of evidence that the magic lantern had a special place in rural life. Many of the provenanced lanterns in today's museums and private collections originated from country homes in Australia and New Zealand, and even among the unprovenanced a significant number were obtained through rural auctions and second hand dealers, strongly suggesting the lantern's widespread use in outlying areas. Lying neglected in old farm buildings, these lantern collections have out survived their urban contemporaries – many of which probably ended up on rubbish tips in the twentieth century 'modern' period. The craze for Victoriana and memorabilia that started up in the late 1960s and still sends forays of dealers and collectors

⁷ *New Zealand Mail* May 27, 1876, p. 16.

⁸ *New Zealand Mail* May 27, 1876, p. 16.

heading into rural areas, has probably by now just about flushed out the last of them. But it is apparent that those existing lanterns and slides were retained as an valued aspect of family life over a considerable span of time and a range of socio-economic contexts.

Originating from a sheep farm in Canterbury, New Zealand, is a particularly fine pair of dissolving view lanterns from London suppliers T. J. Middleton (figure 3.4).⁹ An expensive acquisition for its time, it may have been imported by the affluent farming family as their finances became secure. Large blocks of land on the broad, fertile Canterbury plain on the east coast of the South Island could be purchased by intending emigrants through the Canterbury Association, established in the 1840s with the goal of organised settlement based on the Wakefield plan.¹⁰ Settlers such as these were well accustomed to the accessories of a comfortable middle-class life, but their access to public amusements was curtailed by the substantial obstacles of distance, inadequate or non-existent roads, frequently impassable rivers and, in some areas, heavy snowfalls. Typically, these land-owning colonists prospered, and began to enjoy a 'disposable' income, which could be directed to recreational items such pianos and magic lanterns.

A comparable area of large land holdings in the North Island province of Wairarapa, was the source of the technically more sophisticated 'Terpuoscope' (figure 3.5).¹¹ In Hastings, Hawke's Bay, a comfortably-off farming household owned a substantial slide collection and at least one lantern of simple design in pressed metal illuminated by oil or kerosene light.¹² The main road that runs the length of the plain, with small village settlements strung along it, formed an overland route between the provinces of Hawke's Bay to the north, and Wairarapa and Wellington to the south. Contemporary newspaper reports suggest that itinerant lanternists were active in the area from the 1870s, part of the increasing troupes of travelling entertainments benefiting from improved roads and improving incomes in the colony.¹³ But most homesteads were at a fair distance from these centres and their sporadic amusements, and home entertainment would be a welcome diversion.

A superior quality magic lantern provided home entertainment for the family and friends of prominent upper-class Melbournians Frederick and Jessie

⁹ Private collection, Wellington.

¹⁰ R. C. Webb 'The Canterbury Association and its settlement' in J. Hight et al. (eds) *A history of Canterbury Christchurch 1957-71* Vol. 1, p. 140; Ian J. Lochhead, 'Mrs Grundy and the Gothic: James Edward Fitzgerald and architectural criticism in colonial Canterbury' in *Bulletin of New Zealand art history* 14, 1993 pp. 71-92.

¹¹ Private collection Wellington.

¹² Hawke's Bay Cultural Trust, accession numbers 70/92/1...4.

¹³ *Wairarapa Standard* January 28, 1874; June 16, 1874, p. 2. (Press cuttings private collection Wellington)

Grimwade in the late nineteenth century (see figure 6.1).¹⁴ In addition to their residence in Caulfield, the Grimwades occupied a 'country seat' at Hastings on Victoria's Western Port Bay. Built in 1895, the brick mansion named *Coolart* was, as historian Valda Cole writes, 'a place of social renown,' and offered all the leisure activities expected by the late Victorian colonial upper-class, 'picnics, swimming, music and dancing' and magic lantern evenings.

But ownership of lanterns was not confined to comfortable farmers and the urban gentry. Less affluent colonial families also acquired this technology to meet their leisure needs. A very basic pressed metal lantern was put to good use over many decades by the family of a railway station worker, Stephen Falla, of Westport, an isolated community on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand (figure 3.6).¹⁵ The railway line, which served the timber, coal and gold-mining activities of the region and extended as far as the even more isolated settlements of Granity and Cape Foulwind, could not be assumed to indicate the presence of a bustling well-served cultural life. The mountainous landscape, steep gorges, fast rivers and dense forests heightened the sense of isolation for families, which, along with the high rainfall, increased their appreciation of indoor occupation and entertainment. The Falla lantern that the magic lantern was not confined to an affluent middle-class. Indeed, colonial lantern suppliers' catalogues from around the turn of the century show a selection covering so many gradations of quality and price that a basic lantern was not out of the question for many families from a range of socio-economic groups. For example, a Riley Bros. catalogue, issued by their New Zealand agents shows that, while a top of the range single lantern in Spanish Mahogany, lined with Russian iron and brass fittings, might cost 246s, a lantern very similar to the Falla's, japanned tin with single brass draw tube, could be bought for 35s, with an even cheaper version at 25s (figure 3.7).¹⁶

'Humorous, historical and artistic:' domestic slide collections

As contemporary illustrations show domestic magic lantern practice was naturally more relaxed, informal, and even boisterous, than larger public exhibitions.¹⁷ A magic lantern evening in the home was characterised by a high level of fun for all family members. The family slide collection might typically have been built up gradually over time and contain slides spanning fifty years or more encompassing a whole range of mechanical slides and chromatropes, fables, nursery rhymes, comic and sentimental vignettes and

¹⁴ Valda Cole 'The magic lantern: a Western Port cameo' paper presented to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria 1 July 2000. Lantern in private collection Melbourne.

¹⁵ Collection of the Howick & District Historical Society, Auckland. Provenance supplied by Alan la Roche, director, in letter of 31 May 2000.

¹⁶ *Illustrated catalogue of lanterns, cinematographs and every description of accessory apparatus* Wellington: N. Z. Bible, Tract, and Book Society n.d. [1895-1900].

¹⁷ Such as those reproduced in Robinson *The lantern image*. See figures 3.2 and 3.11.

narratives as well as the obligatory scenic views and natural history. Older pieces handed down from earlier decades could be supplemented with imports from the rapidly developing and expanding stock of European manufacturers and with locally made slides from commercial producers and amateur enthusiasts. Old favourites, such as the notorious and hugely popular mechanical slide of 'the man swallowing rats' – depicting a sleeping bearded man into whose open mouth a succession of rats crawled – continued to be shown well into the twentieth century.¹⁸ Such collections reveal much about the preferred amusements of colonists, their taste in rational recreation and in humour, with ageist, racist and sexist values encoded in the jokes.

The Hastings collection

The family slide collection from Hastings, New Zealand, consisting of over a dozen boxes, includes examples of some of the earliest slides used in the colonies through to slides made in the 1920s, evidence of the ongoing use of this lantern in the domestic context. The substantial quantity of imported slides in the Hastings collection were obtained through 'Thomas Crook, Booksellers and Stationers, Fancy Goods Importers' of Christchurch whose stamp can be seen on one of slide boxes. Slotted boxes like these were specially made to hold and protect up to two hundred of these fragile slides; this smaller example is labelled '60 Portraits: Old Masters, Famous men including New Zealanders & Statuary'. Although no lecture notes or readings survive, the chronological range of the program of portraits suggests a lengthy history lecture based on the deeds of these historic male figures, providing inspiring stories of courage and morality.

A variety of genre and image reproduction techniques are represented in the collection. Hand coloured copper-plate sliders in wooden frames are characteristic, in style and construction, of lantern slides mechanically reproduced in England from the 1820s (see figures 1.7, 1.8).¹⁹ Possibly half a century separates the bulky wooden framed slides from the 3 1/4 ' square glass photographic slides which constitute the majority of the collection being the form in which the majority of slides were mass-produced from around 1880.²⁰ Around one hundred and twenty slides are reproductions of photographs of New Zealand scenic views. Views of this type were mass-produced and widely distributed by a number of New Zealand professional photographers. These included Josiah Martin of Auckland, and D. L. Mundy, W. Meluish and the Burton Brothers of Dunedin, who travelled throughout the colony, from the late 1860s, capturing views of sublime geography, of the progress of settlement, and of Maori life.

¹⁸ Many versions were made in 'slipping slides' and rackwork. See Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 75

¹⁹ Barnes 'Classification of magic lantern slides' p. 75-85.

²⁰ *ibid.* p. 84.

The intersection of fine art and popular culture

Another significant proportion of the slides in the Hastings collection are photographic reproductions of paintings, sculpture and prints, revealing an intersection of imported 'high culture' and colonial popular culture. The reverential consumption of art images enacted through the viewing of these slides is symptomatic of a characteristically Victorian middle-class aspiration to the signifiers of upper class taste and lifestyle. The 'Old Masters' represented in this collection are drawn from the most conservative and aesthetically unchallenging region of the artistic canon up to that time, and point to the significance of British academic painting of the late eighteenth century as a basis for Victorian middle-class taste (figure 3.8).

The 'high art' slides of 'Old Masters' and statuary in this collection are examples of the Woodburytype slide-making process. Devised in 1864 primarily for book illustrations, this process of photographic image reproduction was regarded as the most suitable for fine art reproduction in the best contemporary publishing until the end of the nineteenth century. The Woodburytype replicated tonal modulation superbly without becoming opaque. Consequently, it translated well to projection, resulting in clear and subtle monochrome slides and projected images 'of extreme quality and perfect in every detail.'²¹

The inclusion of statuary in this domestic collection addressed leanings towards connoisseurship and the appreciation of fine art amongst an audience for whom these slides constituted the nearest thing to direct contact with European sculpture. In fact much of the statuary depicted in these slides was itself Parian ware: mass-produced, scaled down ceramic reproductions of original figures and figure groups, immensely popular amongst those with aspirations to art appreciation (figure 3.9).²² Subjects were characteristically picturesque and sentimental genre studies, neo-classical nudes, and historical busts, copied from large scale marble originals, or from plaster pieces commissioned in their hundreds by the major ceramic manufacturers of England. The important features of Parian ware were its fine detail and modelling, immaculate finish, absolute accuracy in proportion and detail to the original. Carefully lit photographs of Parian ware reproduced as slides using the Woodburytype process resulted in projected images of fine detail and subtlety which, even as monochromes, were greatly admired and which might further be enhanced with hand tinting or the use of coloured gels during projection. By the late nineteenth century Parian ware had declined 'from a high quality material with an established position in the art market, to a cheap and readily available product aimed at a more ephemeral market.'²³

²¹ The Woodburytype process is explained in detail by Fenton in 'The evolution of photographic lantern slides' p. 41; see also Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 327-328.

²² Paul Atterbury (ed.) *The Parian phenomenon* Shepton Beauchamp: Richard Dennis 1989.

²³ *ibid.* p. 19.

Here it is transposed into the more ephemeral medium of the lantern slide for wider consumption. Attention has already been drawn to the way in which the public lantern exhibition practice contributed to the democratic dissemination of high art imagery and academic aesthetics. The same was true in the domestic context. Anita Callaway has argued that despite 'the lack of art museums and of grand paintings' colonial society 'demonstrated some degree of visual sophistication.'²⁴ The lantern slide exhibition in both the public and the domestic domains contributed to the transmission of detailed and specific awareness of 'The elevated ideals and cultural traditions that High Art images normally conveyed.'²⁵

The Falla collection

The slide collection of the Falla family of Westport reveals the preferences of the household of a railway employee. The Falla collection encompasses a range of themes and subjects not much different to the landowning, and presumably more affluent, Hastings family. Once again the majority of the slides are photographic and a large proportion of these are New Zealand scenes. But whereas the Hastings landowners favoured scenic views, the Falla family preferred less sublime images. Although the obligatory views of scenic icons, such as Lake Tarawera, and of modernity and progress represented by fine public buildings, are included, other predominant themes reveal an interest in specifically local subjects such as seaside areas close to urban centres and scenes of Maori life (figure 3.10). Significantly, the Falla collection also includes imported photographic slides that demonstrate the family's aspirations to an upper middle-class sensibility. They include a series depicting a tour from London to Rome, and a selection of statuary in which female nudes are well represented such as: 'Mlle Schneider,' a seated Venus figure in a studio setting lavishly furnished in the manner of the 'Aesthetic' movement with oriental carpets, plush drapery and Florentine urns the figures of Hermes and of Joan of Arc; and a series of statuettes of wistful children, not unlike Mary Thornycroft's sculptures of the royal children commissioned by Queen Victoria in 1846.²⁶

Whereas the social function encoded in the practice of the viewing of art works was to elevate taste, the democratisation of consumption habits mediated by the magic lantern in fact blurred the implied hierarchies of 'high' and 'popular' culture.

Children's magic lantern slides

Increasingly, from the mid-Victorian period and continuing well in to the twentieth century, lantern slides were commercially produced specifically for

²⁴ Callaway *Visual ephemera* p. ix.

²⁵ Callaway *Visual ephemera* p. 4. See also Meisel *Realizations* p.4ff.

²⁶ Callaway *Visual ephemera* p. 104.

the juvenile market, which encompassed a wide age group from the youngest children to those in their teens (figure 3.11, 3.12). As in Europe, there was a significant market of juvenile viewers in the colonies, which was supplied by English and European makers. The marketing premise, presumably directed at parents, was that it was instruction as well as amusement.

The magic lantern instructed children in two ways: firstly, through moral instruction and ideologies embedded in the content; and secondly, visual and technological literacy acquired through first hand experience. Slides specially created for, or assigned to, children's viewing offered entertainment and instruction with subjects from amusing vignettes to moralising narratives. Instructive subjects mimicked the adult genre of rational recreation, depicting 'other' nationalities and cultures, with a bias towards adventure and excitement, military campaigns, exploration, land and sea transport. Narratives ranged from traditional fables and folk stories to contemporary cautionary tales, and the entirely frivolous; comic, visual puns, rackwork and moving slides, nursery rhymes, anthropomorphised animals, either acting out narratives or dressed up with hats, spectacles, and pipes (figure 3.13).

Well into the early twentieth century commercial slide catalogues available to the Australasian market continued to offer comic tales, humorous anecdotes and slipping slides. The slipping slide was one of the simplest of optical illusions, produced by means of a pair images, one on a fixed glass and the other on a glass that can be quickly slide across the first, creating an illusion of sudden motion or rapid transformation.²⁷ Comic slipping slides came 'in endless variety – subjects too numerous to mention,' as Scottish supplier, Peter Feathers, wrote in their catalogue of 1901/2.²⁸ The genre that London scientific slide-maker Richard Ebsworth had despaired of in 1825, seventy years earlier, as 'extremely trifling, and in some instances absolutely nonsensical' was still thriving in domestic practice (figures 3.14, 3.16).²⁹ The level of inanity of the myriad of humorous and comical subjects directed primarily, but certainly not exclusively, at children eludes description. Feathers' catalogue listed over seventy sets of up to twelve slides with titles such as 'The Baby, the Wasp and the Puppies' 'Midnight Adventures with a Flea' and 'Plum Pudding, and How it is made.' Catastrophe slides may have been amusing to all ages. 'Puffing up his Wares' shows a poulterer using bellows to inflate a turkey carcass with the following consequences:

A lady is induced to purchase it by its plump appearance and the poulterer's assurance that it is the 'best bird in the market.' The explosion and collapse of the turkey on her arrival home is the funny final slide.³⁰

²⁷ A. A. Wood *Magic lanterns: how made and how used with practical hints to unpracticed lecturers* London: Horne, Thorntwaite & Wood, [1st ed. 1875] [4th ed.] 1891, p. 83, fig. 62.

²⁸ *Catalogue of lantern slides* Dundee, Scotland: Peter Feathers. 1901-2, p. 70.

²⁹ Ebsworth *A popular treatise on astronomy* p. 3.

³⁰ *Catalogue* Peter Feathers, p. 63.

Of major impact on the European domestic lantern slide market was the introduction in the 1860s of a technique of cheap reproduction of coloured slides. Transparent chromolithographic prints, using translucent colours on a transparent material such as gelatine, could be mechanically mass-produced and then easily mounted onto glass.³¹ Variations of this technique of transfer slides were developed and refined over subsequent decades and mass produced, in Britain and in Germany, in huge numbers well into the next century. Although vibrantly coloured and well detailed, transfer slides never reached a level of definition and quality suitable for the degree of enlargement necessary for public exhibition. Even as the quality improved over the 1880s and 1890s, their use was confined to the juvenile and domestic market.³² As well as being cheap and colourful, transfer slides had the advantage for importers and colonial consumers of being lighter, more compact and less fragile than glass slides. As a further cost saving for thrifty purchasers transfers could be bought for mounting on to glass and varnishing at home. Outline slides, also produced using the transfer process, were sold with paints and varnishes for finishing at home. The colonial domestic audience was thus well served with a wide selection of easily affordable images for home viewing.

London slide manufacturers W. Butcher & Sons and Perken, Son, & Rayment used the transfer technique for their Primus and Optimus, respectively, ranges of slide sets for the domestic market. Their extensive lists of titles were available internationally from the 1890s through to the early twentieth century. The sets could be obtained throughout the colonies by mail order or through local suppliers. The number of Primus and Optimus catalogues and slides found in the colonies indicates their popularity within colonial domestic visual culture. 'Our Firemen' by Primus for example can be found in collections in Melbourne, Auckland and Wellington.³³ The Primus junior lecturers' series, in boxed sets of eight or so 3 1/4' (85mm) square slides with accompanying readings or lecture notes, was still in production after the World War of 1914-1918. Added to early favourites such as 'The Death and Burial of Cock Robin,' 'Aesop's fables' and 'Gulliver's travels' were 'Peter Pan,' 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'The Boer War,' and, a little later, 'The Life of King Edward VIII' and 'The World War.'³⁴ Within this repertoire of nursery stories and world history there was a large dose of moral training. Action and adventure subjects such as 'Brave Deeds,' from Primus, inspired heroism and courage, while cautionary tales showed the consequences of deviant

³¹ Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 289, 306-307, 308.

³² For more on transfer slides see: Hermann Hecht 'Decalcomania; some preliminary investigations into the history of transfer slides' in *The new magic lantern journal*, March 1980; Crangle 'Hybrid texts' p. 118; Hecht *Pre-cinema history* (refer to index).

³³ For a detailed discussion of the fireman as hero in the nineteenth century culture see 'The fireman as a model of Victorian heroism' Robyn Cooper *Journal of Popular Culture* (Bowling Green) Spring 1995 Volume: 28 Issue: 4.

³⁴ An illustrated catalogue is reproduced in *The new magic lantern journal* Vol. 3, No. 2, December 1984, pp. 10-11.

behaviour. Optimus sets in a Christchurch collection, 'Honey Stealers,' and 'Juvenile Smokers,' dealt with theft and the recurrent problem of cigar smoking.³⁵ A classically inspired comic tale of 'Diogenes and the Naughty Boys of Corinth' made an example of two young boys who decide to torment the old hermit and end up the worse for it. The story ends with the moral: 'When youngsters play tricks, there's no doubt, In some way or other, they're always paid out.'³⁶ The perennial popularity of this text, gauged by its recurrence in catalogues, suggests that it was appreciated more as amusement than moral instruction.

Not unexpectedly these visual and textual essays carefully reinforced the most conservative of Victorian values. Traditional gender stereotypes were strongly reinforced. Almost without exception boys and men were the main protagonists in historical and fictional action narratives. Girls and women were shown almost exclusively in domestic scenes, gendered games and pastimes, demonstrating 'good' behaviour or just merely being decorative, in series of vignettes devoid of narrative (see figure 3.12) Gender stereotyping also inflected cautionary tales. Naughty boys usually worked their mischief in pairs, such as Tommy and Billy, the honey stealers, the cigar smoking Tom and Harry, Diogenes' young persecutors, and the red-haired German twins Max and Morritz.³⁷ One sole operator was 'Handy Andy,' the inept but well-intentioned son of an Irish widow, whose antics were the subject of a set of twelve slides accompanied by readings.³⁸ The replaying of this trope of mirth and mischief, rather than inculcating highly moral behaviour, supported a notion that boys possessed an inherent tendency to get into trouble. Although their misdeeds were overtly censured the underlying message posits them as essentially harmless and youthful precursors of a manly sense of adventure and courage.³⁹

The white supremacist ideologies of British imperialism were also pervasive in these images. The Watson and Feathers catalogues reveal an entrenched Anglocentric racism in comical slide sets such as 'Sambo,' 'Jing Jing,' 'Gag Jag,' 'Ten little Nigger Boys' and 'The Heathen Chinees'.⁴⁰ In the hope of inspiring young Britons, and young colonists, to dream of joining the fight for British imperialism, Primus presented the glory of battle and military life in lavishly illustrated, histrionic and luridly coloured renditions, with readings, of the conflicts of the Boer War, 'The Siege of Ladysmith,' 'The Relief of

³⁵ Canterbury Museum, Pictorial archives, Mrs B Thomson Box 2; Peter Feather, p. 57,58.

³⁶ See Herman Bollaert 'Wilhelm Busch: Diogenes and the naughty boys of Corinth' in Crompton et al. *Magic images* pp. 34-37.

³⁷ A set of 'Max and Morritz' slides are held in the Cleveland collection, Wellington.

³⁸ A set of slides with accompanying text is held in the Lyttelton Historical Museum, Canterbury, New Zealand.

³⁹ For further discussion of nineteenth century gender stereotypes see Martin Green *Dreams of adventure, deeds of empire* New York: Basic Books, 1979.

⁴⁰ *List of optical lantern slides* Melbourne: W. Watson & Sons. c. 1902, p. 10; *Catalogue Peter Feathers*, pp. 57-65.

Kimberley' and 'South African Heroes' (three sets of eight slides). Watson's list of sixty-two slides (12s per dozen plain, 27s per dozen coloured) of the 'The Russo-Japanese War', was 'being constantly added to' and, it appears, was well received in the colonies. The tradition continued indefatigably into the twentieth century with Primus' eighty slide set 'The World War'.

Although British products dominated Australasian collections, major lantern and slide manufacturing countries in Europe occupied a share of the juvenile market. Miniature, toy or 'Bijou' lanterns for domestic use were typically the product of the great German metal toy manufacturers Gebrüder Bing and Ernst Planck. Miniature lanterns of French manufacture were also imported, such as an ornate Lapierre model, now in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. As their multi-lingual labelling indicates, these companies supplied an international market including the Antipodes which, judging from the quantity of their lanterns still in existence in local collections, was substantial. Reflecting the Victorian era's love of hierarchies, children's magic lanterns were produced in a gradation of sizes and were marketed in elaborate boxed sets complete with miniature rectangular glass sliders in appropriate sizes from 1' (25 mm) to 2 3/4' (65 mm) width and up to 8' (200 mm) long (see figure 3.12).⁴¹ The sliders typically consisted of either four to five separate views or a panoramic format intended to be drawn through the slide holder, and were mass produced in their thousands by the chromolithographic transfer technique which was so amenable to miniaturisation in a range of sizes. The subjects and themes were diminutive versions of standard size slides. Two German produced Bing lanterns in New Zealand collections at the Golder Cottage, Upper Hutt, New Zealand, and Howick Historical Village, Auckland, have small sliders showing anthropomorphised animal scenes, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and the remnants of a series showing military life.⁴² The Lyttelton collection reveals a repertoire including: life and customs in 'foreign' countries; forms of transport; scenic views; children's pastimes; and humour. Miniature chromolithographed slides by German manufacturer Ernst Planck in New Zealand collections include, for example: 'Tales with Text' with readings in two languages, illustrating nursery rhymes, fairy tales and pantomime story from a variety of national traditions: 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Red Riding Hood,' 'Puss in Boots,' 'Dick Whittington,' 'John Gilpin,' 'Jack the giant killer' with readings in German;⁴³ and German folk tales such as 'Der Kleine Muck' and 'Kalif Storch' recorded by nineteenth century folklorists Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827) and the Grimm brothers.⁴⁴ In this way children's stories of British origin

⁴¹ British manufacturers Horne, Thornthwaite & Wood offered five sizes of Bijou lantern based on a lens diameters of 1 1/2' to 3' capable of producing images from 4' up to 7', respectively, in diameter. Wood, *Magic lanterns* p. 52, 53.

⁴² These two GBN (Gebrüder Bing Nuremberg) lanterns are in the collections of Golders Cottage, Upper Hutt, New Zealand, and Howick Historical Village, Auckland, New Zealand.

⁴³ Cleveland collection, Wellington.

⁴⁴ Les Cleveland, Lecture notes c1985; slides and readings, Cleveland collection.

were dispersed through Europe and the colonised countries, and European nursery stories and folk tales were incorporated into an internationally shared repertoire. Nevertheless the values encoded children's lantern slides, along with the flood of Anglocentric juvenilia in other print and pictorial media which poured into the colonial marketplace, resolutely upheld Victorian imperialist ideologies.

Through the lantern Australasian colonial children imbibed not only cultural constructs and conventions illustrated in the images presented to them, but also the instructive aspect of juvenile lantern practice, which contributed to the scientific education of children in the home through hands-on experience of the principles of optics and illuminants. Like their European counterparts, colonial children acquired a familiarity with and understanding of the basic principles of visual technology both by passive viewing and through hands-on interaction and play with the technology. Graffiti scratched into the blacked-out areas of a few slides in the collection of the Lyttelton Historical Museum are evidence of at least one child's active experimentation with the medium.

The evidence of domestic magic lantern practice in the Australasian colonies shows that a wide range of families, across the socio-economic spectrum, either owned a lantern or had access to the technology with some regularity. This ensured that the values encoded in the messages and practice of the medium were disseminated across any social boundaries existing in the colonies – from Sunday School pupils, to a railway worker's family in New Zealand to the high society of 'Marvellous Melbourne.' The two New Zealand domestic collections, of the Westport family and the Hastings family, considered here are a necessarily limited sample. Nevertheless a pervasive similarity between the two collections attests to a 'democratised' sensibility in the colonies, characterised by a determinedly low-brow taste in humour, in 'kitsch' art and in the consumption of local views.

At the same time, the divergence of these two collections – the Hastings run-holders' preference for New Zealand scenic views, for example, in contrast to the Westport family's choice of urban scenes and the London to Rome tour – provides a glimpse into the way into which the flexibility of lantern practice allowed two families over several decades to construct collections to suit their interests and reflect their taste.

In the wider community

Domestic magic lantern practice extended beyond the confines of home into the surrounding spheres of the local church, school and neighbourhood, thus ensuring a wider dissemination of the visual technological literacy the medium demanded. A number of colonial clergy and teachers either owned or had ready access to a magic lantern which could be brought out for special occasions in the local community such as church fundraising events and children's prize-givings. The arrival of a magic lantern in a small community

in the 1850s and 1860s was, as Lush noted in his journal, a significant enough social event to attract a flurry of attention.⁴⁵

From the late 1840s the children of St John's Sunday School in Adelaide were regularly treated to a magic lantern at their Annual Festival. In 1853 a professional lanternist, Mr James Allen, brought a 'beautiful magic lantern, the largest in the colony' to the event. Having been treated with tea and cake in a school room decorated with flags, banners and flowers, the children were shown slides 'of celestial bodies, views of London and foreign countries, and some highly amusing characters, among which Mrs Judy, our old friend Punch's wife, [which] excited particularly the laughter of the young people.' Outside, fireworks and the ascent of a fire balloon, concluded the festival, drawing a 'great crowd' of onlookers, who were treated to some accidental pyrotechnics when the balloon caught fire and a mine exploded prematurely.⁴⁶ A 'Public Examination of Children' at Mrs Chandler's Licensed School, Clare, South Australia, in 1858, was another occasion for a magic lantern. In front of about twenty parents and guardians, the children were examined, answering questions, reading aloud and displaying their handwork. The lantern exhibition, 'to the great delight and amusement of the juveniles' was noted as new to most of the 35 children present.⁴⁷

In 1861 the Rev. G. T. Kingdon, vicar of St Marks' Church, Remuera, Auckland, and a colleague of Vicesimus Lush, acquired a magic lantern fitted with dissolving views worth £30.⁴⁸ Even Lush, who was neither affluent (his annual stipend around that time being £200) nor scientifically inclined, owned one. He described his initial difficulty in operating the lantern in August 1855 shortly after he had first received it probably a gift from the family in England for whom his journals were written:

Showed the assembled household the Phantasmagoria. This is the third time I have tried it – the first time I utterly failed – the second time we got but an imperfect disk but this evening I succeeded admirably – Mary Abraham, Blannie and Charlie were delighted, and so I was happy in showing it – but I cannot help thinking most painfully of the others, who I feel assured would have been even more delighted: Charlotte in particular – the expected magic lanthorn [sic] forming so often the topic of her pleasing anticipation.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Drummond *The Auckland Journals* p. 217.

⁴⁶ *South Australian Register* March 30 1853, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

⁴⁷ *South Australian Register* October 29 1858, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

⁴⁸ Drummond *The Auckland Journals* pp. 13, 3 January 1861. No statements about the explicit intentions for these lanterns have yet come to light. As well as their self-appointed task, the education and Christianisation of Maori and Melanesian youth, members of the Society in New Zealand, had the youth of their own community to instruct and inform. It may well have been intention Lush, Kingdon and others to employ their lanterns at the village school.

⁴⁹ Three of Lush's children, including Charlotte who had just turned ten, had died from scarlet fever within a few days of each other in September 1854. His remarks suggest that the lantern had been on its way to New Zealand in 1854, perhaps sent by the family. Drummond *The Auckland Journals* p. 217.

Lush evidently regarded his lantern not only as a personal benefit but also as a resource for the local community. Only a week after his first success with the apparatus he put on a show at the local school.

Finding the school well attended & the children in tolerable order I promised to show them the Magic lantern this evening: I saw many eyes sparkle with delight at the anticipated pleasure. A 5 o'clock Betsy and I went to the school-room to prepare for the Exhibition. At Six, the children mustered pretty strongly: Flora, Angus & Annie Macdonald came – we were waiting in deep silence, the children being on their best behaviour.⁵⁰

Community based lantern exhibitions such as these contributed to the dissemination through the domestic sphere of various types of acculturation and technological literacy. Valued cultural knowledge at the simplest level was imparted in the content as Lush's exhibition illustrates:

I then began my part as showman & silence no longer reigned for the youngsters were very delighted & made loud & eager remarks on the pictures. I showed among other birds a pelican – several children called out 'Oh what a pretty duck' – Charlie who had seen it before & and knew what it was, said to Mary Abraham in a loud whisper, 'What geese the children are to call a *Pelican* a *duck*'. This made us all laugh, but the *geese*.⁵¹

In accordance with the tenets of rational recreation the images were part of the lexicon of animals and names, a culturally specific primer that has long been an accepted part of early education and indoctrination into Western modes learning for young children (figure 3.17). The lexicon imparted 'useful knowledge' of the imperial world outside the narrow confines of their own direct experience in the colonial world. The seriousness of this cultural lesson is encoded in Mary's little joke and the ensuing laughter as a symptom of the unease aroused by the utterances of the uninformed.

Local community and neighbourhood lantern shows exhibited as broad a repertoire as commercial and public events, projecting the same shared global picture. The South Australian clergyman and teacher Rev. John Lloyd had great success with his 'magnificent magic lantern,' at Wallaroo School in 1867. The *Wallaroo Times* reported that:

the room was well filled. Many of the views exhibited were of an amusing character, while some were very instructive – such as the rotundity of the earth, the various phases of the moon with the diurnal rotation. The exhibition of a ship in a storm, wrecked and on fire, with the raft on which appeared the rescued, was very graphic. The Old and New Testament scenes were very beautiful, and were well calculated

⁵⁰ Lush journal, 20 August 1855, unpublished, photocopy supplied by William Main.

⁵¹ *ibid*.

to instruct the children in the manners, customs and habits and dress of the people in the East.⁵²

Lloyd was also a photographer with an interest in science and technology which he was keen to share with his young parishioners. 'At the close of the exhibition,' the *Wallaroo Times* noted, 'many of the juveniles received electric shocks from a galvanic battery, which created great amusement.' This type of sensational scientific demonstration would become a regular feature of colonial public entertainment, as mentioned in chapter one, Australian photographer and lanternist Caire entertained his audiences with 'Shocks' in the late 1860s. In the 1870s in the gold-mining settlement of Thames, New Zealand, local resident Mr Severne, also had an 'Electric Machine' which he demonstrated at Easter Monday school prize-giving. Severne regularly put on magic lantern entertainments for the local school. To 'the infinite amusement' of the 340 children present,' in return for their 'songs, recitations and dialogues' each of them received an apple, 'and very many of them a shock from Mr Severne's Electric Machine.'⁵³ Neither a clergyman nor a teacher but a middle-class professional, Severne was an assayer to the Bank of New Zealand in Thames. He had a keen interest in the sciences and was appointed by the New Zealand Government to observe the transit of Venus in December 1874. Severne was typical of a growing number of colonists whose passion for the latest technology and scientific instruments flowing out of Europe's Industrial Age, enabled them to demonstrate these wonders for the edification of fellow colonists. For example, Napier civil engineer, Edward Henry Bold (1841-1914), a government appointed Roads Engineer for the newly opened Napier-Taupo Road, was among the first of his middle-class settler community to have had access to the spectacular scenery of the Taupo lake district. An evident interest in visual technology enabled him to share his experience with his community. In September 1876, Bold showed lantern slides of Taupo views and natural phenomena to a large gathering of friends and neighbours. The occasion was recorded by a neighbour, Anna Spencer, in her journal, 'We took the boys but they went to sleep. It was very good. Lots of people there.'⁵⁴

Public lantern shows in the colonies were not only commercially driven but also put on by local communities to raise funds for charities. In the absence of government social welfare, and in the presence of a sense of community spirit, charitable causes varied from raising funds for church and school building to supporting fellow colonists in hardship. In December 1868, for example, a large crowd gathered at the Oddfellows' Hall in Auckland 'to

⁵² *Wallaroo Times* 5 June 1867, cited in Noye.

⁵³ Letter from W. Edward Lush, 19 June 1875. Unpublished photocopy and transcript in private collection, Wellington. A. Drummond (ed) *The Thames journals of Vicesimus Lush 1863-82* Christchurch: Pegasus Press 1975 pp. 152, 174

⁵⁴ Diary of Anna Spencer was the wife of Dr William Spencer (1845-1908) of Napier, New Zealand, Wednesday 6 September 1876. Electronic transcript of her journal in Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier New Zealand, provided by Gail Pope, Curator of Archives.

witness the magnificent series of dissolving views exhibited by Mr. Waddel, for the benefit of those who suffered by the late massacre at Poverty Bay.⁵⁵ The great advantage in this context was that an entertaining and varied programme could be constructed and presented without relying entirely on a cast of performers, musicians and actors. While the success of the performance depended on the skills of lantern operator and lecturer, and perhaps the voluntary contribution of one or two amateur musicians, mechanical reproduction was central to the performance. If a good selection of slides and a reliable lantern were available an exhibition could be put together at short notice. 'We cannot refrain from tendering our thanks to Mr. Waddel for having struck this ingenious method of increasing the fund,' the *New Zealand Herald* exclaimed. The benefactor, a local businessman, exhibited from his own 'magnificent collection of dissolving views' painted by local artist J. B. Hoyte, with 'pleasing and appropriate airs on the violin and piano' provided by Mr. James Howden and Mr. Kloff.⁵⁶

Of course Waddel was neither the first nor the only affluent middle-class lantern owner to strike upon the idea of showing off his expensive lantern and slides for charity. The majority of public fundraising lantern exhibitions were to assist with less desperate social needs such as the building programmes of churches and schools, the church choir, or a new organ. Intrepid Baptist minister, the Reverend John Bunyan McCure, undertook a remarkable pilgrimage of his own. To raise money to pay off the debt on the Baptist Chapel in Castlereagh Street, Sydney, McCure travelled through the south eastern colonies with a magic lantern show, arriving in Adelaide in August 1866 and spending the next month exhibiting in the city and surrounding townships.⁵⁷

Around the same time other worthy causes around Adelaide, such as the Presbyterian Church at Port Adelaide, and the Draper Memorial Church Building Fund, St Andrew's Sabbath School Library and the Sailors' Home Fund, benefited for several years from public lantern entertainments put on regularly by a generous visiting sea-captain Alexander Louttit.⁵⁸ Captain Louttit's lantern had been acquired specifically for the entertainment of passengers on his vessel the *St Vincent* during the journey from London to Port Adelaide. The slides enjoyed first by Louttit's passengers, and then by Adelaide audiences, were up-to-date titles from English suppliers, shown in a

⁵⁵ *New Zealand Herald* December 18, 1868, p. 3. The article refers to an attack on the mainly Pakeha community at Matawhero, Poverty Bay, around 7 km west of Gisborne, on 10 November 1868, by Maori resistance leader and prophet Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki. See Judith Binney, 'Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki ? - 1893'. Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, updated 4 April 2003 <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>. The significance of these locally produced slides and the context in which they were exhibited is discussed further in chapter eight of this thesis.

⁵⁶ *New Zealand Herald* December 18, 1868, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Noye 'Photohistory SA.' *South Australian Register* August 21, 1866 p. 1 and ff.

⁵⁸ Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

range of venues from small church halls to capacious public lecture halls. The 'Overland Route' from England to India was a topical subject shown by Louttit in January 1868, the same subject J. L. Stanley was commercially exhibiting in New Zealand at the time.⁵⁹ Later the same year Louttit returned with a set of dissolving views illustrating Tennyson's poem *Enoch Arden*, the melodramatic epic of a sailor's life.⁶⁰ The *Register* described the exhibition at Pirie Street Lecture Hall:

After giving an outline of the sad story of Enoch Arden – the most prominent features of the poem were illustrated by gigantic dissolving views projected on a screen reaching nearly to the roof of building and broad in proportion. the views were remarkably clear and distinct, and were very successfully managed. Captain Louttit's rendering of the poem was that of an appreciative admirer of the Poet Laureate, the true spirit and meaning of the author being caught and intelligently portrayed. The proceedings were enlivened at intervals by the excellent harmonium instrumentation of Mr. W. B. Chinner.⁶¹

The magic lantern carried into the domestic realm a range of cultural values and concerns, encoded in visual images, cautionary tales, jokes, genre, revered views, sacred sights, high art and literature, and held together by the doctrine of rational recreation. The magic lantern functioned as a respectable technological aid to improve the quality of domestic life, supporting middle-class Victorian values and concerns. In this way colonial families hope to protect the young and vulnerable from the social dangers of settler life. Practice in the domestic realm illustrates that class boundaries did not limit familiarity with the magic lantern. Families of varying socio-economic levels could acquire the technology. Clergy, school teachers and other professional community minded individuals extended the practice of magic lantern viewing into the local community bringing it within reach of those who did not have access to it at home. In this way class barriers to visual technological literacy continued to be eroded, a situation which bears out Michael Chanan's observation that the magic lantern:

was practically the first medium to inject a uniform view of the world right into the heart of existing institutions, such as the family and the school, thus moulding them from within. And perhaps more than any other medium of the time, the magic lantern reached beyond the confines of any particular class. Other entertainments seem to have been the adoption of a paradigmatic form to a particular class; in the

⁵⁹ *ibid.* J. L. Stanley was commercially exhibiting the same subject at the same time in New Zealand. *Otago Daily Times* March 5, 1868 p.1.

⁶⁰ A partial set of hand-coloured, life-model slides by York & Son are held in the Lyttelton Historical Museum.

⁶¹ Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

case of the magic lantern it was fundamentally the same style of presentation which offered itself to all classes.’⁶²

The action of the magic lantern in imposing a uniform view of the world from within existing institutions is discussed further in chapter five regarding the application of the medium in formal education.

The new way of seeing

As Crary and others have argued, the new visual media demanded of viewers new techniques of seeing, new ways of paying attention, and new behaviours, none of which are part of a ‘natural’ condition, but a learned response to the medium itself, independent of the content.⁶³

The variant responses of two groups of young people, in the 1850s, to the magic lantern are illustrated in an excerpt from the journal of Lush’s eldest child Blannie. Those who have learnt the trick of selective suspension of perception and response to stimuli, delight in the confusion of those who have not. The Lush children had gained firsthand knowledge of the technology by observing their father’s struggle with the newly acquired apparatus. Their technological sophistication is contrasted with the naivety in response to their first magic lantern exhibition of a group of Melanesian boys undergoing a programme of cultural immersion at the Church Missionary Society’s St John’s College in Auckland. ‘In the evening Mr Kingdon showed us his magic lantern and dissolving views,’ Blannie wrote, ‘we were all delighted but the poor black boys were indeed in ‘a state of mind’. On a ‘Tiger’ for instance appearing on the canvas they shouted and when it disappeared one ran behind the screen to see where it had gone to.’⁶⁴

Although the overt subject was, once again, the lexicon of animals of the Empire, the message of the medium is ultimately more significant. The Anglo children knew they were seeing the projection of an image painted on glass and understood where the tiger ‘went’ when it disappeared. They could, therefore, receive the spectacle with ‘delight’ as intended. The young Melanesian students experienced the exhibition in a different way. Overwhelmed by the illusion, the colonised boys were unable to enjoy the show in the prescribed manner, and even contravened Western conventions of spectatorship and performance, by jumping up and crossing the proscenium boundary.

Blannie’s childish anecdote dramatises her sense of white supremacy with the ‘poor black boys’ cast as the foils against which to compare the technologically and visually literate young colonists. Simply by virtue of their being there the Melanesian boys were identified as culturally deficient and

⁶² Chanan *The dream that kicks* pp. 12-13.

⁶³ Crary *Suspensions of perception* p. 1.

⁶⁴ Blanche Hawkins Lush (1843-1922) journal, 31 December 1856, unpublished, photocopy of original and transcript in Main Collection.

uninitiated into the rules of the technological game, and as demonstrated by their behaviour. Technological sophistication as a hallmark of Western imperial culture, an 'almost natural instinct,' was therefore a mandatory aspect of being white, Victorian and middle-class and an attribute that even youngest colonial child could acquire and exercise over others.

As early as the 1870s the magic lantern was an accepted and familiar piece of technology in many private homes. As in the public arena, its message had generally been so well absorbed and integrated into everyday colonial life that the lantern as spectacle was losing a little of its magic. With the development of photography, a more literal programme of dour monochromatic photographic images began, by sheer weight of numbers, to displace the lavishly colourful and often outlandish hand-painted and mechanical effects that topped the bill in early decades. Anna Spencer's sons were less than impressed with Mr Bold's views of Taupo in 1876 and fell asleep before they finished. William Edward Lush, (see figure 3.1) familiar with the magic lantern from his earliest years, demonstrated, at the age of ten, a sophistication which contrasts strongly with the delight of his older siblings fifteen years earlier. His father wrote:

15 October 1872. Last night ... he had gone to some public hall to see a Magic Lantern; he dwelt with considerable gusto on the 'row' they had made - stamping and hissing according as they liked or were disappointed in the scenes - till the owner of the Lantern was so annoyed that he closed the show, thus depriving them of some 50 views more than they had already seen. I remarked 'Now you see, Edward, how much you lost by not being quiet when desired.' 'I don't think so Papa,' he said, 'The row was much more enjoyable than the extra views would have been.'⁶⁵

For colonists of William Edward Lush's and the Spencer boys' generation the magic lantern was a commonplace and unremarkable technology which might encountered in one's own or a neighbour's home, at Sunday school or day-school, as well as in a public entertainment venue. Across all socio-economic and geographical locations the viewing practices and positions demanded by the medium had become second nature. In Australia and New Zealand as in the rest of the world the magic lantern had become a window to the world.

As the end of the nineteenth century approached the substantial public and private lantern practice described in this and the preceding chapter was increasingly supported by locally-based magic lantern importers, suppliers and dealers, and a network of professional and amateur practitioners. The

⁶⁵ Vicesimus Lush journal, 15 October 1872, unpublished excerpt, transcript in private collection, Wellington.

next chapter will show how this flourishing infrastructure maintained the colonies' integration within a global visual technological culture and communication and trade networks.

Chapter Four

'We can supply': magic lantern infrastructure

*We deal in all kinds of Magic Lantern Apparatus, oil or lime light.
We hire Lanterns, slides, &c., for all Lectures by the night or for any period.
We exchange slides and sell on commission everything connected with the lantern.
Lectures accompany all sets. We can supply almost every set or slide, or make any known slide to order.
Newest and latest sets by every mail.*

Jerdan & Co., George Street Sydney 1892.⁶⁶

In the 1890s international magic lantern industry was thriving. In England, as John Barnes has shown, there were over 100 manufacturers and dealers active during nineteenth century supplying both British and overseas markets, by far the large majority flourishing over the 1880s, 1890s and into the twentieth century.⁶⁷ A similar pattern existed in Europe, where, at the turn of the century, Gebrüder Bing, Max Dannhorn Ernst Planck, Georges Carette & Co, and Johann Falk in Germany, and Clément et Gilmer, Gaumont et Cie, Lapierre, and Émile Deyrolle in France, employed thousands of workers and exported lanterns and slides across the world.⁶⁸ Throughout the colonial period Australian and New Zealand relied heavily on the importation of manufactured goods largely from Britain, but not excluding other European and American industrial centres. Local interest in the magic lantern was significant enough to give rise to a range of commercial activities around the importation and marketing of slides and lanterns as part of the stream of commodities flowing into the colonies.

From the late 1880s and into the 1890s a network of locally based importers and retail suppliers of lantern apparatus, slides and the related merchandise expanded within, between and beyond the Australasian colonies' main centres, meeting demand from a broad range of private and public practitioners and consumers. Amateur and professional lantern practitioners were supported, additionally, by networks of clubs and societies in most colonial centres and by locally published journals which addressed their interests (figure 4.2). This chapter will trace the extent and growth of the

⁶⁶ *The Town and Country Journal* 5 March 1892, p.7 (figure 4.1)

⁶⁷ John Barnes 'A list of magic lantern manufacturers and dealers active in England during the 19th century' in Crompton et al. *Magic images* pp. 19-30.

⁶⁸ Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 36-37, 72, 84, 111, 124, 162, 235; *Diapositifs sur verre pour projections* Paris: Les fils d'Émile Deyrolle. 1912

commercial infrastructure, supply and distribution and practitioners' networks that developed around magic lantern practice in Australia and New Zealand from the mid-nineteenth century. Within fifty years a multi-layered infrastructure was in place that would sustain a lively and widely accessible colonial magic lantern practice into the twentieth century

Colonial importers and retail suppliers

A persistent local consumer market for the magic lanterns and slides was already discernible in the 1860s, although specialist businesses were unknown. Optical novelties like the lantern and the stereoscope tended to be subsumed within the category of 'fancy goods,' purveyed by 'general merchants and importers.' Thus in 1859 Auckland importers Connell & Ridings included 'two very superior magic lanterns' in a consignment of drawing room ornaments.⁶⁹ In 1871 S. H. Jaffa's Adelaide Bazaar, King William Street, offered a 'choice assortment of goods, suitable for wedding and birthday presents,' from musical instruments, Sevres vases, engraved jugs, papier-mache goods (the latest fashion in Europe), to a billiard table, and including a small selection of stereoscopes and slides: 'Transparencies of some of the best Operas. Transparencies of Paris, Rhine, Italy, and Switzerland; Opaques of the same. A few Instantaneous views on Glass.'⁷⁰ Lantern slides and lanterns might also be stocked by specialist dealers in related goods, such as optical and scientific instruments or chemistry supplies. Auckland chemist and amateur lanternist H. T. Watts and Queen Street optician Edward Featon stocked lantern slides in the late 1860s.⁷¹ References to the supply of lantern apparatus and slides appeared sporadically in advertising from this trade area in newspapers and business directories of the period. British manufacturers and dealers George Richardson & Co, of Liverpool, England, advertised directly to the Adelaide public on the front page of the *South Australian Register* in March 1869, listing magic lanterns and sets of twelve slides complete at prices ranging from 7s 6d to 170s.⁷²

As discussed in chapter one, colonial professional photographers also contributed to the supply of slides and lanterns for the local market in the 1860s. In addition to the dissolving view apparatus he advertised in 1866, Adelaide photographer and importer Bernard Goode offered 'several very good magic lanterns also on sale with slides and all complete, from 12 to 50 shillings each.'⁷³ Nicholas Caire recognised a niche market or wider demand for his 'Dark Deeds' slide sets. During his time in Dunedin as an importer and retailer of photographic materials and apparatus from 1864 to 1870, William

⁶⁹ *New Zealander* October 26 1859 (figure 2.3)

⁷⁰ *Northern Argus* August 4 1871, p. 1.

⁷¹ *The New Zealander* 14 June 1865 p1; *New Zealand Herald* 12 October 1868, p. 3.

⁷² *South Australian Register* March 4 1869, p. 1.

⁷³ *South Australian Register* June 1866, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

Meluish carried a stock of varied, imported slides ranged from dissolving view effects, European travel, to mechanical astronomy demonstrations slides, augmented by slides made from his own photographs of scenic views New Zealand. Always ready to take advantage of any commercial opportunity associated with his photographic practice, Christchurch photographer D. L. Mundy kept a stock of imported slides: animals from the London Zoo, astronomy, 'good views of home and foreign scenery,' 'scriptural subjects by the Old Masters,' as well as his own photographs of local views.⁷⁴ His public exhibitions in Christchurch in February 1868, can also be seen as a marketing strategy, he actively promoted his business with advertisements for stereoscopic, carte and instantaneous pictures of local personages and recent events.⁷⁵

Hiring lanterns and slides was an alternative willingly accommodated by colonial merchants. Bernard Goode advertised to hire out a lantern and slides at a nightly rate of 20 shillings.⁷⁶ With admission for adults at 1s and children at 6d even a small audience could cover costs.⁷⁷ More ambitiously, in 1869 Adelaide merchants Cunningham's of Rundle Street advised of their Newton & Co. lanterns 'Imported expressly for Lending Out for Public Exhibitions, Lectures, Soirées, Fetes, Schools, Private Families, &c.' The equipment they offered included dissolving view apparatus valued at £120, and phantasmagoria lanterns.⁷⁸

From the 1880s the trade was booming internationally. Commercial activity in the colonial lantern trade accelerated visibly.⁷⁹ Local merchants gave it more serious attention, increasing numbers of specialist businesses were set up, and British manufacturers advertised directly in post office and trade directories. London optician J. H. Steward, advertised in Victoria and New Zealand editions of *Wise's Directory* from the mid 1880s, promoting their catalogue of 'Improved Magic and Dissolving View Lanterns and Slides. The New Photogenic Lantern, Bi-Unial Lanterns, the Bridgman Triple Lantern (Registered), and New Tales, New Dissolving Effects, Photographs, &c.'⁸⁰ Alongside surveying instruments and a pair of binoculars they chose to illustrate, not 'The Premier' triple lantern used in their English advertisements of the same period, but a substantial biunial lantern of their

⁷⁴ Local views of the colony need to be distinguished from views of 'home,' that is of Britain, and 'foreign scenery' denoting other locations.

⁷⁵ *Lyttelton Times* 6 February 1868, p.3.

⁷⁶ *South Australian Register* June 1866, cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

⁷⁷ The amount charged by the Rev McCure in Adelaide in 1866. *South Australian Register* 7 September 1866.

⁷⁸ *South Australian Register* 5 March 1869, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Over this decade listings relating to lantern supplies began to appear regularly in businesses directories in Australia and New Zealand such as *Wise's Post Office Directories*, *Sand's & McDougall's Melbourne, Suburban and Country Directories*.

⁸⁰ *Wise's* Victoria 1884; *Wise's* New Zealand 1887.

own manufacture.⁸¹ In the 1890s London lantern and slide manufacturers R. W. Thomas & Co, W. Butcher & Son, Blackfriars Photographic and Sensitising Co, and York & Son regularly promoted their goods to colonial lanternists through local photographic journals.⁸² Other British suppliers' catalogues were readily available in the colonies. English scientific instrument manufacturer Newton & Co also produced lanterns and slides; their slide catalogue of 1892-93, in the Museum of Victoria, listed subject areas from the physical sciences, agriculture, the literary canon, history, geography, missions and travel.⁸³ London manufacturers John Wrench's catalogue of the 1890s ran to almost one hundred pages of lanterns, accessories and slides, which they claimed could be 'Purchased from any Dealer throughout the World.'⁸⁴ The 1901-2 catalogue of Peter Feathers of Dundee, Scotland, offered Wellington lanternists 'a large variety of subjects, such as Lecture Sets on Travel, Education and Instructive Sets, Special Temperance Sets, Scriptural Subjects, Humorous and Comic Tales.'⁸⁵ The amount of surviving ephemera, such as these rarely preserved catalogues, indicates a substantial trade in direct importing of slides and lanterns into the colonies from the 1880s.

A London firm in Melbourne: W. Watson & Sons

By 1890 London lantern manufacturers W. Watson & Sons regarded the colonial market significant enough to warrant the establishment of a branch at 78 Swanston Street, Melbourne, under the management of H. & F. Baker, as 'manufacturers and importers of photographic apparatus, microscopes, magic lanterns, surveying, mathematical and general optical equipment.'⁸⁶ The Grimwades of Caulfield and *Coolart* may have been patrons. Supplying not only the Australasian market, the large stock maintained in Melbourne did away with the long wait for orders to come from England.⁸⁷ In their catalogue of around 1902, the current stocklist of the lantern slides alone ran to eighteen pages, the quantity and variety indicating a lively market concurrent with the

⁸¹ See Steward's advertisement reproduced in John Barnes 'A list of magic lantern manufacturers and dealers active during the 19th century' in Crompton et al *Magic Images* p. 27.

⁸² *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer 1895-99 passim.*

⁸³ *Supplementary list of Lantern slides, etc., for season 1892-93* Newton & Co. Museum Victoria Reg No. TL 06386

⁸⁴ Museum Victoria Reg No. TL 07060.

⁸⁵ *Catalogue of lantern slides* Peter Feathers.

⁸⁶ See Watson's advertisement reproduced in Barnes 'A list of magic lantern manufacturers' p.27. *Sands & McDougall* 1891/2, 1899/1900, alphabetical listing. A company of the same name had been listed in *Sands & McDougall* since 1869 until 1889. W. Watson & Sons, warehousemen and importers, in Little Collins Street and later in Little Flinders Street, also listed a London address, 13 Jewin-crescent. The relationship between the two companies is not clear however. William Watson was a common name and importing and warehousing a common trade.

⁸⁷ *List of optical lantern slides* Melbourne: W. Watson & Sons c.1902. This document was found in Wellington.

early years of cinema.⁸⁸ Only one lantern, offered in four models in Russian iron priced from £3 15s to £6, was included in the slide catalogue: 'Watson's Demonstration Lantern the most popular, and undoubtedly the most efficient and convenient for exhibition in schools and halls.'⁸⁹

The Watson catalogue also detailed a range of related services. Slides of images of the customer's choice could be 'made to order at 1s 6d each and coloured at 15s per dozen.' Hand-colouring of both imported and locally made slides, in addition to all varieties of mechanically reproduced images, constituted an occupation for numerous colonial artists. Frequently they were women, either self-employed or working in-house by photographic studios.⁹⁰ Young art students also painted lantern slides, including, according to Jack Cato, Australian artists Norman Lindsay, Percy Lindsay, and Will Dyson who went on to achieve recognition in the realm of high art.⁹¹

For an evening's use customers could hire any slides from the catalogue for 5% of the selling price. For example a program of 'First Aid to the Injured and Sick' (62 coloured slides), 'Diogenes and the Boys of Corinth' (12 coloured slides), 'man swallowing rats' (single mechanical slides), and 'Rock of Ages' (6 coloured slides) would cost around 11 shillings. A package deal of 'Hire of lantern, ... and any slides selected from the list, not exceeding six dozen, for one evening's entertainment' was a very reasonable 12s 6d. Compared with 20 shillings asked by Bernard Goode in 1866 this represents a substantial increase in accessibility. Watson's seemed confident of continuing demand:

In order to meet the times, and in expectation of great increase in this department of our business, we are prepared to provide a splendid Dissolving View Entertainment, worked by a skilled operator, using a very fine Oxy-Ether Limelight Lantern for the sum of £15s.' Lantern entertainments for children's parties from £1. Within a five-mile radius of Melbourne, and special arrangements for country customers.⁹²

A Religious Importer: The New Zealand Bible, Tract and Book Society

English manufacturers and suppliers also recruited existing colonial retail networks as direct agents for lanterns and slides. In this way the New Zealand Bible, Tract and Book Society, with its branches in Dunedin and Invercargill, became part of a global chain of outlets for English lantern manufacturers Riley Bros of Bradford. In the mid-1890s, with premises in

⁸⁸ Examples of labelled W. Watson & Son lantern slides are held in the State Library of Victoria.

⁸⁹ *List of optical lantern slides* Watson & Sons, p. 19. Separate illustrated catalogues were also available for lanterns and apparatus, and cinematographs and film.

⁹⁰ Two women listed under 'Photographic colourers' in *Sands & McDougall* through the 1890s were: Miss M. G. Bald at 229 Collins St.; and Miss E. S Kearthland at 318 Collins St.

⁹¹ Cato *The story of the camera in Australia* p. 115.

⁹² *List of optical lantern slides* Watson & Sons, p. 2.

New York and branches in Boston, Chicago, Chattanooga, Kansas City, Portland and San Francisco, Riley Bros proclaimed themselves 'The Largest Lantern Outfitters in the World.'⁹³

As religious groups were significant users of lantern slides, it is not surprising that the outlets they established for religious publications also imported and sold lantern equipment to the colonial public. The Society had an optical lantern department based at its premises in Willis Street, Wellington. In the early 1890s they held six selected English manufactured Riley lanterns in stock, 'our experience proving them to be the most useful for general purposes.' At the top of the range were: the 'Premier' Lantern, described as 'a superior mahogany-bodied lantern' and 'one of the finest lanterns ever made,' costing £13 10s, including saturator; and the 'New Portable Collapsible Skeleton Lantern,' in Russian iron and brass, at £11 16s 6d. Both were entirely suitable for the needs of the amateur or professional lecturer, teacher or clergyman wanting to address a large audience. The Society also offered the oil-lit 'Praestantia' at £5 6s and 'Junior Praestantia' at £3 10s. At the bottom of the range the japanned tin 'Eureka' could be had for £2 17s 6d, and the 'Triumph' at £1 17s 6d was pronounced suitable for 'those who only want a Lantern for Home and Private Use, as a very fair 8-foot picture can be obtained from it.'⁹⁴

Items outside of the range held in stock had to be ordered especially from England, but this arrangement and its attendant delays were part of everyday life in the colonies when material culture was still so heavily reliant on importation. 'Any lantern in Messrs. Riley Bros' General Catalogue procured to Order in four month's time. Terms for Special Indents 10 per cent, on English Catalogue Price.' A separate fully illustrated lantern catalogue covered the whole range of Riley Bros lanterns and accessories. Of varying technological sophistication, they were priced accordingly, from 'Cheap Lanterns' of japanned tin, for oil light, at 25s, through those with 'Russian iron' bodies from 70s to 157s – up to elegant mahogany-bodied double and triple lanterns, with highly polished panelling, mouldings and brass fittings, for oxy-hydrogen light at around £35.⁹⁵ Also listed and illustrated were all the additional paraphernalia and accessories that could be required or desired by an enthusiastic lanternist. The essential limelight jets, saturators and gas bags, rubber tubing, gas fittings, limes; and the convenient portable reading desks, tripod stands, canting stands, dissolving taps, slide carriers (including the popular Beard's 'Eclipse'), transit slide boxes, signal boxes (to enable the lecturer to communicate instructions to the lantern operator), reading lamps,

⁹³ See Riley's advertisement reproduced in Barnes 'A list of magic lantern manufacturers' p. 27.

⁹⁴ *Illustrated catalogue of lanterns, cinematographs and every description of accessory apparatus* Wellington: N. Z. Bible, Tract, and Book Society n.d. p. 11.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

portable screens and stands, display apparatus for table exhibition of lantern slides and the latest acetylene gas generator.⁹⁶

A subsequent slide catalogue issued by the Society offered titles from England's 'Leading Makers, such as Wilson, Hughes, Newton, Valentine, Riley &c.' in categories of travel and history, songs and recitations, temperance and Biblical subjects – a modest but varied selection of around 170 sets (usually around 12 slides, often as many 60 for travel and history titles) with further titles supplied on request. Plain slides were 1s. 3d. each and coloured slides 2s. 6d. The Society also stocked a good selection of slides purely for entertainment encompassing: a 'great variety' of dissolving effects slides, for which a separate list was available; mechanical slides, including the ever appealing chromatrope from 10s 6d each and an enduring favourite 'Man swallowing rats' at 12s 6d; and 'cheap lithographic coloured slides' of children's stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk' the price of which, at 6s 6d per set of twelve, reflected the lower image quality of these entirely mechanically mass-produced transparencies.⁹⁷

In addition the Society offered a range of associated services which indicate the extent of local consumption of the medium. Slides could be hired at 1d plain, 1 1/2 d coloured for 24 hours, or at a subscription rate of one guinea (21s) for 350 slides, two guineas for 700; exchanged for two thirds of their selling value; and made 'from any subject, prints, pictures, photographs, books, etc, to order 2/- each. From customers' negatives, to order 1/- each.' Oil lanterns were provided at 5s per night and limelight apparatus at 17s 6d. Alternatively, for one inclusive charge of 30/-, the Society could provide a complete service 'skilful operators, with the very best limelight apparatus, to any part of the City or Suburbs for Lectures, Anniversaries, Band of Hope Meetings, Children's Treats, &c.'⁹⁸

Local suppliers and manufacturers

The 1890s also saw an increasing number of local merchants placing greater significance on the lantern trade and specialist businesses set up in urban centres. Christchurch 'Bookseller, Stationer, Electroplater and Fancy Goods Importer' Thomas Crook (1832-1916) (figure 4.4) supplied the Canterbury province and beyond, from the late 1880s into the next century, with 'Magic Lanterns & Dissolving Views Apparatus – of every description on Sale or Hire.' Slides could also be 'made to Order on the shortest notice.'⁹⁹ Crook,

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Optical lantern department* Wellington: N. Z. Bible, Tract & Book Society. n.d..

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Trade advertisements in *Wise's New Zealand* 1890/1; and Thomas Crook papers relating to the Church of England Book Depot 1876-1928. Folder 559. Manuscripts Department, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

Crook's retail business was located in opposite the Bank of New Zealand, Colombo Street, in Morten's Buildings, which later became the United Service Hotel. See New Zealand

who arrived in Christchurch in 1875 and became a prominent figure in the province, as proprietor of a long-running successful stationery and bookshop in the city, also had a local reputation as a professional lanternist presenting his own exhibitions and providing technical support for other lecturers. In August 1893 on the occasion of a Grand National Holiday Crook put on an entertainment of dissolving views a selection of the most frequently exhibited of slide genre, 'Picturesque Beauties of the World, Moving Fountains, Buildings on Fire, &c., Epsom and Ascot Races, Horses, Dogs, &c., Humorous Stories, &c.' At a series of 'Thursday popular concerts' at the Theatre Royal the following winter, he exhibited limelight views of statuary and scenery throughout the world, from his collection which was as the LT noted 'so well and favourably known.' Crook also operated the lantern at numerous events such as meetings of the Philosophical Institute, and Charles James Russell Sunday evening educational lectures at the Oddfellows' Hall in Lichfield Street, Christchurch, in the winter of 1893.¹⁰⁰ His trade notice announced that:

Mr. T. Crook, who is one of the oldest exhibitors in New Zealand, and has the finest collection of slides and Apparatus, is prepared to give Entertainments, illustrated with powerful Oxy-hydrogen Lime-Light, either in Town or Country, at moderate prices.¹⁰¹

In December 1894 a fire 'in an outhouse at his residence' in Linwood, Christchurch, destroyed 'some 3000 lantern slides, the result of years of labour.'¹⁰² This had no adverse effect on his business however. In response to an increasing demand, Crook began to specialise in the photographic and lantern trade, boasting 'Thousands of slides to select from' at his renamed business the 'Central Photographic Depot' which continued to thrive into the next century.¹⁰³

Of the hundreds of professional photographers practicing in the colonies of the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s it is very likely that a large proportion of them also traded lantern slides, whether of their own making or imported.¹⁰⁴ Cairé in Adelaide, and Meluish and Mundy in Dunedin and Christchurch, have already been discussed. Also in the South Island of New Zealand, William and Frederick Tyree, supplied slides and lanterns to the Marlborough and West Coast provinces from the 1880s into the early 1900s. They also provided outdoor entertainment by projecting slides onto a large plate glass window above their Nelson premises for crowds in the street below.¹⁰⁵ Advertising in

Federation of University Women, *Round the Square: a history of Christchurch's Cathedral Square* Christchurch: Clerestory Press 1995 p. 56.

Slides supplied by Crook are held in the Napier Museum, Feickert collection.

¹⁰⁰ *Lyttelton Times* August 10 1893, p. 1; July 4 1894, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ *Wise's New Zealand* 1890/1.

¹⁰² *Sharland's* December 7 1894, p. 79.

¹⁰³ *Lyttelton Times* 16 July 1894, p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ *Knight Photography in New Zealand* pp. 181-186.

¹⁰⁵ Les Cleveland 'The Tyrees: notes towards a critical assessment' *Photoforum supplement* Spring 1979, pp. 6-9.

local print media provides further evidence extensive involvement of photographers in the lantern slide trade in New Zealand in the 1890s. Boasting 'the Largest Stock of Photographic Goods in New Zealand' in the early 1890s, W. Park, Photographic Store, of Wellesley Street, Auckland, stocked a range of magic lanterns, slides, condensers, lamps and carriers.¹⁰⁶ Photographer Josiah Martin, at his premises in Queen Street, Auckland, advertised his own lantern slide sets of New Zealand views and slides made to order from illustrations (figure 4.5).¹⁰⁷ Ready for the winter of 1893, E. Beardsley had ensured 'a large supply of Lanterns, Gas Bags, Lime Jets, Slides, Screens, in fact everything in connection with Lantern work, and many new sets of slides' were available at his premises in Manchester Street, Christchurch. Anticipating 'a great run on Lantern Work this season,' he advised that 'buyers will do well to make an early selection.'¹⁰⁸ At the same, his colleagues E. H. Wheeler & Son, of the N. Z. Scenery Depot in Cathedral Square, claimed twenty years experience in the lantern slide trade and recommended their sets of slides of New Zealand scenery to 'persons going Home, School Committees, Public Lecturers and for Private Entertainment.'¹⁰⁹

Auckland photographer and lanternist Enos Silvenus Pegler abandoned studio practice almost entirely in the early 1900s in favour of dealing in photographic and lantern supplies through a chain of Photo Supply Stores in the North Island centres of Auckland, Taumaranui and Palmerston North linked by the main trunk railway line.¹¹⁰ A 1906 letter head promoted 'Three Departments:' magic lanterns, slides and sundries; Edison phonographs, records, and supplies; cameras [...] & all photographic accessories.¹¹¹ (figure 4.6) Pegler supplied private purchasers, lecturers and teachers, hired out slides and oil-light or acetylene-light lanterns, advertised apparatus for sale on behalf of customers and, like most provincial merchants, offered a mail order service.¹¹² One of Pegler's mail-order clients was Wellington businessman and entrepreneur A. J. McCurdy who organised entertainments for community groups such as the Upper Hutt Literary and Social Clubs. In July 1906 McCurdy sought advice on the lantern best suited to his needs. 'It is not altogether a question of the lantern but the main point is the illumination,' Pegler replied. His recommendations provide some insight into the finer points of image projection technology in the first decade of the twentieth century:

¹⁰⁶ *Sharland's* June 7 1894, p. 81 *et passim*.

¹⁰⁷ *Sharland's* July 7 1892, p. 89.

¹⁰⁸ *Lyttelton Times* July 6 1893, p. 1; trade notice, *Wise's New Zealand* 1892-3, p. 35. Beardsley, a member of the Photographic Section of the Canterbury Philosophical Institute, regularly operated the lantern at local lectures and exhibitions.

¹⁰⁹ *Lyttelton Times* July 17 1893, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ William Main *Auckland through a Victorian lens* Wellington: Millwood Press 1977 pp. 137-9.

¹¹¹ Letter from E. S. Pegler Photo Supply Stores to A. J. McCurdy, 3 July 1906. Cleveland collection.

¹¹² *Catalogue* Palmerston North, New Zealand: Photo Supply Stores. [c.1905] p. 28.

The Stocks 4 wick lamp ... [is] the very best thing in oil. We have these to fit any lanterns price 35/-. The next best thing is Acetylene Gas I have generators in stock from £2. ...

Undoubtedly the finest thing I have struck for compact & easy working is a (Spirit Lamp) burning Methylated Spirits & illumination [illegible] an Incandescent mantle[sic]. The Spirit Resvor [sic] Mantle & all go in the lantern and at an exhibition the other evening I had a splendid 10ft picture with it. You could have a trial with it. Price 30/-.

A fairly good Magic Lantern we can supply at £2 quite enough for general purposes.¹¹³

Surviving records show that McCurdy dealt concurrently with a variety of suppliers. In addition to Photo Supply Stores, one of his sources was the Department of Tourism and Health Resorts from which McCurdy either hired or purchased slides. He was also ordering slides directly from English life model slide maker James Bamforth of Holmfirth Yorkshire. In October 1906, Bamforth replied with a quote for 'Best Coloured Lantern Slides 15/- per Doz Less 5% Cash.' 'I could deal with you direct,' he continued, 'and forward goods through our shippers Messrs. Neale & Wilkinson, St Mary Ave, London.'¹¹⁴

Curiously, miniature or toy lanterns, typically of European manufacture, which frequently appear in Australasian museums are rarely mentioned by any of the known lantern suppliers in the colonies and they are almost entirely absent from extant catalogues. An exception is Pegler's Photo Supply Stores, which included lanterns for 'Boys' or 'Youths' boxed sets complete with slides for 2/6 to 12/6.¹¹⁵ Within an Australasian lantern and slide market dominated by British industrial product, European miniatures were marketed within the category of educational toys by booksellers, stationers and merchants of 'fancy goods' and it may be in the inventories and catalogues of those businesses that evidence of this trade could be found.

The magic lantern and the culture of consumption

From 1890 a cluster of lanternists, lantern and slide suppliers began to congregate around within or close to the main retail strips and arcades of Melbourne's Collins Street and Little Collins Street in 'The Block' between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets, characterised by a melange of shops, businesses and clubs whose patrons were drawn from the middle and upper classes of colonial society (figure 4.7).¹¹⁶ The area maintained its reputation as

¹¹³ Pegler to McCurdy, 3 July 1906.

¹¹⁴ Letter from J. Bamforth to A. J. McCurdy, 1 October 1907. Cleveland collection. The significance of the Department of Tourism's lantern slide production is discussed further in Chapter eight of this thesis.

¹¹⁵ *Catalogue* Photo Supply Stores. p. 31. Cleveland collection.

¹¹⁶ R. W. E. Wilmot 'On the Block: promenade of the 'eighties: gay figures of old Melbourne,' in *The Argus camera supplement* Saturday January 25 1930 p.3.

a socially respectable public promenade and shopping precinct for decades. The culture of 'The Block' was one of leisure, affluence and consumption, and the magic lantern business sat comfortably and prominently within its prestigious commercial environment. Genteel neighbours such as Hopetoun Tearooms, Ye Lady Queene Bootshop, hairdressers, costumiers and jewellers serviced the upper classes of colonial society with leisure, luxury and prestige commodities.

Significantly, 'the sad days after the boom' in the economic depression of the 1890s coincided with the height of magic lantern popularity in the colonies. In their 1892 edition *Sands & McDougall Post Office directory* introduced a new category of 'Limelight artists and mechanists' in its trades section, 'Lantern slide manufacturers' was added in 1894, and 'Lanternists and dealers in lantern requirements' in 1897. These listings over the period from 1892 to 1905 reveal that a significant number of lantern related businesses were established within or close to 'The Block.'¹¹⁷ At the turn of the century, the leaders of this thriving group of lantern and slide merchants were the English firm W. Watson & Sons in Swanston Street, and two wholly Australian owned businesses Baker & Rouse and Alexander Gunn.

Two Melbourne firms: Baker & Rouse and Alexander Gunn

Baker & Rouse – 'manufacturers and importers of photo materials, optical lantern goods, microscopes, telescopes', publishers of *The Australasian Photographic Review* and major suppliers to eastern Australia with branches in Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart – sat in the heart of this prestigious shopping precinct, at 260 Collins Street. Their 'optical lantern business' opened in 1890 and carried a range of lanterns. The cheapest was a single projector at 45s. At the other end of the range 'The Terpuoscope' sold for £8, and Biunial and Triunial lanterns from £10 10s.¹¹⁸ By 1898 their catalogue included a range of 'Praestantia' lanterns, 'popular with travelling lecturers and missionaries,' the Riley Bros' mahogany 'Monarch Ethoptican' Bi-unial 'our most popular lantern,' a further 15 pages of essentials and accessories for lantern practice, with the disclaimer that:

Neither time nor space at command would permit of details being given with reference to the extensive additions to a our already large stock of OPTICAL LANTERNS and Accessories for the present season, but we will be most happy to supplement the information herein contained by return post to all enquirers.¹¹⁹

Baker & Rouse's lantern and cinematograph catalogue of 1907 demonstrated changes in the trade resulting from the rise of cinematography and having been taken over by Kodak in 1905. The eight models of lantern, for use with

¹¹⁷ These Melbourne businesses are listed in Appendix III of this thesis.

¹¹⁸ *Complete illustrated price book: photographic material*. Melbourne: Baker & Rouse, [c1890]

¹¹⁹ *The lantern, and cinematographe guide for 1898-9* Melbourne: Baker & Rouse p. 1.

oil-light, limelight, acetylene and electric light, illustrated were smaller single lanterns, being simpler and more practical for travelling lecturers, for Sunday school and home use contexts to which the lantern was increasingly confined. The place of the massive and elaborate biunials and triunials, suitable for public exhibition and showcased in catalogues of previous years, was now taken up by the cinematograph, a third of the catalogue being devoted to cinema apparatus and accessories in contrast with a mere two pages in the 1898 catalogue.¹²⁰

'Manufacturer and importer of all apparatus for the production and projection of limelight' Alexander Gunn took up premises 242 Little Collins Street in 1897 (figure 4.8).¹²¹ Gunn had been associated with the lantern since 1887 working from his home at 24 Coventry Street, South Melbourne.¹²² In October 1890 he operated the lantern for 'a splendid entertainment' mounted by the Dorcas Street Presbyterian Church at the local Mechanics' Institute. Gunn's 'superior' presentation took the form of 'a series of lime-light photographic views, illustrative of a trip through the Highlands of Scotland, interspersed with appropriate Scotch music' sung and preformed on the piano and clarionette.¹²³

Gunn did not begin to list his occupation as optical lanternist until around 1894, having been a real estate agent for many years. The change of occupation notably coincided with the plummeting of real estate prices after the colony's economic downturn. Clearly the lantern offered better prospects at this time, for Gunn's new trade quickly flourished and by 1897 he claimed to have 'the largest stock of slides in the colony.'¹²⁴ His *Catalogue and Supplement of Apparatus, Dissolving Views etc.* of 1898, contained 13 pages of slides and a cover photograph of the shopfront in Little Collins Street displaying some impressive hardware and emblazoned with various notices such as 'Supplies all requirements for the production and projection of light.'¹²⁵

In his informative catalogue Gunn assured clients that they 'can depend on getting what they require, as unlike the retail shops, mine is a permanent stock.' Among his stock were a large selection of 'life-model' sets including numerous Sims titles, Dickens, international and colonial travel lectures, temperance and moral subjects, scriptural illustrations, hymns including three different versions of 'Rock of Ages,' songs, portraits of the famous, dissolving

¹²⁰ *Baker & Rouse lantern and cinematograph catalogue for the present season* Sydney; Melbourne; Adelaide; Brisbane: Baker & Rouse. c. 1907.

¹²¹ *Sands & McDougall* 1895-96 ff.

¹²² *The Scientific Australian* September 20 1900, p. 8. *Sands & McDougall* 1884/5 to 1894/5, alphabetical listing.

¹²³ *Bohemia* October 9 1890 p. 15. My thanks to Dr Caroline Jordan for drawing this reference to my attention.

¹²⁴ *Sands & McDougall* 1895-96 ff.

¹²⁵ *Catalogue and Supplement of Apparatus, Dissolving Views etc., etc.* Melbourne: Alexander Gunn.

and effect slides, astronomy and comic slides.¹²⁶ Like his colleagues in the trade, Gunn ran a Hire Department. In 1897, he lent out over eight thousand slides, 'many of which went to N. S. W., South Australia, and Tasmania.' An engineer by profession, Gunn paid special attention to improving in the technology of lantern slide projection and his innovations gained him an international reputation recognised in an article in the British *Optical magic lantern journal* which included him among 'Prominent men in the lantern world.'¹²⁷ His 1898 catalogue described some of these in detail (figure 4.9). The new 'Improved Retort' was able to generate gas for the limelight 'as it is required, being almost automatic, at a minimum of cost and trouble;' and he mass-produced and indeed exported an improved Saturator:

having supplied the Working Men's College, Melbourne; the Salvation Army; Working Men's College, Horsham; Mr. G. H. Snazelle; Gordon Institute, Melbourne; Gordon College, Geelong, and most of the leading amateurs in Victoria, besides having had purchasers in all the Australian colonies, and in America and Great Britain.¹²⁸

To further recommend himself to prospective patrons, he proffered his credentials as a lanternist, providing a rare overview of the career of a professional lanternist of the 1890s. 'I have for years,' he proclaimed,

given [optical lantern entertainments] my special study, and have endeavoured to place before the public a high class, refined entertainment, having exhibited in the presence of as many as 7,000 people in the Exhibition Building, Melbourne, also before the leading people of the land, including Lord and Lady Brassey, who expressed their pleasure and appreciation of my work. I have also exhibited the views for all the public lecturers who have visited the colony for some years past. Mr. G. H. Snazelle said, "I want nothing better;" Rev. R. H. Haweis, "I am extremely gratified;" Mr. Frederick Villiers, "I have given over 700 lime-light lectures, and have never been better served;" Rev. Haskett-Smith, "My lime-light pictures have never been better put on the screen;" also hundreds of others from colonial residents. I have given over 600 exhibitions during the last three years, and have given general satisfaction.¹²⁹

Trade directories of the 1890s list other dealers in lantern supplies in the central shopping precinct of Melbourne. One of these was J. W. Small & Co. 'manufacturers and importers of photographic and lantern material' at 270 Little Collins Street. Small & Co had in fact been in business as photographic

¹²⁶ Around 300 slides from Gunn's stock are held in the collection of the State Library of Victoria. Included are a number of 'life-model' sets, and occasional gems such as 'Santa Claus in Maoriland,' from the period under study, as well as numerous slides from later decades.

¹²⁷ Prominent men in the lantern world: No. XX. Mr Alexander Gunn' in *The optical magic lantern journal and photographic enlarger* vol. 11 No 139, December 1900, p. 155-6.

¹²⁸ Gunn Catalogue p. 2; 'Alexander Gunn' in *The Scientific Australian* September 20 1900, p. 8; 'Prominent men in the lantern world no. 20: Alexander Gunn'.

¹²⁹ Gunn Catalogue pp. 2-3.

material makers and dealers in Melbourne since 1868 and in Sydney since 1870. Further branches were established in Brisbane and Adelaide in 1893 and 1894. Their Melbourne outlet continued into the twentieth century as 'Camera Corner' at the intersection of Collins and Elizabeth Streets.¹³⁰ However, relying on trade directories gives only a partial picture of businesses handling magic lanternalia. Some lantern slide suppliers chose not to be listed under the relevant categories and did not include lantern supplies in their brief notices. Evidence of their participation in the trade has survived however in other forms. One example is Cooper & Co, stationer and fancy goods importer, whose trademark appears on the labels of slides in a Melbourne collection. They too were located within The Block precinct, initially from the early 1890s at 21-23 Royal Arcade, which runs between Little Collins and Bourke Street, and around 1897 taking additional premises in the more prestigious Block Arcade. Evidence of Kett's Photo Stores trade in lantern supplies has survived in a remnant of his slide stock which includes a range of photographic and print images and a selection of comic slides, a sample of the humorous effects obtainable with simple projected still images and enjoyed at the turn of the century and into the twentieth (figure 4.10).¹³¹ William T. Kett established his photographic material import and retail business, at 263 Little Collins Street in 1898. Formerly a storekeeper and Postmaster at Warburton, he was an enthusiastic amateur photographer and entertainer, who sang, performed conjuring tricks and gave lantern shows.¹³²

Just north of the city in the nearby suburb of Carlton watchmaker James Searle was the first to make use of the new category of 'lantern slide manufacturers' in the 1894 edition of *Sands & McDougall*, describing his business as 'limelight artist and mechanist; the only practical manufacturer of limelight apparatus in Australia; supplies limelight for tableaux, illustrated lectures etc. 15,000 slides to select from; compressed oxygen for all purposes.' While maintaining his Carlton premises, first at 252 Rathdowne Street and later at 759 Drummond Street, he too was drawn to the central retail precinct, first at 23 Union Lane off Little Collins Street and then from around 1901 at 274 Collins Street.¹³³ Also located in Carlton was T. W. Cameron, a former Primitive Methodist clergyman forced to give up preaching after he lost his voice, who entered the booming lantern slide business at the end of the century.¹³⁴ By 1899 he had established himself as a manufacturer and importer of lantern slides, lanterns 'and other goods' at 110 Lygon Street. Additional services included hand colouring slides and lantern and cinema exhibitions. Although no catalogues have come to light, it is clear that

¹³⁰ Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p. 230; *Sands & MacDougall* 1903, 1904.

¹³¹ Kett died in 1906 while the lantern medium was still thriving. After flourishing for nearly four decades with the burgeoning photography trade the business ceased in 1936. The extant slides are held by his descendant Robert Kett.

¹³² Conversation with Robert Kett, Melbourne.

¹³³ *Sands & MacDougall* 1898, 1903, 1904.

¹³⁴ Conversation with Dr Ian Edwards, Melbourne, 27 March 2001.

Cameron's stock was immense and varied; slides bearing his trade name, covering all genre religious, travel, colonial views etc. appear frequently in existing collections. The business flourished well into the twentieth century, moving to 430 Bourke Street around 1915, attesting to a continuing market for slides after the outbreak of the First World War.¹³⁵

A compelling picture of the vitality of the lantern slide trade in the Collins Street area in Melbourne at the turn of the nineteenth century can be gauged from accessible material, such as trade directories. A similarly lively trade no doubt existed in other colonial centres, along with a consistent demand for slides and apparatus. In Hobart for example J. W. Beattie's photographic studio specialised in magic lantern slides supplying slides extensively throughout colonies, and most likely traded in lantern apparatus.¹³⁶ In Sydney alongside major photographic dealers such as Harrington & Co and Baker & Rouse was H. S. Jerdan & Co., opticians, electricians, photographic and magic lantern stock dealers, of George Street, who advertised a mail order service from their 'Magic Lantern Bureau' for country customers in the 1890s.¹³⁷ On the other hand, as a correspondent to the *Optical magic lantern journal* complained, in 1893 Queensland still had only one business carrying stock of lantern slides for hire, overpriced at 27s for fifty slides per night.¹³⁸ It is evident nevertheless that by the turn of the new century the local magic lantern trade had achieved a visible presence in the Australasian retail marketplace and was firmly positioned within a global trade network of images and visual technology.

Lantern Journals and Societies

The interests and concerns of both amateur and professional lanternists in the colonies were addressed within a network of photographic journals and photographic societies. The *Optical magic lantern journal and photographic enlarger*, published in London from 1889, was already of value to local practitioners, as occasional reports and correspondence in its columns indicates. The late 1880s and early 1890 saw the colonial publication of specialist journals for photographers which included coverage of lantern practice. Although the central interest was photography, these journals regularly included articles on points of interest, techniques and processes for lantern slide enthusiasts. *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer* was introduced in 1892 as a special section of the monthly trade journal of Auckland chemical, medical and pharmaceutical suppliers Sharland & Co. whose stock included photographic and lantern supplies. Edited by Auckland photographer Josiah

¹³⁵ Cameron slides are held in: State Library of Victoria; University of Melbourne Archives; Salvation Army Archives; Edwards collection.

¹³⁶ Reproduced in Long *Tasmanian photographers* p. 13.

¹³⁷ *The Town and Country Journal* 5 March 1892, p.7.

¹³⁸ W. J. McCulloch 'Lantern matters in Australia,' Correspondence, *OMLJ&PE* vol. 4 1 September 1893, p. 139.

Martin, it was 'forwarded to all photographers and to the members of all photographic clubs in New Zealand,' and claimed 'a guaranteed circulation of 2,400 copies.' Australian photographers and lanternists were similarly served by *The Australian Photographic Journal, Exchange and Mart* published monthly by Sydney photographic dealers Harrington & Co. commencing in the same year and *The Australasian Photographic Review* published by Baker & Rouse (see figure 4.2).

The photographic journals supported an active intercolonial communication network, publishing articles written by local practitioners, exchanged across the Tasman and reprinted from overseas journals. Trade advertisements were included as well as classified notices for sale and exchange of slide and lantern apparatus for, as Martin noted, 'Many lanternists in the Colony are burdened with a stock of slides which they would gladly exchange.'¹³⁹ The journals regularly reported on the activities of the photographic clubs and societies springing up in most colonial centres. From the six listed in *Sharland's* in July 1894, the number of such clubs in New Zealand doubled in less than three years. Lantern practice was an important component of photographic clubs' activities (figures 4.11, 4.12). These societies might be an extension of or attached to the local philosophical society, as in Christchurch, and drew membership largely from the educated and scientific men and women of the community with wide ranging interests beyond photography. Many of them used lantern lectures in their professional life, as educators and scientists. The special nature of the lantern exhibition also supported club activities and social life as Martin observed:

Our local Photographic Clubs and Societies are often at a loss for subjects of sufficient popular interest to bring their members together and keep alive the social element of their meetings.

Evenings with the lantern are usually entertaining and popular, particularly when novelties are introduced and an opportunity afforded for frank criticism. The preparation of slides calls forth the best energies of every worker, and a perfect slide is an evidence of the highest technical ability.¹⁴⁰

These more relaxed, social occasions fostered interaction between professional and amateur photographers. Northern Tasmania Camera Club reported on one of its monthly meetings in 1898:

As soon as the business of the evening was disposed of, the meeting resolved itself into a "lantern evening" - one of those pleasant gatherings with which the club is identified. A large number of visitors were present, who much appreciated the beautiful pictures presented, Mr Sparrow [professional photographer] had command of the

¹³⁹ *Sharland's* June 7 1894 p. 80. W. J. McCulloch reported that he had tried to do the same thing in Queensland the year before. W. J. McCulloch 'Lantern matters in Australia,' *Correspondence, OMLJ&PE* vol. 4 1 September 1893, p. 139.

¹⁴⁰ *Sharland's* November 7 1892, p. 85.

limelight, and the views were shown about 16 feet in diameter. Hearty applause greeted several of the sets, notably a fine series of coloured flower studies by G. W. Wilson, the celebrated English slide maker, and a set of slides taken on the Mole Creek track by Mr. Spurling.¹⁴¹

Consistent with their concerns with technique and craft, the societies particularly nurtured the stylistic aspirations of the lantern slide makers among their members with regular slide evenings; demonstrations of processes and techniques; a special section in their regular competitions; and taking advantage of the communal nature of slide viewing to mount critical viewing sessions. The clubs were also a venue for visiting lecturers, from other colonies and overseas.

Through this network of journals and clubs it was suggested, in 1892, that Australasian lanternists participate in an International Slide Exchange proposed at a Photographer's Convention held in Edinburgh. Photographers in England and in Boston, USA were already circulating sets of 'Prize Lantern Slides' and Martin urged his colleagues to contribute:

We can suggest no better method of enlarging the sympathy, uniting the interests, and stimulating the enthusiasm of photographers throughout the world, than by joining such a circuit of exchange, ...

The most popular subjects for an international series are character studies typical of the habits and occupations of the people: including incidents of life afloat and ashore, curious houses, vehicle and boats, street and market scenes, quaint costumes, amusements, antiquities, national and racial peculiarities, anything and everything out of the common, most of which can be obtained by instantaneous shots with any of the new detective cameras in use.¹⁴²

The editors of *Sharland's* and *Australasian Photographic Journal* were still trying to coordinate this project in 1894 and proposed, in the meantime, a less ambitious Intercolonial Exchange. Both projects were only partially successful. In 1894 *The Australian Photographic Journal* announced that the first collections had arrived from England and urged the Australasian societies to forward their contributions. 'We are honour bound to carry out the exchange arrangement without delay.'¹⁴³ By the end of 1894, only the Nelson Club's contribution of twenty-one slides had been submitted. In 1896 *Sharland's* noted that 'The contribution of lantern slides for Australia has lost its way in going the round of the New Zealand societies ... many anxious enquiries are being made.'¹⁴⁴ Although the Exchange projects subsequently slipped from view, a less structured but active exchange between the colonies continued as before through the network of clubs and journals. This network not only

¹⁴¹ *The Australian Photographic Journal Exchange and Mart* July 20 1898, p. 177.

¹⁴² *Sharland's* November 7 1892, p. 85.

¹⁴³ Reprinted in *Sharland's* October 8 1894 p. 74.

¹⁴⁴ *Sharland's* April 7 1896 p. 73.

supported practitioners locally, it also ensured their continued integration within a progressive global culture of visual technology.

By the end of the nineteenth century the magic lantern was thoroughly integrated into the social and economic life of the Australasian colonies. A local commercial infrastructure had developed in response to demand for home entertainment and the needs of public practitioners. Itinerant lanternists made the medium accessible to geographically isolated audiences. Although the medium remained part of the barrage of English industrial exports to consumers in the empire and beyond, local dealers established longstanding businesses based both on imported stock and on local production of slides and apparatus.

Surprisingly, the economic downturn in Victoria had no adverse effect on the trade. In fact, the opposite was the case. Lantern trade visibly flourished from the early 1890s indicating that it had become by then a cheap and attractive medium of public and private entertainment, as well as a favoured vehicle for self-improvement. At the same time it is evident that the magic lantern rose in prestige and desirability, as an accepted part of modern life instead of merely an outmoded novelty or child's toy. Both amateur and professional practitioners aspired to greater proficiency in using the technology, fostered by local photographic societies and journals.

Through the intercolonial infrastructure that supported magic lantern practices, magic lantern practice itself became a means by which intercolonial cohesion was fostered. Itinerant entertainers and importers and suppliers of lantern slides disseminated, and facilitated the sharing of a common culture of the global repertoire of mass produced and distributed images. Intercolonial traffic in locally produced slides of local views and events through photographic societies, and to some extent itinerant entertainers, were means of visually transmitting pictorial information about the separate colonies in terms of scenic views, settlement and progress, as well as sharing cultural ideas and aesthetics. The magic lantern thus reinforced intercolonial commonality and shared culture, at the same time strengthening emerging regional identities and a sense of rivalry between them.

This chapter and the three preceding chapters have been concerned largely with the magic lantern as an entertainment – albeit framed as one with a largely educational component to it. The theme of self-improvement, through the practice of rational recreation and avoidance of 'idleness' was a constant undercurrent and the impetus for a large proportion of lantern trade. The next three chapters will consider the other end of the continuum which placed greater emphasis on the formal educational and institutional uses of the magic lantern in the colonies.

Chapter Five

‘An instrument of education’: formal education

Photography and the magic lantern are going to democratize sects, educate the masses and contribute to the evangelisation of the world ... The time is coming when a school without a lantern will be as absurd an anachronism as a school without a slate or an inkpot.

W.T. Stead, mid 1890s.¹⁴⁵

altogether a different kind of acquaintanceship to which mere reading ... would produce. The study of history and geography was by these lectures, transferred from a dry-as-dust affair, with which they had no personal connection, to live subjects.

The Truth Auckland 1899.¹⁴⁶

The power of the projected image to convey factual information within a systematic course of instruction was appreciated early in the history of magic lantern. Arguments for this application were regularly voiced by eminent European lanternists of the seventeenth, eighteenth centuries and early nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷ Such arguments were, by the nineteenth century, located within the discourse of rational recreation in which the overt aspects of amusement and sensationalism were used as a ploy to hold the attention of the audience while they absorbed information without effort. Although magic lantern practice, like the discourse of rational recreation within which it was invariably located, persistently resists categorisation of pure entertainment or pure education, the applications with which this chapter is concerned were centred on educational institutions and programs in the Australasian colonies – contexts in which specific pedagogical outcomes of one sort or another were in place for school children, for vocational and academic education, and for non-vocational and self-improvement courses of instruction for adults.

As Mike Simkin and Richard Crangle point out, the nineteenth century was the great period of growth internationally both for institutional education and for lantern use.¹⁴⁸ By the end of the 1880s the use of the magic lantern in

¹⁴⁵ William Thomas Stead ‘Magic lantern mission’ in *Review of reviews* c.1895 cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p.231, entry 350.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Notes and comments,’ *Truth* Thursday October 5, 1899. Press clipping, Thomas Crook papers relating to the Church of England Book Depot 1876-1928, Folder 559, Manuscripts Department, Canterbury Museum.

¹⁴⁷ One of the earliest was German cleric and scientist Johann Zahn (1641-1707).

¹⁴⁸ Mike Simkin and Richard Crangle ‘Use of the lantern in education’ in Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 98-99.

English schools and educational institutions was on the increase.¹⁴⁹ This situation was paralleled in the Australasian colonies with the introduction of Education Acts, in Australia from 1872 and in New Zealand in 1877, which made a minimum standard of formal structured education compulsory. The growth of lantern use in the colonies over this period coincided also with improvements in photographic slide making processes and the production of accurate, literally descriptive and inexpensive lantern slides. Auckland photographer and lantern enthusiast Josiah Martin was a consistently vocal advocate for the medium in formal education. In 1899, in an editorial for *Sharland's New Zealand photographer*, he noted that: '[t]he optical lantern has already been utilised by the most advanced teachers, and it finds a recognised place in the best secondary schools and colleges of all progressive nations.'¹⁵⁰ The use of magic lantern in schools thus promised to bring colonial educational institutions into line with modern international practice.

Having been a school teacher himself, Martin was aware of the advantages of visual teaching aids, from the simplest and most basic blackboards, to posters, maps and charts. He was able to observe from his own experience that: 'This method of graphic illustration to a large extent supersedes the black board, and more effectively secures the full interest and attention of the children.'¹⁵¹ Commenting further on the pedagogical reasoning behind such practice, he wrote that:

Its great value as an instrument of education is now firmly established, because it so successfully appeals through the eye – the most important entrance and avenue to the mind. Then arousing interest and stimulating enquiry it develops faculty, by creating that longing desire for knowledge which is recognised as the most important factor of true education.¹⁵²

Although the lantern as pedagogical tool held promise for primary and secondary school teachers struggling with often reluctant learners and 'dry-as-dust' subjects, expectations were not always realised. For a variety of reasons the lantern was not used extensively in schools. In the realm of further education it was another matter, and the lantern lecture came to occupy a significant place in technical and academic teaching.

¹⁴⁹ For a brief survey of English practice see Robinson et al *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 98-99. The use of the magic lantern by nineteenth century educationists in the United States is surveyed in Shepard 'The magic lantern slide in entertainment and education; and Carla Conrad Freeman in 'Visual media in education: an informal history' in *Visual resources* Vol. 6 1990 pp. 327-340.

¹⁵⁰ Josiah Martin 'The lantern in schools' *Sharland's* June 7 1899, p.67.

¹⁵¹ Josiah Martin 'The optical lantern in school' *Sharland's* January 7 1897, p.68. Martin was one of the founders of a private school in Grafton Road, Auckland in 1871, and the headmaster for several years. *Grafton School ninetieth Jubilee 1877-1967* Auckland: Grafton District School 1967.

¹⁵² Martin 'The lantern in schools' p.67.

The use of the magic lantern in the formal education sector increased the number of opportunities to acquire visual technological literacy within colonial culture. At the same time emphasis on its function as an instrument of education attracted to the medium additional credibility and respectability. Educational and instructional applications of the medium not only ensured that its message continued to be disseminated across social, cultural and geographical boundaries, these practices led to its appearance of the magic lantern in some unexpected locations.

‘A school without a lantern will be as absurd an anachronism as a school without a slate or an inkpot’¹⁵³

Although evidence of the use of lantern exhibitions in Australasian colonial day schools prior to the 1890s is fragmentary, the practice was not unknown.¹⁵⁴ In 1864 Charles Hawkins Lush, eldest son of Vicesimus Lush, noted a lantern exhibition and the interest and attention it attracted at the Church of England Grammar School, Auckland, where he was a pupil.

18 July 1864. At 7 o’clock Mr. Philip Wyman exhibited his Magic-lantern in the Grammar School this evening. There were a good many placards about it stuck at different places so as to attract attention; I was not able to go, but Martin went; he said the School was quite full. When it was nearly over I heard the boys down here stamping on the School floor.¹⁵⁵

The content of William Meluish’s exhibitions in Dunedin in 1868, mentioned in chapter one, inspired Mr Hislop of the local Education Board to arrange daytime performances where local schoolchildren could experience the latest developments in visual technology and astronomy, and photographic views of the colony. These performances were of course just as entertaining as instructive, as ‘[t]here was liberal use of the more amusing “slides;” and the little folks evidently enjoyed the exhibition very greatly.’¹⁵⁶

The significance of the educational market was not lost on professional lanternists touring the colonies. One of these was Howard Haywood who toured Australian and New Zealand in the early 1880s with an exhibition based largely on photographic views.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the public exhibitions on his itinerary through South Australia and Victoria, he increasingly included special exhibitions to school groups. In January 1883 he was engaged by the Gawler School Board to exhibit his dissolving views in the

¹⁵³ Stead ‘Magic lantern mission.’

¹⁵⁴ Day schools for secular education as opposed to Sunday schools discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

¹⁵⁵ Journal of Charles Hawkins Lush (1849-1883), entry dated 18 July 1864, unpublished, photocopy and transcript in private collection Wellington.

¹⁵⁶ *Otago Daily Times* March 12 1868 p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Mr Hayward [sic] presented a similar program in Auckland in September 1880. *New Zealand Herald* September 15 1880 p. 7.

Gawler Institute Hall for the children of the district. Haywood's 'pictorial panorama of Australia and New Zealand,' it was reported, 'afforded both instruction and amusement:'

All parts of New Zealand showing the snow-capped ranges, lakes, rivers, hot springs, boiling cauldrons, Maoris, etc., were exhibited, followed by beautiful scenes in Victoria and South Australia, which were much enjoyed by the young people, who mustered up in large numbers, there being nearly 400 each evening.¹⁵⁸

At another Adelaide venue he showed South Australian views:

which embraced scenes in all parts of the colony, from Mount Gambier to Government Gums, besides a number showing all the principal public buildings, and some of the grandest of colonial mansions. There are also views of some streets of Adelaide, and the products of the country in the shape of loads of wool and wheat.¹⁵⁹

The pedagogical value of these exhibitions was fully appreciated by local teachers. In June 1883, after Haywood had presented 'his pictorial lecture entertainment 'South Australia',' to the students at the Prince Alfred College, the headmaster expressed the hope that Haywood 'would not leave the colony without giving lectures upon the other colonies he had visited, as it was an easy mode of teaching geography much to be encouraged.'¹⁶⁰

Haywood was primarily a commercial entrepreneur who had identified and took advantage of a lucrative niche market in supplying schools. His repertoire of photographic slides were appropriate for both public amusement and for teaching geography, the appearance of other countries, and manners and customs of other people, along with views of the colonies, showing progress, industries and produce. The programs he devised using the immediacy and literality of photography and the spectacle of the projected image gratified general audiences as well as school children and their teachers.¹⁶¹

Other itinerant lanternists in the colonies exploited the blurred line between instruction and amusement to their advantage. A correspondent to the *Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger* in the early 1890s, noted that:

a great many travelling lanternists in the Colonies ... get permission from the State school committees for use of schoolrooms free, and from all accounts make a fair living.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA' (reference not provided).

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ A few days later he repeated his lecture on South Australia before a large audience in the Port Adelaide Congregational Schoolroom. Cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA' (reference not provided).

¹⁶² C. Mountford Allen 'Lanternists in Australia,' in *OMLJ&PE* 1 January 1893, vol 4, p. 15.

Although the pedagogical value of the medium was generally understood in the colonies, the extent of its regular implementation in colonial schools is difficult to gauge. Martin observed in 1897 that:

In all our higher class institutes, and also in many of our public schools, the lantern has been for many years a recognised means of illustration, and some excellent series of lantern slides have been in circulation through New Zealand.¹⁶³

There is however little documentation surrounding the practice in those years to indicate the systematic adoption of the magic lantern as teaching resource in 1880s and 1890s. Indeed Martin had been surprised and disappointed to learn of the lack of knowledge of lantern networks supporting teacher-practitioners when *The Australian Photographic Journal* published evidence of the ignorance of 'the resources of our Colony, particularly in such a matter as the preparation and circulation of slides,' revealed in a letter from 'one of the Public School Teachers of New Zealand' calling for the importation of thousands of slides from England for teaching.¹⁶⁴

Martin continued to argue for the use of the lantern as a means of quantitative improvements in learning outcomes:

Teachers in these days of standard examinations naturally look for 'results' and we can assure them that they will materially increase their percentages – particularly in geography – by the judicious use of the lantern in school.¹⁶⁵

The headmaster of St Albans School, Christchurch, Mr. R. Speight performed his own quantitative experiment with the use of the lantern in schools. Faced with the problem of falling attendance rates over the winter of 1896, Speight asked the School Committee 'to sanction and encourage a series of lantern entertainments which he intended to give to encourage more regular attendance.' A month later Speight was able to report that attendance had increased as a result of the lantern lectures, the average daily attendance having risen from 446.4 in August to 473.6 in September. The effect was not sustained, however, and attendances fell again in November. Speight was at the end of his teaching career when he took this initiative and he retired the following year. Although his membership in the Photographic Section of the Canterbury Philosophical Institute attests to an ongoing interest in visual technology, it is not clear if Speight had previously used the lantern in that context.¹⁶⁶ The practice was not maintained at St Albans. The school's annual

¹⁶³ Martin 'The optical lantern in school' p.68.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 70.

¹⁶⁶ Speight was on the committee in 1894. 'Photographic societies in New Zealand' *Sharland's* July 7 1894, p. 73.

report of March 1897 expressed 'great anxiety' over an absentee rate of 19% and announced its intention to appoint a truant officer.¹⁶⁷

Other teachers had more success. In his 1897 article Martin commended the efforts of an Auckland public school assistant teacher 'to introduce the lantern to assist his usual schoolwork.' This determined teacher initiated a fund-raising campaign and gained the support of parents and school committee, to acquire for his school 'a very complete and efficient apparatus [which] was set up in such a manner that even in daylight educational diagrams, etc., can be projected on to the screen at a moment's notice.' He 'soon learned to prepare his own slides by photography, and by drawing on prepared plates.' And even further exploited the novelty of the medium 'as a means of encouraging his pupils,' Martin noted, 'he photographs the most successful scholars and projects their portraits on the screen.'¹⁶⁸

Alluding to the scarcity of resources for teachers who wanted to use the medium, in 1899 Martin again urged teachers to make their own slides:

The difficulty of providing suitable slides and subjects disappears before an enthusiastic teacher who is also his own photographer. The cost of the outfit is so small, and the study is so fascinating, that the teacher who has once entered on the business of slide-making, finds it such a positive relief to the usual routine of school duty, and so full of new interest to himself and his class, that he soon becomes proficient and launches out into more ambitious work in photography.¹⁶⁹

Photographic slide making may have been straightforward for a professional, but, in the face of competing demands, not all school teachers had the same degree of 'personal energy and determination' extolled by Martin. In 1899 he was forced to admit that still 'in our public and elementary schools, where it is most needed, it rarely finds a place, except where some enthusiastic teacher has taken the initiative and provided the necessary apparatus.'¹⁷⁰

Yet another of this rare breed was Henry R. Wilkinson, a professional lanternist and a public school teacher active around Canterbury from 1890.¹⁷¹ After a short period as school master at Leithfield,¹⁷² Wilkinson resided in St Albans in 1896 and 1897, coinciding with Speight's lantern trial at the local school.¹⁷³ Like Speight, he was a member of the photographic section of the

¹⁶⁷ St Albans School Committee Minute Book 1894-1904, pp. 69, 71, 91. National Archives, Christchurch.

¹⁶⁸ Martin 'The optical lantern in school' p.68.

¹⁶⁹ Martin 'The lantern in schools' p.67.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Wise's* 1890/91; 1892/3; 1894/5; 1896/7

At Marshland District School in August 1893 he gave 'A Magic Lantern Entertainment; illustrated in limelight' showing the Queensland Floods and West Coast views with proceeds in aid of the school Prize Fund. *Lyttelton Times* August 24, 1893, p.1

¹⁷² *Wise's* 1894/5.

¹⁷³ *Wise's* 1894/5; 1896/7

Canterbury Philosophical Institute and exhibited his slides at its meetings.¹⁷⁴ It is likely that the two teachers discussed their ideas and experiences with the lantern as a pedagogical instrument.

The dual location of Wilkinson's lantern practice is symptomatic of the intermingling of education and public entertainment (figure 5.1). The subjects he advertised for entertainments for hire would also have furnished lessons in local history: early views of New Zealand towns, Dunedin, Russell, Wellington and Christchurch; portraits of historical figures, and contemporary political leaders, Richard Seddon and Joseph Ward; and reproductions of Australian historical paintings, Frederick McCubbin's *Bush Burial* (1890) (see figure 8.10) and E. Phillips Fox's *Captain Cook at Botany Bay* (1902).¹⁷⁵ Views of earthquake damage and other natural disasters, of imperial and colonial troops and the Naval reserve, of Scott's departure for the Antarctic in 1901, and the New Zealand football team of 1905 may also have been of interest to his pupils. Moral lessons might be taught using Optimus brand high quality, mass-produced, coloured slide sets of cautionary tales, 'Honey Stealers' and 'Juvenile Smokers,' so too the home-made set of seven slides, with racist sub-text, titled 'Violet's Experience' in which a mule is deterred from its habit of kicking – 'She ain't a kickin' mule no mo'! She done had a 'sperience.' Wilkinson also made his audience the subject of the exhibition. Several slides depict children at Bromley School, his post over the first decade of the new century. One of these, labelled 'Boys who have passed' indicates, that consistent with Martin's suggestion, the exhibition of this slide was used as reward for achievement (figure 5.2). The new way of seeing introduced by the magic lantern included the possibility of viewers seeing projected images of themselves.

An educational pilgrim: Thomas Crook

In his argument for the use of the lantern in schools Martin also drew attention to the responsibility of 'educational authorities' to encourage the practice. He cited an initiative of the Minister for Education, William Pember Reeves,¹⁷⁶ during the 1890s, which sent a travelling lecturer with a splendid set of apparatus on tour round among the network of 'native schools' for the education of Maori children.¹⁷⁷ Reeves's envoy was, according to Martin 'one

¹⁷⁴ *Lyttelton Times* July 11 1894, p.4.

¹⁷⁵ A coloured lantern slide reproduction of the Phillips Fox, commissioned for Federation 1902, is held in the State Library of Victoria, part of a set of 95 slides, relating to European discovery and exploration of Australia 1606-1910, created by photographer Gordon H. Woodhouse ca. 1910-ca. 1950. Accession no: H15361/18. Collection: PCV LTLS 4.

¹⁷⁶ See also Keith Sinclair 'William Pember Reeves 1857-1932' *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* Volume 2 1870-1900, pp. 411-414.

¹⁷⁷ Martin 'The optical lantern in school' p. 68; 'The lantern in schools' p.67. Judith Binney briefly discusses native schools and health education in 'Amalgamation and separation: 1890-1920' in Judith Binney, Judith Bassett & Erik Olssen 1990 *The people and the land: Te tangata me te whenua* Wellington: Allen & Unwin. pp. 203-231. See also Judith Simon & Linda Tuhiwai

of the best lanternists in the country,' Christchurch businessman and lanternist Thomas Crook.¹⁷⁸ It was his personal and professional association with fellow Cantabrian Reeves that led to this additional role, characterised as 'an educational pilgrim.' In 1894 *The New Zealand Church News*, voice of the Church Missionary Society, reported that:

The education of children of the Maori race is being widely advanced by the Minister who, in conjunction with the Inspector General of Schools, some time ago tried an experimental plan. Mr Crook, of Christchurch, was commissioned to visit the Native schools in the Canterbury District, and give such lantern exhibitions and explanatory lectures as would prove of educational advantage. So keenly were these pictorial lessons appreciated by the adults, as well as the children, that an extension of the plan was speedily determined upon. Mr Crook was commissioned to proceed to the North Island, visit all the Maori schools, and give lantern lectures which should include some readily applicable teaching on the laws of sanitation. He was cordially welcomed everywhere; his lectures were listened to with intense interest, and he found abundant evidence of keen intelligence. Indeed the essays written by the Native scholars to show what they had remembered of Mr Crook's talk and pictures, compare more than favourably with the bulk of those produced by European children.¹⁷⁹

From the outset the plan had the flavour of a missionary endeavour, except that instead of spreading a message of Christian evangelism, Crook taught a secular doctrine of Western racial and cultural supremacy and British imperialism. Interestingly, whereas the *Church News* focussed on the pragmatic attributes and results of the project, an undated newspaper report from the period articulated its quasi-religious quality:

Mr Crook ... under direction from the Education Department, started on a perilous and rough journey through the Uriwera country, to exhibit views of the world to the Natives who have not yet been brought into much contact with European civilisation, but are now under British rule and protection. ... A finer ideal was never elaborated than this. The shedding of light was entrusted to him.¹⁸⁰

Upon Crook's return to 'civilisation' it was reported that his audiences 'were delighted with the views. The Chiefs stood up and testified their admiration, and thanked the lecturer for his efforts on their behalf. Many of them sent messages to the Government, and altogether the trip was a success.'¹⁸¹ Under

(eds) *A civilising mission?: perceptions and representations of the Native Schools system* Auckland: Auckland University Press 2001.

¹⁷⁸ Mentioned in chapter four of this thesis.

¹⁷⁹ *New Zealand Church News* November 1894, p. 5.

¹⁸⁰ Unannotated press clipping, Thomas Crook papers relating to the Church of England Book Depot 1876-1928, Folder 559, Manuscripts Department, Canterbury Museum.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

Reeves's direction Crook continued to travel regularly to North Island areas visiting 'native schools.' These later expeditions, while still bearing the tone and intent of the missionary, were directed to formal educational institutions.

The value assigned to the medium, that is the power of the projected photographic image as a simulacrum of direct experience, was clearly articulated in the context of these expeditions. For example, it was commented that: 'The idea on which Mr. Crook started was that the children, having no real idea of civilisation, ought to be brought face to face with its highest developments.'¹⁸² The highest developments of civilisation were represented not by the technology but by the views. The medium itself had become invisible and the students had learnt to negotiate the duality of the relationship of viewer to the screened image – to perform the role of spectator and consumer of an illusion and at the same time be able to respond to the object represented as if it were real. Evidence of the validity of the magic lantern of the 1890s as a visual technological teaching aid was illustrated by a student's essay, from St Stephen's School, Parnell, Auckland, quoted in the *Truth* in October 1899:¹⁸³

It was very pretty indeed to see the house where Mr. Crook lived, and to see its carts, trams and people walking up and down. Next comes a place called Paris. It was very splendid to see the big houses, nice streets, and splendid buses, and people walking up and down. It seemed to me as if I were there looking at them.¹⁸⁴

Within the current discourse around visibility, seeing equated with knowing, and the more accurate, detailed and compelling the image then the truer the knowledge imparted. These results were hailed as evidence of the advantage of lantern illustration in education. The children referred to the places depicted 'with altogether a different kind of acquaintanceship to which mere reading about them would produce. The study of history and geography was by these lectures, transferred from a dry-as-dust affair, with which they had no personal connection, to live subjects.'¹⁸⁵

Crook's educational experiment attracted the attention of the New Zealand press at the end of the nineteenth century because it was part of an evolving

The gracious, formal responses of the rangatira defused some of the condescending arrogance of the mission. Adherence to protocol in their reception of Crook's mission redefined the encounter as one between equals, more like a diplomatic exchange than the uneven relationship of a superior culture dispensing benefits to an inferior one.

¹⁸² *ibid.*

¹⁸³ St Stephen's was established in the early 1870s by the Church Missionary Society, and supported in part by government subsidies, as boarding school for Maori boys. It was one of several established during the nineteenth century to provide a high standard, English language, secondary education for young Maori. The 'moral, social and material elevation' would result, it was intended, in young leaders who would return to their people as teachers and clergy, to further the spread of Christianity and Western culture. See W. P. Morrell *The Anglican church in New Zealand: a history* Dunedin: John McIndoe 1973, chapter V.

¹⁸⁴ 'Notes and comments.'

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*

program of assimilation of Maori into Pakeha culture. But it also serves to illustrate clearly the evolution of 'the society of the spectacle' identified at the end of the twentieth century by Debord – a society in which vision is the dominant sense, where mass-mediated illusions and spectacle stand in for direct experience – wherein, Debord argues, 'the perceptible world is replaced by a set of images that are superior to that world yet at the same time impose themselves as eminently perceptible.'¹⁸⁶

'The School Board.' A best quality Lantern ... Price complete – 110s

Photo Supply Stores, Palmerston North, c. 1905.¹⁸⁷

Echoing Martin's argument for the lantern in schools, the *Truth* concluded its report of Crook's project with these comments:

And the question arises why an educational advantage provided for native children in the North Island should not be extended to our European boys and girls, and to other parts of New Zealand. If the Government will not give to others the advantages they provided for the Maoris, our Education Boards might well consider whether such an aid to instruction as lecturers with suitable slides should not be appointed to travel about, and instruct while they amused the scholars in our charge.¹⁸⁸

Although the medium's pedagogical potential was recognised by those around the profession (including lantern and slide manufacturers and dealers) colonial teachers were not quick to apply the lantern systematically in the arena of formal education. There were practical constraints to overcome such as lack of technical skill, access to equipment, time and, in a period of economic depression, money.

After decades of sporadic and isolated efforts of individual teachers, there were still only a few signs, at the beginning of the new century, that governmental educational bodies had begun to actively support the use of the medium in public schools. In 1901 for example the North Canterbury Education Board (New Zealand) invited Christchurch lantern enthusiast Edward William Seager (1828-1922) to present a lecture on the 'Life and Reign of Queen Victoria' to local schools.¹⁸⁹ Once again, however, this initiative did not arise directly out of the school curriculum but as a response to a major event in the history of the Empire. Commemorations of the death of Queen Victoria that year were prolific. Seager's lecture was no doubt successful in strengthening the dead queen's mythical status and its links with imperialist wars and colonial identity, in the minds of the young generation. The children

¹⁸⁶ Debord *society of the spectacle* (1994) Theses 4, 18, 36.

¹⁸⁷ *Catalogue* Photo Supply Stores p. 30.

¹⁸⁸ 'Notes and comments.'

¹⁸⁹ Canterbury Museum, manuscripts Folder 13 23: Edward William Seager.

Seager's use of the magic lantern for the benefit of patients at the Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum, Christchurch, is discussed later in this chapter.

were also asked for donations 'to enable them collectively to have inserted in the base of the statue to be erected in the memory of Her late Majesty in Victoria Square, Christchurch, a tablet stating the names of the 'Canterbury men' who were either killed or who died from disease while engaged in the South African War.' One-off events such as this, however, did not go very far in exploiting the advantages of the lantern in education.

Nevertheless, there are indications that, in the early years of the twentieth century, New Zealand Education Boards had finally taken heed of Martin's suggestions. In 1899 for example he urged the Government to purchase slides of 'such important subjects as the Early History of New Zealand – its Physical Geography, its Geology, its Natural History, its beautiful scenery and its wonderland' and circulate them among the schools.¹⁹⁰ Within a few years Erinus Pegler, the proprietor of Photo Supply Stores in Palmerston North, New Zealand, noted that a fine set of geographical slides was held by the Wanganui Education for use only within their own district, and 'a fair collection' belonging to the schoolmaster at Waverley, a country town in the Wanganui region.¹⁹¹ Along with a number of Australian and New Zealand lantern importers and dealers, Pegler clearly had an interest in supplying the educational sector. His Photo Supply Stores catalogue of around 1905 advertised a lantern aptly named 'The School Board.'¹⁹²

Tertiary education

While public school teachers and elementary educationists were struggling to bring the lantern into the classroom in the 1890s, vocational, academic and higher educational institutions had already incorporated illustrated lectures into teaching practice in a range of disciplines.

The accuracy and detail of photographic lantern slides obviously lent itself to the very literal needs of technical and trade education. A classroom at the Coromandel School of Mines, New Zealand, shows a lantern alongside other more traditional visual aids such as charts and diagrams (figure 5.4). Tangyes, an English engineering company with branches through the colonies, produced slides, illustrating tools and machinery for the benefit of engineering apprentices and trainees, whose only knowledge of the equipment might come from slides like these.¹⁹³ The Sydney Technical College used a similar teaching collection of locally made slides bearing photographic and engraved images of steam engines and steam turbines from around 1890-1910.¹⁹⁴ In 1901 the Victorian Agriculture Department commissioned Melbourne supplier James Searle to devise a 'limelight outfit and special lantern' for Mr Du Bois, director of the Rutherglen Viticultural

¹⁹⁰ Martin 'The lantern in schools' p.67.

¹⁹¹ Letter Pegler to A. J. McCurdy, dated 10 July 1906.

¹⁹² *Catalogue* Photo Supply Stores.

¹⁹³ Tangyes engineering slides are held in the Museum of Victoria.

¹⁹⁴ The Powerhouse Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Items: 97/80/1; 97/81/1.

College, for his lecturing tours around the country. Du Bois 'was naturally anxious that there should be but few parts liable to loss, and none to derangement.' Compactness and durability were other qualities required for this travelling teaching resource. *The Scientific Australian* reported that Searle:

accomplished this problem in a most successful manner. The whole appliance weighs between thirty and forty pounds, and should be of invaluable assistance, not only to Mr. Du Bois, but also to those to whom he speaks.¹⁹⁵

Even a cursory inspection of the archives of the older Australasian universities reveals the existence of large collections of superseded glass slides, and in some cases ancient projection apparatus, some of which were in use from the early years of these institutions until the 1950s. The Macleay Museum's substantial collection of possibly 7-8,000 slides relate largely to science and social science subjects taught at the University of Sydney from the 1870s (figure 5.5). As a fertile teaching resource the collection was continually developed and used well into the twentieth century, and holds slides drawn from an eclectic range of sources, makers and slide media. The anthropology collection includes ethnographic depictions of aborigines and aboriginal culture from the 1870s onwards representing the work of significant colonial photographers: Charles H. Kerry, practising in Sydney from 1883, John William Lindt, Grafton NSW from 1863 and Melbourne from 1876, Henry King, Sydney from 1873, and Paul Foelsche, Northern Territory from 1873 to 1890s. In addition to the masses of photographic slides in the geology collection are some rare hand painted slides of the Antarctic expedition under Captain James Clark Ross on the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.¹⁹⁶

University of Melbourne archives hold a similar accretion of thousands of superseded glass lantern slides from departmental teaching collections on engineering, geology, chemistry, botany, meteorology and fine arts, as well as the collection of the Melbourne College of Advanced Education for training teachers.¹⁹⁷ The School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury retains in storage its collection of thousands of slides relating to art history, architecture and classics.¹⁹⁸ Many of the architecture slides have hand written labels

¹⁹⁵ *The Scientific Australian* March 20 1901, p. 51.

¹⁹⁶ For example *Mt Erebus*. Newton & Co, Fleet St. shows the ash capped peak, with a ship moored in foreground. (Exhibition catalogue *Wanderlust* Museum of Sydney 1998.)

¹⁹⁷ Ongoing expansion of the School of Fine Art's slide collection was anticipated with the construction in 1912 of a special wooden cabinet of fifty-four drawers each with room for fifty to eighty slides, now in the University of Melbourne Archives (thanks to archivist Jason Alexander for drawing my attention to the date inscribed on the back of the cabinet). The slides still stored there include works by Australian artists of Dobell and Drysdale, and images from the Nan Kivell collection of the National Library of Australia – indicating that they were still in use in the 1950s. A collection of architectural slides show buildings in the Modernist style of the 1950s.

¹⁹⁸ For discussion of the use of lantern slides in education and in particular art history see: Anthony Hamber 'The use of photography by nineteenth century art historians' in *Visual resources* Vol 7 no 2-3, 1990 pp. 135-161; Freeman 'Visual media in education.

indicating that they were made from personal photographs rather than from mass production slides and have been attributed to the teaching collection of New Zealand architect Samuel Hurst Seager (1854-1933).¹⁹⁹ Another prominent New Zealand architect Frederick de Jersey Clere (1856-1952), used an idiosyncratic collection of slides for teaching architectural history and theory well into the twentieth century.²⁰⁰

The content, size and prevalence of these collections attest to the almost limitless diversity of subjects for which the magic lantern lecture was deployed, and its frequency, in nineteenth century colonial academic and vocational education. Of all its applications, the formal educational lecture would become the most significant for the projected still image over the following decades. The huge volume of slides consumed in this sector might be made by institutes and educators themselves, as did Hurst Seager and de Jersey Clere. But international manufacturers, as well as local importers, dealers and slide-makers responded to the world-wide demand.

Educational suppliers

As the market for educational slides expanded other specialist suppliers established a presence in the local market. Newton & Co was one of several educational slide specialists exporting to the antipodes. Parisian manufacturers Émile Deyrolle in their catalogue of 1912, offered several thousand photographic and microphotographic slides to lecturers in human anatomy, histology, botany, geology, archaeology, history and geography.²⁰¹ Lantern slides for educational use on many subjects could also be easily produced by local slide makers. Melbourne lantern slide manufacturers and importers James Searle and T. W. Cameron both specialized in supplying educational institutions, and a significant proportion of the lantern slides in the University of Melbourne archives carry their trade names. Although both eventually moved into the central city, they maintained their original premises in Carlton conveniently close to University, one of a number of educational institutions they supplied slides to over several decades.²⁰²

But the lantern had a whole range of applications specifically in the teaching and demonstration of the physical sciences beyond simply projecting static, graphic illustrations on to the screen. The numerous lantern manuals in circulation in the colonies described at length the many accessories devised for science demonstrations.²⁰³ In his magic lantern handbook of 1891, English

¹⁹⁹ I have to thank Devon Sinclair of the School of Fine Arts Reference Room University of Canterbury, for drawing my attention to these.

²⁰⁰ Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand, Clere Collection Album, postcards and lantern slides of the work of Frederick de Jersey Clere PAColl-4293

²⁰¹ *Diapositifs sur verre pour projections* Les fils d'Émile Deyrolle. July 1912.

²⁰² *The Scientific Australian* March 20 1901, p. 51.

²⁰³ Wood *Magic lanterns* pp. 103-130; W. C. Hughes *The art of projection: by an expert* London: E. A. Beckett, first published 1893 [c. 1903-1914?], p. 154.

A. A. Wood pronounced 'the Optical Lantern to be an indispensable adjunct' in science teaching; with varying degrees of modification, the lantern could be used 'for the experimental demonstration of numerous fundamental natural laws.'²⁰⁴ Live organisms, algae, insects, small plants, even the foot of a living frog, could be trapped in a microscopic gap between two squares of glass and the greatly enlarged translucent image projected onto a screen for scrutiny. A microscopic attachment enabled the projection of subjects smaller than the 1" (2.5cm) diameter.²⁰⁵ The glass-sided 'optical tank' made possible the demonstration to a large audience of experiments with fluids (figure 5.6). Vertical projection attachments allowed for the exhibition of objects that needed to be held in a horizontal position so that the silhouette of 'any small piece of apparatus or mechanism can be thrown on the screen with distinctness.'²⁰⁶ Both Wood and Hughes listed experiments with electricity that could be demonstrated using projection. For example 'The deflection of gold leaves in the Electroscope, the action of an electrified wire on a magnetic needle, the phenomena of capillary action, the formation of magnetic curves, electro magnetic rotation, the electric spark in vacuo, decomposition of water, may be mentioned now as indicating the wide field now open for popular instruction.'²⁰⁷ Elaborate and imposing combination lanterns were produced by some English manufacturers to meet the science instructor's range of needs such as the device used at Auckland University in the 1880s (figure 5.7).

Both the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Christchurch Press* printed a report on a biology lecture at the Auckland University in 1893 in which Professor Thomas 'gave an interesting account of a recent examination of a Bank of New Zealand £1 note through the lantern.' Using the projection microscope the lecturer showed bacteria obtained from the soiled note:

among them figuring very plainly the yeast plant, which was regarded as suggestive of the idea that at least one of the sometime possessors of the note had been a frequenter of public houses, or at least a lover of beer, or, to be more charitable, perhaps only a baker. Then there was present a bacterium responsible for decayed teeth. Evidently some people count their notes with their mouth.²⁰⁸

The perceived newsworthiness of this demonstration and its humorous interpretation attest to the intersection between science and spectacle mediated by the magic lantern. The account concluded with a more sober comment that: 'Altogether the exhibit was a most interesting one, and demonstrated very clearly how readily paper money may become a means of propagating disease.'

²⁰⁴ Wood *Magic lanterns* p. 103.

²⁰⁵ *ibid.* p. 106.

²⁰⁶ Hughes *The art of projection* p. 111. Wood *Magic lanterns* p. 105.

²⁰⁷ Wood *Magic lanterns* p.103.

²⁰⁸ *Christchurch Press* June 17, 1893, p. 6.

Educate the masses

all subjects of an educational interest, whether scientific, political, religious, ethical, philosophical, or literary, such as would stimulate individual thought.

Dunedin Progressive Society, 1906.²⁰⁹

Beyond the realm of structured qualification oriented educational systems, informal educational programs for adult and general audiences proliferated in the colonial urban centres in the 1870s and 1880s. The burgeoning middle-classes of Australia and New Zealand, having attained a degree of physical and material comfort and stability, began to favour a set of meritocratic ideals, valuing self-improvement and aspiring to personal and social advancement through the acquisition of knowledge. Aspirations to social progress through self education were symptomatic of the Victorian middle classes at 'Home' as well as in the antipodes, but in the colonies the impetus was increased by chronic anxieties, persisting since the 1850s and 1860s, around the intellectual and moral degeneration that might result from the great separation from the cultural sustenance of the imperial centre.

Informal public educational institutions were formed first in colonial urban centres and subsequently in smaller suburban and rural communities. These community based philanthropic public education initiatives, frequently offered without charge, were distinct from commercial instructive amusements. Philosophical institutes attached to universities and colleges served the self-improvement needs of the colonial elite and aspirant merchants and tradespeople. Affluent and influential philanthropists in turn saw to the establishment of working men's clubs for those on the lower levels of the colonial social hierarchy. Their weekly or monthly meetings, faithfully reported in the local press, were social as well as intellectual occasions, drawing together amateurs and professionals with interests in the arts and sciences, where lectures were presented and discussions held on a miscellany of topics. The lantern was frequently put to use to illustrate a lecture, as a demonstration or as a pleasant interlude or conclusion to the evening. Many institutions purchased their own lanterns by subscription. Even so there would always be at least one member with enough devotion to the medium to own or have access to one.

The grandest of these occasions were the *conversazione*, popular in the 1880s, as a sort of science fair at the intersection of mass education and public spectacle. The term was explained in the *New Zealand Herald* in September 1880:

Formerly the word was applicable only to a meeting of *cognoscenti*, who were themselves proficient in some art or science which might be the immediate subject of a learned interest. At the present time the materials for discussion are supplied by the proficient, and the general public are invited to provide the talk or criticism. Moreover a

²⁰⁹ Dunedin Progressive Society committee report March 1906.

‘conversation’ of this kind is not limited to a specific subject, but may comprise topics incidental to any branch of science and art whatever.²¹⁰

These democratic and eclectic occasions attracted large crowds, drawing together prominent local figures and the interested public, and presenting them with the latest developments and innovations in sciences and arts. Invariably the lantern, as a visual medium, played a significant role.

A *conversazione* at the Congregational Hall, in Russell Street, Melbourne, in July 1879, saw the lantern deployed in several of its applications as an instrument of scientific demonstration (figure 5.8). Throughout the halls, rooms and library of the building ‘a variety of curiosities and rare scientific instruments were exhibited’ and a series of illustrated lectures delivered with the aid of the oxy-hydrogen light. In the smaller council hall Mr. Alex. Sutherland, M. A., ‘explained the theory of vortex rings, and showed some striking experiments,’ and architect C. A. Henderson, C. E., ‘described the wonders of the spectroscope,’ (creation of an artificial rainbow using the oxy-hydrogen projector). In the large hall, Mr Symonds, ‘by means of the sciopticon, exhibited and described some beautiful photographs of Continental scenery and buildings, ... the Rev. J. J. Halley lectured on microscopy, illustrated by the lantern microscope, and Mr Henderson on the moon nebulae and star clusters, illustrated with special photographs.’²¹¹

At the same time in nearby St George’s Hall, Melbourne, the previously mentioned Professor Pepper, formerly of the London Royal Polytechnic, was commencing his season of ‘Scientific Festivals’ during which he introduced Melbourne audiences to his latest sensational optical illusion, the ‘Metempsychosis.’²¹² The coincidence of these two highlights in Melbourne’s calendar winter leisure activities invites comparison. Both evenings presented some of the latest innovations in science and technology in the form of practical demonstrations to a popular audiences. In both, the magic lantern was prominent as an instrument not as an attraction in itself.

It becomes apparent, however, that these events lie at opposite ends of the broad category of rational recreation. Pepper’s theatricality and showmanship, contrasted with the *conversazione*’s concern with mechanics and practical applications. Although viewing is central to both, in Pepper’s case deception and illusion become dominant, while the attraction of the *conversazione* is straightforward demonstration. Pepper’s exhibitions moved quickly into a wholly different register. The respected scientist redefined himself as showman and entrepreneur, his demonstrations of optics hinged on a deliberately fictive narratives. This outmoded register of sensationalism contrasted with the more up-to-date ambience of the science fair of the *conversazione* as a series of exhibits relating to modern scientific and aesthetic

²¹⁰ *New Zealand Herald* September 17 1880, p.5.

²¹¹ *Illustrated Australian News* August 2 1879, p. 122; *Age* July 18 1879 [p.2].

²¹² Described in chapter two, see also Appendix II.

concerns. Tellingly, no mention is made of any involvement by the eminent visitor in the proceedings of the *conversazione*, despite his reputation as a scientist and educator. The Auckland Institute's *conversazione*, in September 1880, was praised as an exemplar of 'this modern feature of such gatherings.'²¹³ Over evenings the general public were invited along with 'nearly every person of social, professional, or commercial influence in the province'²¹⁴ to peruse a phantasmagoria of contemporary arts and sciences (figure 5.9). Eighteen individual exhibits encompassed a huge variety: hydraulic machinery, a pyramid of stuffed birds, the Edison electric pen from which 'at least a thousand copies an hour could be obtained,' chemical apparatus, a telephone, wood-turning, optical instruments, rare coins and the skeleton of a giraffe. Nearly a thousand photographs of scenery, sculpture and architecture were displayed on one wall. To conclude each evening an 'Exhibition of Scenes from the Oxy-hydrogen light,' was presented by local photographer Josiah Martin and Anglican Bishop of Auckland the Rev. W. G. Cowie. On Thursday evening the Bishop presented 'Scenes in North India' where he had been stationed between as chaplain to the British forces between 1857 and 1866. Martin then described his own photographic views of 'Landscapes in North Wales,' and the following evening exhibited 'Chromatic experiments,' and his 'Views in the Rocky Mountains.'²¹⁵

In 1895 the *conversazione* were still all the rage. A limelight exhibition was advertised as the main feature of 'A Grand Conversazione,' held Dunedin's Garrison Hall to mark the anniversary of the Young Women's Christian Movement. The material exhibits included microscopes, artefacts from India, China, the New Hebrides and New Zealand including contributions from the collection of Dr. Hocken, and 'other articles of interest.'²¹⁶

Public education initiatives of varying degrees of formality and erudition proliferated in the colonies in the 1880s and 1890s. The winter of 1893 was a particularly busy lantern season for these activities in Canterbury. At the Philosophical Institute in Christchurch, A. H. P. Noble began a course of illustrated science lectures on 'The Earth' with specially prepared slides. Meanwhile on Sunday evenings at the Oddfellows' Hall, Charles James Russell, assisted by Thomas Crook operating the lantern, was running a lengthy series of free public lectures under the heading of 'Health and Food.' Not for the faint hearted, subjects such as 'The Brain and Nervous System,' 'The Heart, the Lungs, The Blood, and the Circulation,' and 'Digestion! The Stomach, Liver, and Organs of Digestion' were illustrated with photographic slides.

Meanwhile, William Whitehouse Collins (1853-1923) was presenting a series of astronomical lectures for the Freethought Association in Christchurch and

²¹³ *New Zealand Herald* September 17 1880, p.5.

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ *The Centennial History of the Auckland Institute and Museum 1867-1967*, p. 16.

²¹⁶ *Otago Daily Times* August 8 1895, p. 1.

Dunedin. 'The Solar System' and 'A Trip to the Moon' illustrated with 'limelight views of the lunar surface, showing the volcanoes and the mountain ridge,' were well received.²¹⁷ 'Some magnificent mechanical slides shown by means of oxy-ether light' for 'An Hour in the Heavens' drew an audience of 700 to the Lyceum on a mid-winter afternoon in Christchurch.

Collins, who later became an eminent politician, was a rationalist. Rationalist and secularist movements such as the Australian Secular Association and the New Zealand Freethought Association were growing in the colonies in the 1890s.²¹⁸ Their adherents throughout the English speaking world, 'considered it their duty to denounce religious bigotry, and the weaken the hold of the church on society.'²¹⁹ Secularist 'missionaries' were trained in England and sent out to tour the colonies giving lectures and holding meetings. Collins was one of these, settling in Christchurch in 1890 after five years as a Secularist missionary in the eastern Australian colonies. A 'clear and forceful speaker and debater,' Collins used 'his knowledge of science and biblical criticism to make Christianity appear incredible, of history to depict the church as an enemy of freedom and progress, and Scripture to discredit a biblical God as a bloodthirsty despot.'²²⁰ He also made judicious use of the magic lantern as an effective visual aid to transmit his knowledge and ideology to his audience.

Later the same day, significantly a Sunday, Collins lectured to another large audience on 'Religious Quackery.'²²¹ His astronomical lectures, supported by powerful visual testimony of the lantern, laid the foundation for the free thinkers' deconstruction of religious 'superstition.' As the season progressed, Collins continued his critique with Sunday evening lantern lectures, proceeded by orchestral selections, with titles such as 'In the Beginning God Created the Heavens and the Earth' 'Body and Mind, or Materialism and Idealism' and 'The Five Senses and the Evolution of the Mind.'²²² Large audiences again attended Collins' lectures on social issues when his Sunday afternoon lecture on 'Christianity and Crime' was followed in the evening with 'How the Poor Live' illustrated by 'some pictures of the London slums.'²²³

Commercially produced slide sets of sentimentalised photographic genre studies of the English working class life were widely available and popular

²¹⁷ *Christchurch Press* May 27, 1893, p. 7; *Lyttelton Times* July 15, 1893, p. 1; *Otago Daily Times* August 18, 1893, p. 2.

²¹⁸ The significance of the nineteenth century Secularism in New Zealand and Australia is examined in P. J. Lineham 'Freethinkers in nineteenth century New Zealand' in *The New Zealand Journal of History* Vol. 19, No. 1, April 1985, pp. 61-80.

²¹⁹ Lineham 'Freethinkers' p. 73.

²²⁰ John Stenhouse, "Collins, William Whitehouse 1853-1923, in Claudia Orange (ed.) *Dictionary of New Zealand biography* Vol. 2, 1870-1910, pp. 94, 95.

²²¹ *Christchurch Press* June 19, 1893, p. 5.

²²² *Lyttelton Times* July 15 1893, p. 1; August 5 1893, p. 4; August 12 1893, p.1.

²²³ *Lyttelton Times* July 10 1893, p. 4.

with colonial audiences.²²⁴ Collins may also have been able to draw upon the work of photographers like Jacob Riis who, during the 1890s, were exploring the 'urban unknown' in England and America, a domestic parallel to 'pushing back the distant frontiers of Britain's burgeoning Empire.'²²⁵ Increasingly portable photographic apparatus and the development of flash photography enabled the production of images of the worst aspects of poverty in the big cities, and their subsequent broadcast to lantern audiences.²²⁶

The Dunedin lantern seasons of the new century reinforced prevailing notions of cultural dependency. A lecture on 'Homes and Haunts of England' illustrated by '60 beautiful limelight views' was given by Reverend R. M. Turnbull for St Matthew's Social Guild in June 1901.²²⁷ In the same month the Reverend W. Scorgie lectured to a packed hall on 'Florence the Wonderful' with 'beautiful limelight views, never before seen in New Zealand' which 'helped to convey to the audience some idea of the wonders of that ancient seat of art.' Mr. Scorgie's authority on the subject lay in his having had 'the advantage of spending some days in Florence a few years ago.'²²⁸

Subjects such as this emphasised the importance of maintaining and fostering the cultural links between the colony and an idealised construct of the 'Old World', culturally superior, homely and familiar, encoded in the canonical iconic sites (and sights) of European history and mythology. The vicarious experience of a lantern lecture would only enhance and encourage further connections. In August 1902, Miss Marchant, principal of the Otago Girls' School, gave a illustrated lecture on Venice at which she proffered this advice to 'young colonials who had not had an opportunity of visiting old world cities:'

Read all that you can, and when you go to Europe, as I hope you will some day, every house, every street, and every name will recall something of interest to your mind. To those who have seen these places, as I have seen them, read more, and deepen the impressions you have already received. Another visit will then bring a revelation of fresh truth and beauty.²²⁹

²²⁴ For example the Riley Bros series 'Street Criers of London', held in The Otago Settlers' Museum, and 'Street life: or people we meet' reproduced and discussed in Gordon *By gaslight in winter* pp. 51-81.

²²⁵ Ryan *Picturing Empire* p. 173.

²²⁶ For further discussion on this practice see John Tagg *The burden of representation : essays on photographs and histories* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988; H. J. Dyos & Michael Wolff (eds) *The Victorian city; images and realities* London, Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1973; P. Keating *Into unknown England 1866-1913: selections from the social explorers* Manchester [Eng.]: Manchester University Press; Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1976; Keith Gandal *The virtues of the vicious: Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane, and the spectacle of the slum* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

²²⁷ *Otago Daily Times* June 1 1901, p. 1.

²²⁸ *Otago Daily Times* June 19 1901, p.1; June 21 1901, p. 8.

²²⁹ *Otago Daily Times* August 2 1902, p. 3.

Lantern shows such as these ensured that young colonials would visit these cultural icons not as ignorant outsiders but as well-primed initiates of global high culture.

Concurrently other public lantern exhibitions showcased the spectacular geographical features of the region, the scientific work of local academics and the colony's opportunities for outdoor adventure. In June 1901 St Paul's Mutual Improvement Association, for example, presented a lecture 'On Mountaineering in New Zealand, illustrated by Limelight Views' by Dr P. D. Marshall, a lecturer at the Otago School of Mines, chaired by eminent historian Dr. T. M. Hocken.²³⁰

Arguably still the liveliest intellectual centre of the colony at the turn of the century, Dunedin had been the location, four decades earlier, of the first appearance of public secularism in New Zealand. Following this secularist tradition, the Dunedin Progressive Society was formed 1905 to provide 'a free, unfettered and impartial platform' for the discussion of 'all subjects of an educational interest, whether scientific, political, religious, ethical, philosophical, or literary, such as would stimulate individual thought.'²³¹ The lantern was used regularly as a visual aid on that platform. The Society's 'popular lectures' each 'profusely' illustrated with lantern slides included: 'Facts of Evolution' by Professor W. B. Benham, zoologist and Curator of the Otago University Museum; and A. A. Brown's presentation of ninety lantern slides on 'From Coast to Coast through Canada' with 'illustrated songs by Mr Percy James.'²³²

In its second year the Dunedin Progressive Society continued its 'popular scientific lectures' embracing topics that were contemporary and had local relevance.²³³ Marshall, now professor of geology, lectured on 'The Ice Age in New Zealand and Earlier Climates.' Using 'specially prepared maps and diagrams projected on to a large screen by powerful lantern' he described 'the extent to which different portions of the earth had been covered by ice, and mentioned the popular theories by which the great reverses that had taken place were accounted for.' Going on to explain the extent of glacial action on the geography of the South Island, he 'showed how much of the beautiful scenic features of [the Sounds] region were due to the ancient glaciers that moved slowly down the valleys now occupied by the sounds.'²³⁴

Informative and skilfully delivered though they might be these sorts of lectures herald the end of the magic days of the lantern. Although insisting that Dunedin Progressive Society lectures were well-received the *Otago Daily*

²³⁰ *Otago Daily Times* June 8 1901

²³¹ Aligning itself with neither 'political creed nor religious dogma' the DPS also took care to point out that it could not be either 'a Socialistic or a Freethought organization.' Dunedin Progressive Society committee report March 1906.

²³² *Otago Daily Times* February 15 1906, p. 1.

²³³ Many of the slides from these lectures are now held in the Otago Museum collection.

²³⁴ *Otago Daily Times* September 19 1906, p. 1.

Times observed, in its review of Brown's February lecture, that 'the announcement of a lecture is not always considered, as experience has shown, an irresistible attraction to the public in these days.'²³⁵ By the middle of the first decade of the new century the magic lantern had been largely overshadowed by more modern and innovative attractions, most notably the rapidly developing cinema, and begun its slide into dusty obscurity.

Tellingly, in the same column, the *Otago Daily Times* previewed a forthcoming programme of 'the very latest successes in moving picture films' imported from London by local entrepreneur Edmund Montgomery. Much of the repertoire is familiar from the heyday of the magic lantern: 'A Trip up Mount Blanc'; 'Marie Antoinette' (or 'From Queen to Scaffold'); 'mirth producers' such as 'A Policeman's Troubles' 'Bill Bailey's Surprise' and Sandy McGregor's Ablutions.' More innovative additions were 'Daring American Bank Robbery' and 'The Derby Winner.' In contrast to Brown's offering of one and a half hours of views of the Rocky Mountains, Montgomery claimed that 'One can obtain more tragedy, comedy, humour, and pulse-quickenning excitement in an hour at this show than can be obtained at a dozen ordinary theatrical performances.'

Lunatic asylums

'supplant the place of delusive ideas and feelings.'

'On reading, recreation and amusements for the insane' c1850.²³⁶

Within the broad discourse of individual improvement through the acquisition of information, the lantern was also deployed in settings on the periphery of mainstream colonial society. In the socially marginalised territory of hospitals for the care and treatment of the insane the magic lantern was used to assist in the restoration to health of the mentally and emotionally ill. The lunatic asylum, as such a hospital was normally known, was not ostensibly an educational setting but a medical one. Nevertheless, in these institutional locations the lantern was deployed for the inmates' instruction in a range of subjects, as well as amusement, with the objective of intellectual stimulation leading to overall improvement in the patient.

Barely a dozen years after the arrival of the first four ships at Lyttelton, the New Zealand province of Canterbury established a lunatic asylum. The proliferation of such institutions in the Victorian era is a story in itself of changing practices in England in response to 'the continuing rise in the

²³⁵ *Otago Daily Times* February 16 1906, p. 6.

²³⁶ John M. Galt 'On reading, recreation and amusements for the insane' paper delivered to an annual meeting of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the insane (date not given), cited in Godbey 'Picture me sane' p. 53.

proportion of the population officially recognised as insane.²³⁷ Within that ideological climate publicly funded lunatic asylums were established in the earliest stages of some settlements in the Australasian colonies. Edward William Seager and his wife Esther, keepers of the Lyttelton gaol, were appointed Superintendent and Matron of the asylum, later known as Sunnyside, positions they held from 1863 to 1887.

Following contemporary English practice, which since the 1830s had increasingly moved towards cure and care rather than restraint and punishment, the Seagers' management was compassionate and enlightened.²³⁸ In his first report to the Provincial Government in June 1867, Seager described under the category of 'General Treatment' a range of mundane social and practical activities. They included 'cultivating the soil,' religious services and a program of amusements to which neighbouring residents were invited, maintaining patients' contact with the wider community. The amusements were frequent and varied, and included indoor and outdoor games, communal concerts, musical and dramatic performances, and the magic lantern.²³⁹

Sunnyside was not the only colonial asylum practising these strategies. In South Australia in 1866 the Rev J. B. McCure took his dissolving view exhibition to the local 'lunatic asylum,' Adelaide Hospital for the Insane, where it was seen by three-quarters of the inmates. The *South Australian Register* reported that 'The dissolving views were given by the aid of the oxy-calcium light, which throws a large and powerful light upon a screen erected

²³⁷ Marlene A. Arenio *Victorian lunatics: a social epidemiology of mental illness in mid-nineteenth century England* Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico, 1984 p. vi. See also Leonard D. Smith *Cure, comfort and safe custody: public lunatic asylums in early nineteenth century England* London; New York: Leicester University Press 1999; Stephen Garton *Medicine and madness: a social history of insanity in New South Wales 1880-1940* Kensington, N.S.W.: New South Wales University Press, c1988.

²³⁸ See Arenio *Victorian lunatics* and Smith *Cure, comfort and safe custody*.

Although E. W. Seager's biographer, his granddaughter Madeline Seager, may be biased in her sympathetic account, the Seagers earned public respect in the region for their work at the hospital over several decades. Madeleine Seager *Edward William Seager: pioneer of mental health* Waikanae, N. Z.: The Heritage Press, 1987.

²³⁹ *Province of Canterbury Journal of Proceedings: Report on Lunatic Asylums 1866/67* cited in Seager *Edward William Seager* p. 109. This biography was published after the writer's death and although a list of archives and collection consulted is included, detailed references are not given. With sufficient time it is likely that much more could be discovered in the named archives, regarding E. W. Seager's lantern practice. Seager was an enthusiastic amateur entertainer. He maintained a lifelong interest in the lantern and after his retirement from the directorship of Sunnyside continued to entertain the local community with his lantern exhibitions. For example: 'Sacred and Secular' a 'high class descriptive entertainment' held in the Oddfellows' Hall, Christchurch in August 1893. The concert was in aid of the Choir of St Mary's Church. The program was equally divided between sacred and secular musical items, illustrated with lantern views. The lantern, illuminated by 'oxide- ether', was operated by E. W. Seager, with other leading members of Christchurch society presenting in the musical items. The *Lyttelton Times* judged the performance 'unique and interesting' and 'an excellent programme.' *Lyttelton Times* August 8, 1893, p. 1; August 10, 1893, p. 4.

in one of the wards of the institution, and the proceedings were enlivened by some brilliant performances on the pianoforte by the daughter of one of the officers of the Asylum.²⁴⁰ The program was not described except for the comment that it was 'highly interesting and instructive.' Elsewhere the repertoire of this Baptist temperance advocate included English illustrator and temperance advocate George Cruikshank's melodramatic ballad *The Bottle* with its horrendous madhouse scene.²⁴¹ The hospital did not have a space for the purpose, so it can be assumed that entertainments such as this were rare at this establishment. Nevertheless a dissolving view exhibition at the Adelaide Hospital for the Insane was again noted in 1873. This time local photographer James Brown took his lantern to entertain the inmates.²⁴² Earlier that year in the Adelaide Town Hall Brown had presented an exhibition of dissolving views, brought from the Inter-Colonial Exhibition in Melbourne, which included Gustave Dore's well-known illustrations of the Life of Christ.²⁴³

The audience at the Adelaide asylum was limited to inmates and staff, but such events were often open to the wider community. In Auckland in September 1871 'an entertainment got up for the benefit of the [inmates] of the [Provincial] Lunatic Asylum was given and a considerable number of people from the surrounding neighbourhood and the City of Auckland attended.' The extent of this community event was only restricted by a lack of sufficient transport from town. 'The magic lantern and dissolving views' were presented by Mr [S. C.] Brown and Mr Graham,' and followed with an amateur concert and a band and 'lastly a dance in which both visitors and the more rational of the patients joined in with much zest.'²⁴⁴

This use of the lantern for the entertainment of those in institutional care did not exist in isolation from international practice. Frederick Norton, in his *Report on lunatic asylums* commissioned by the NSW government in 1868 to assess current practice in Britain, Europe and America with a view to establishing effective and progressive institutions in the colony, noted that the magic lantern was frequently part of a regular program of entertainment for inmates.²⁴⁵ In many English asylums for example, an entertainment or social activity such as 'a dance, concert, lecture, or reading, a magic lantern exhibition, or a conjuring or theatrical performance,' was held each week and

²⁴⁰ *South Australian Register* August 31 1861, p. 2.

²⁴¹ The lantern slide version *The Bottle* is discussed further in chapter six of this thesis.

²⁴² Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

²⁴³ Images from Gustave Doré's illustrated Bible, first published in 1866, were quickly reproduced in other media including lantern slides. See Musée d'art moderne *Gustave Doré, 1832-1883* Exhibition catalogue Strasbourg: Musée d'art moderne, Cabinet des estampes, 1983, illustrations 49-53, pp. 94, 95. Further reference to the use of slides from Doré's engravings in the colonies is made in the following chapter.

²⁴⁴ *New Zealand Herald* September 30, 1871 [unpaginated]

²⁴⁵ Frederick Norton *Report on lunatic asylums* Sydney: Thomas Richards Government Printer 1868.

in some cases more often. The event might take place in the institution's dining room or amusement hall if there was one and were 'generally organised within the asylum.' In the main the entertainment was supplied by the inmates and attendants, 'more or less of a mutual character.' Quite often however 'extraneous assistance is obtained, and entertainments are given by either amateur or professional musicians, singers, lecturers, etc.'²⁴⁶

'Many asylums possess magic lanterns' Norton reported, and 'at others they are hired for the evening'²⁴⁷ In American asylums 'magic lanterns form a standing amusement.' One of these was the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, Philadelphia, where, under the direction of Thomas Story Kirkbride, the magic lantern had been a central to an expanding program of evening activities offered to patients since 1845. Along with the majority of recreational activities in American institutions, however, the lantern had 'instruction rather than amusement as its leading feature.'²⁴⁸

The reports of Kirkbride and his colleagues provide some indication of discourse underlying educational and therapeutic use of the lantern in lunatic asylums. In a report published in 1858 regarding the lectures and evening entertainments at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane it was argued that consistent with 'the modern enlarged idea of medicine' a 'modern institution for the insane' must provide for not only specially designed buildings, grounds and facilities to meet the physical, moral, religious, hygiene needs of patients, but also a systematic education to foster recreation and improvement.²⁴⁹

Referring to an annual report of Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane Kirkbride's biographer Nancy Tomes writes:

Reading the list of topics covered, including scenes of foreign countries, demonstrations in the natural sciences, and illustrations of new inventions such as the telegraph and steam engine, families would be convinced that hospital treatment included the equivalent of a lyceum series.²⁵⁰

Kirkbride's intention was that 'these lectures and entertainments' would at the very least 'occupy an hour pleasantly, ... divert the attention of some from habitual trains of thought, ... [and] help break up the monotony so common to evenings in a hospital.'²⁵¹ At best, the topics themselves were 'calculated to

²⁴⁶ Norton *Report on lunatic asylums* p. 101.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *ibid.* p. 102.

²⁴⁹ 'A lecture introductory to the thirteenth annual course of lectures and evening entertainments, at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, at Philadelphia. By Edward A. Smith, M. D., assistant physician.' *American journal of insanity* Vol.14 1857/1858, pp. 301-3. The underlying medical discourses are explained by Godbey in 'Picture me sane.'

²⁵⁰ Nancy Tomes *A generous confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the art of asylum-keeping, 1840-1883* Cambridge University Press, 1984 p. 139.

²⁵¹ *PHI Annual reports* 1858, p. 20. Cited in Godbey 'Picture me sane' p. 53.

excite curiosity, and fix the attention upon new and healthful objects.’²⁵² In her account of Kirkbride’s practice, Emily Godbey sums up the premise of this use of the lantern as a therapeutic tool:

viewers sat in a room while scientific, travel, comic and morality slides were displayed, and the slide lectures were to act as correctives to irrationally-functioning brains. The patients were to absorb the illustrated lesson and extract from them rational topics of thought and conversation.²⁵³

Although the Seagers’ relationship with American institutions is not known, E. W. Seager’s comments over the years in his reports to the Provincial Council indicate that his practice was informed by international discourse on the value of the medium as a restorative instrument. Unlike the large and wealthy Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, Sunnyside was constantly chronically under-funded and under-resourced. It is remarkable then that a hospital inventory of March 1870 lists under ‘items bought from private subscriptions’ a dissolving view apparatus valued at an astonishing £200, by far the most expensive item compared with £25 for pianoforte, £88 for billiard tables and £20 for musical instruments.²⁵⁴ Such extravagant patronage indicates the significance the medium had in the institution’s culture; apparatus of that value would have been capable of sophisticated visual effects and been suitable for projection in a large hall.

Not a great deal is known of the Sunnyside lantern repertoire. Inspirational and morally improving subjects such as a series of readings and lectures were given by the chaplain on *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.²⁵⁵ However instructive lectures at the level provided at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, such as ‘The History, Manufacture, and Uses of Illuminating Gas’ and ‘The Early Domestic Habits of New England,’ were not offered.²⁵⁶ Seager’s reports on the practice indicate that he placed most value on the simpler benefits of communal pleasure the lantern shows offered. In his report of 1871 to the Colonial Secretary, he commented on the pleasure provided to the patients by the ‘dissolving views.’ ‘The patients would converse with one another discussing the localities of the pictures.’²⁵⁷ Frequently a patient might recognise a familiar scene in a series of photographic views of England, Scotland or Ireland, ‘thereby awakening old recollections of bygone days.’²⁵⁸

²⁵² ‘A lecture introductory to the thirteenth annual course of lectures and evening entertainments, at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, at Philadelphia. By Edward A. Smith, M. D., assistant physician.’ *American journal of insanity* Vol.14 1857/1858, pp. 301-3.

²⁵³ Godbey ‘Picture me sane’ p. 53.

²⁵⁴ Seager *Edward William Seager* p. 121.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 126.

²⁵⁶ *Tomes A generous confidence* p. 200.

²⁵⁷ Seager *Edward William Seager* p. 277.

²⁵⁸ *Report of Joint Committee upon Lunatic Asylums* October 1871. Cited in M. Seager, p. 126.

The 'healthful influence of hilarity' identified by Kirkbride's colleague John Galt, was not discounted either.²⁵⁹ Kirkbride's biographer Nancy Tomes writes that 'the patients particularly liked illustrations of foreign countries and cartoon-like "comic views".'²⁶⁰ Seager had plenty of evidence of the 'healthful influence of hilarity' especially when mediated through the institution's £200 worth of visual technology. On the inmates' responses to the classic mechanical slides and transformation scenes, he commented: 'The mirth and surprise occasioned by the transition from one view to another, has a most wonderful effect on the mind.'²⁶¹ For additional amusement patients were photographed, especially if they were 'of a comic cast' and shown on the screen.²⁶² Elsewhere he reported on the dramatic recovery of a woman seeing a visiting Christy's Minstrels performance. The 'wonderful effect on the mind' of light-hearted and communal entertainment was beyond doubt for Seager.

In this way the lantern functioned as an instrument for the correction and restoration of 'irrationally functioning brains.' This use of illusion and spectacle presents an interesting reversal. That comic and illusory views should be employed to 'supplant the place of delusive ideas and feelings' as Galt theorised stands in marked contrast to earlier associations of the medium with, as Tom Gunning writes, 'the derangement of the senses' brought about by the phantasmagoria exhibitions of the late eighteenth century for example.²⁶³

Both these applications of visual technology highlight the way that the lantern experience functioned therapeutically for reinclusion or reintegration of minds, separated geographically physically or psychologically either by choice or by social and cultural exclusionary practices, back into mainstream culture.

Pedagogical use of the magic lantern expanded the opportunities through which colonists of all ages, social origins and geographical areas could encounter modern visual technology. In formal instructional contexts, such as schools and universities, in community-based educational programs, and in institutions, such as the lunatic asylum, the integration of the medium into the cultural and technological environment of the Australasian colonies was extended, further disseminating its message of visual technological literacy

²⁵⁹ John M. Galt 'On reading, recreation and amusements for the insane,' a report to the AMASII cited in Godbey p. 53.

²⁶⁰ Tomes *A generous confidence* p. 200.

²⁶¹ Cited in Seager *Edward William Seager* p. 277.

²⁶² *ibid.* p. 126. This practice contrasts with Kirkbride's. As Godbey points out the PHI carefully steered away from photographing inmates in any context, deeming it an intrusion into privacy and confidentiality, and to avoid making them a spectacle,

²⁶³ Galt 'On reading, recreation and amusements for the insane.' Gunning 'Renewing old technologies.'

The pedagogical value of the medium relied heavily on the indexical relationship of the lantern image to its subject. The combined power of the literally descriptive photographic image and enlarged projection created an illusion that viewers learned to read and experience as the equivalent to a direct encounter with original subject.

Once again, as in the entertainment context, the subjects of the educational magic lantern exhibition constituted almost exclusively an imperial world view. Michael Chanan's observation of the function of the medium 'to inject a uniform view of the world right into the heart of existing institutions'²⁶⁴ is thus borne out in the context of colonial Australasia. Responses to Thomas Crook's educational pilgrimage to Maori communities, for example, articulated the significance of the medium in the promulgation of the imperial world picture. Presenting Maori audiences with a magic lantern experience of European urban spaces, cultural icons and modern progress, was intended to initiate them into western modernity and foster that allegiance to the imperial cultural centre held by the colonial community. Even in instances where local content was included, such as Haywood's trans-colonial views in the 1880s, and advocated by Martin in the 1890s, it was framed pedagogically as a lesson in geography, part of a wider British imperial perspective, mediated through a global technology.

Although the magic lantern's suitability to classroom teaching was identified and promoted by its advocates, wider adoption in schools was somewhat constrained by limits to the energy, time, finances and imagination of educators and their employers, the school boards. Nevertheless the repeated association with formal education and instruction helped to neutralize the magic lantern's novelty appeal. In more well-endowed educational institutions, colonial universities for example, its application was extended and valued into the twentieth century, giving rise to a long-standing and central practice of illustrated lectures in most disciplines, and the legacy of large collections of superseded glass slides.

Thus in the education sector over the later nineteenth century the projected still image shifted from its populist status as an instrument of illusion and spectacle to a higher standing of literality and veridicality, to become a 'transparent' medium through which the simulacrum could be directly encountered – a technological illusion consumed as a tangible reality.

²⁶⁴ Chanan *The dream that kicks* pp. 12-13.

Chapter Six

‘Strong men will weep in the dark:’ the magic lantern and religion

The idea may seem as fantastic as did the first introduction of the Hymn book. But before long the lantern may become as indispensable as the pulpit itself.

William Thomas Stead, London, c.1895.¹

I have come to the conclusion that the magic lantern is the greatest agency for securing individual conversions in existence ...Strong men will weep in the dark who dare not show their feelings in the light.²

Joseph Nix, West London Wesleyan Mission, c.1895

While educational uses tended to deploy the rational, literal aspects of the medium, the applications of the magic lantern by religious, proselytising and reform institutions and movements rested more heavily upon its affective aspects to influence spectators morally and emotionally. The use of the magic lantern in these contexts in Britain acquired increasing momentum from the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, similar practices had become well established in the Australasian colonies, where religious proselytisers, evangelists and moral improvers of all sorts, from sectarian, clerical and lay evangelists, temperance advocates and missionaries, to non-sectarian movements and propagandists, constituted a major group of magic lantern practitioners, and slide and lantern purchasers. The copious catalogues of English producers and local suppliers of the 1880s to early 1900s document the extensive repertoire of images suitable for religious and evangelical purposes. The extent to which they were imported into and used in the colonies is evident in the wide variety and selection of scriptural, liturgical and inspirational slides preserved in collections throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The notion of magic, natural or otherwise, sits rather uncomfortably in the context of nineteenth century Victorian Christianity, which would seem to have no place for an instrument burdened with two centuries of associations with worldliness, conjuring tricks and spirit-raising. The magic lantern was, nevertheless, adopted by evangelical groups and individuals within the non-conformist, as well as many mainstream, churches. English lanternist Hughes, in the 1893 edition of his top selling instruction manual *The art of projection*, described English practice in the 1880s and 1890s:

¹ Stead ‘Magic lantern mission.’

² Joseph Nix of the West London Wesleyan Mission quoted by W. T. Stead in ‘Magic lantern mission.’

In some the churches, it is the rule to give a lecture or pictorial service, after evensong on Sundays,... [for those] who could not be got into church by other means. Such subjects being used as "The Angels," as mentioned in the old and new Testament, "Church History," "The Passion of our Lord," ... &c., and showing such effects as the "Rock of Ages," during the singing of the hymns by the choir ³

Contrary to W. T. Stead's expectation, the lantern did not 'become as indispensable as the pulpit.'⁴ It is evident, nevertheless, that the medium had a place in the social and liturgical life of many Christian congregations in the Australasian colonies, as local clergy followed the example of the more progressive of their English counterparts in recognising the power of the medium as a pastoral tool. One of those who encouraged the practice was Reverend H. R. Haweis, respected English clergyman and member of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Visiting Auckland during his colonial lecture tour of 1895, Haweis spoke of 'the desirability of having lantern slides shown during divine service,' declaring that he was 'in favour of introducing new methods to draw people to the House of God and even had slides in his own church.'⁵

Nevertheless the climate of opinion in which this practice was located was ambivalent. The use of modern visual technology in a consecrated space aroused strong reactions from some quarters to a perceived blurring of spatial and temporal boundaries between the sacred and the profane. In 1894, writing on 'The Lantern in church' in the *Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger*, English cleric G. W. Nash noted, that although he had had 'splendid success' with 'picture sermons', there were those amongst both clergy and laity in England who were 'shocked and horrified at the idea of the magic lantern in church.'⁶ At his lecture in Auckland Haweis admitted that 'many of the clergy were strongly opposed to it, and resented it.'⁷ In this context the technology of the lantern was not perceived as neutral. At best, it was regarded as an interruption of the secular world into a devotional setting. At worst, this lowly form of amusement and deception represented a profane intrusion into sacred space, and its use in any space on the Sabbath was viewed by some as sacrilegious.⁸

Proponents argued that the lantern was an effective means to reach the less educated and religiously inclined. Hughes makes this clear: 'If every prejudiced person could be present at one of these evenings, he could see

³ Hughes, *The art of projection* p. 103.

⁴ Stead 'Magic lantern mission.'

⁵ *New Zealand Herald* July 8, 1895.

⁶ *OMLJPE* 1894, vol 5, pp. 78-79. Hecht p. 292, 415L.

⁷ *New Zealand Herald* July 8, 1895.

⁸ Stead noted in the 1890s that 'In Scotland the prejudice against using the lantern on a Sunday still lingers.' In 1899 it was noted in the *OMLJPE* that lantern sermons were still not taken for granted. Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 292 entry 415L.

what really can be done with a secular and rough audience.⁹ Even so, Hughes' recommendations on bringing the lantern into the church related to less formal occasions, not replacements for traditional liturgies and he warned that indications for its use were restricted. The lantern service was not proposed to replace normal church services, for instance, '[n]o-one would think of displacing or attempting to rival the three hours' service [on Good Friday],' he wrote. But for those 'too ignorant and untrained to appreciate and understand' that lengthy ritual a 'pictorially illustrated evening devotion' with lantern slides of 'scenes in our Lord's Life and His Passion,' an appropriate alternative.¹⁰

Aware of the problematic blurring of boundaries and the need to reduce the negative impact of the medium, Hughes, in his advice to lanternists operating in a church setting, emphasised the special care needed to prevent any undignified or unintentionally comical moments in the exhibition, or anything that might draw attention to the technology and thus disrupt the sacred and devotional mood. 'Scrupulous care should be taken that there is no possible chance of a hitch in any manner,' he cautioned, 'In a church nothing that suggests the least unworthy remark should be seen or heard.'¹¹ 'One of the great dangers of such a devotion' was, in his opinion, the use of poor quality slides 'unintentionally grotesque and shockingly painted.'¹² Even W. T. Stead, who advocated the publication of an 'Illustrated Lantern Bible,' warned that it 'would simply amount to blasphemy if the representation of the sacred writings would be placed in the hands of a pot-boiling slide dauber.'¹³ 'Take special care,' Hughes continued, 'that the rays from the lantern escape the head gear of the feminine portion of the congregation and under no plea allow persons to pass in front of the screen. Nothing mars the solemnity more than to see a silhouette of a person's head on the bottom of a picture.'¹⁴ He also warned that 'If it is a service for adults, under no circumstances admit children.'¹⁵ The implication is that 'a secular and rough audience' and children would be too ready to be amused at anything ludicrous, and thus to perceive and expose the ludic nature of any irregularity during the performance. Such were the dangers a lanternist had negotiate in order to maintain a distance between a solemn religious exhibition and shows given for public and private entertainment.

Nevertheless many clergy in the Australasian colonies followed the example of their English counterparts in adopting the magic lantern for certain devotional and ecclesiastical occasions. Existing collections in church and secular archives reveal a large body of slide images specifically for that

⁹ Hughes, *The art of projection* p. 103-4.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹²

¹³ Stead 'Magic lantern mission.' Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 239, entry 358.

¹⁴ Hughes, *The art of projection* p. 104.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

purpose, inspirational stories and devotional songs, scriptural subjects and biblical stories. Specific examples of religious and devotional use of slides in the colonies are however more difficult to locate. It was not the sort of event that might be advertised or reviewed in the press. Primary sources that might include reference to the practice, such as personal journals, oral histories and local histories require more intensive research. Fortunately, however, evidence of at least one colonial cleric's lantern practice has been preserved in family and local history.

Reverend Percy John Thomas Edwards

Church of England clergyman and avid lanternist, Reverend Percy John Thomas Edwards (1850-1940), made extensive use of the magic lantern during his assignment to parishes in Victoria around the turn of the century. He was posted in the Western Port district of south east of Melbourne from 1895 to 1901 and the Diocese of Wangaratta in north-eastern Victoria from 1902 to 1921 (figure 6.1). Throughout his career Edwards used a mahogany and brass single projector, No. 6 Premier made by London lantern manufacturers W. Watson & Sons and probably obtained through their branch in Swanston Street, Melbourne. The lantern was the generous gift of the Grimwade family of Melbourne whose country home, *Coolart*, stood within the Western Port parish to which Edwards was assigned in June 1895.¹⁶ It is unlikely that Edwards, then a stipendiary reader, the poorest paid and lowest grade of Church of England clergy, would have been able to purchase for himself such a magnificent piece of equipment. Edwards orchestrated entire Sunday evening services using the Watson lantern and a large collection of slides including hymns, devotional songs, prayers and order of evening service; and these services lingered in the memory of the community for years afterwards.

It can be imagined that Edwards followed the advice in Hughes's manual that when 'a single lantern is used, it can be placed behind the screen in the chancel, and the pictures thrown through, and if the screen is not large enough, the sides filled in with curtains, to prevent any movement being seen.'¹⁷ The projection apparatus was thus out of sight to the congregation seated in the pews and the views, order of evening service, and hymn and prayer slides, appeared on the screen in the darkened church interior, or school hall, accompanied by music and song (figure 6.2). As Hughes explained, 'No books are needed, the hymns and prayers being thrown on the screen where every one must look, and are thereby almost compelled to sing, and the singing is indeed most hearty.'¹⁸

In the 1890s Edwards and his colleagues had access to an extensive repertoire available through all local suppliers. Extant catalogues listed hundreds of

¹⁶ Cole, 'Western Port cameo.' Conversation with Dr. Ian Edwards, Melbourne, 27 March 2001.

¹⁷ Hughes, *The art of projection*, p. 104.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

titles. Hymn and song slides with words only could be purchased by the dozen, and were also available in large type, embellished with ornamental borders or a small landscape or sea view. But it was the fully illustrated hymns and devotional songs such as *Rock of Ages* that brought visual technological spectacle into the religious context. Inspirational and devotional ballads such as *Star of Bethlehem*, *The Better Land*, *The Holy City*, *The Lost Chord* and *Ora pro nobis* made extensive use of life model scenes combined with painted segments, elaborate dissolving effects and overlays to represent inner visions, dreams and angelic apparitions (figure 6.3).¹⁹ Even with only a single projector, as Edwards had, sequenced, individual slides judiciously hand coloured with evocative musical accompaniment would have had a powerful effect. In this way the visual technological exhibitions put on in a country church hall by the religious practitioner Edwards, were indeed not far removed from those staged by professional entertainers in the city, a confirmation of the blurring of boundaries between the devotional and the spectacular which caused concern for those who were ambivalent about the use of the magic lantern in a church setting.

Liberal use of life model slides and dissolving effects were out of place in the illustration of Biblical subjects. Scenes from the Old and New Testaments were typically depicted not with life models but with reproductions of images from the European art historical canon. The 'Woodburytype' photographic process, used for fine art reproduction in the best contemporary publishing, was most frequently employed by commercial manufacturers such as Newton & Co who were the among the main English suppliers of scripture slides. They sourced their images from all over Europe, purchasing rights to the work of European photographers and slide makers who in turn traded in photographic reproductions of the work of the 'Old Masters,' as well as more recent fashionable artists in the academic style (figure 6.4). Where recorded, the provenance of such slides attests to a traffic in images across an international network of photographers, licensees, publishers, slide-makers and distributors, and is evidence of cautious copyright protocol at least in the case of contemporary art works.²⁰

The periods on the church calendar of Lent and Advent were frequently occasions for a series of weekly slide shows. A range of artists and art historical styles might be juxtaposed and orchestrated into appropriate narrative sequences of the events leading up to Christmas and Easter. A sample of images in the Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives encompasses such a range. 'Old Masters' Raphael, Rubens, Albrecht Durer,

¹⁹ Cole notes that *Ora Pro Nobis* (Pray for us) was a favourite with Edwards's Hastings congregation. Cole 'Western Port cameo.'

²⁰ Two examples by London slide-makers Newton & Co. are in the Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives. A reproduction of *The Annunciation* by H. Hoffman is copyrighted to Swiss photographic studio E. Gautschy Maison d'Optique Lausanne; and Bouguereau's *Our Lady of the Angels* to Braun, Clement, & Co.

and Guido Reni (1575-1642) ²¹ were combined freely with the work of contemporary artists Adolphe William Bouguereau (1825-1905), Luc Olivier Merson (1846-1920), Heinrich Hoffman (1824-1911) and founder of the English Pre-Raphaelite movement William Holman Hunt (1837-1910) all of whose work was frequently reproduced in various media (figure 6.5). Such highly derivative images have little appeal for twenty-first century consumers of visual culture saturated as it is with high quality, full colour art reproductions. They do, however, indicate the extent to which the magic lantern contributed to the transmission of high art images beyond an elite and well-travelled audience, increasing the influence of European high art aesthetic values on colonial populist taste, as noted previously.

Surviving collections also reveal that slides made from engravings of the work of French illustrator Gustav Doré (1832-1883) were greatly favoured by religious practitioners (figure 6.6).²² Doré's treatment of light and shade had a richness and depth some thought comparable to colour and the engraved illustrations reproduced superbly with conventional photographic processes for use as monochrome or hand-coloured slides. Published editions of the so-called *Doré Bible*, containing 230 engravings completed in 1865, and of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Dante's *Divina Commedia* illustrated by Doré, were widely available and used freely by commercial and private slide makers.²³

To meet the demand for slides of inspirational and devotional subjects, substantial quantities of lantern slides were produced by the majority of British slide manufacturers and subsequently imported and sold in the colonies. All local suppliers carried slides in this category and some, such as T. W. Cameron in Melbourne and the New Zealand Bible, Tract and Book Supply in Wellington, specialized in religious subjects. At the same time, local production of slides of religious subjects, hymn and songs of all kinds, prayers, order of service, and so on, flourished as local commercial slide-makers offered slides made to order from any photographically reproducible illustration, and the technology became increasingly accessible to the general public for home slide production.

In this way the practice of using the magic lantern in a religious and even liturgical context maintained the circulation through the colonies of a global repertoire of both 'high art' images and modern visual narrative techniques like the photographic life-model slide. Importantly too, this application of the lantern, despite its detractors, reinforced the expansion of visual technological literacy.

²¹ These include Raphael's *Via Dolorosa*, Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*, Dürer's *It is finished*, Guido Reni *Ecce Homo*.

²² For a survey of the use of Doré's engravings in lantern slides see Dan Malan 'Gustave Doré: magic lantern slides' in *The new magic lantern journal* Vol 9 No 1 winter 2001, pp.3-6.

²³ Adelaide lanternist James H. E. Brown exhibited Doré's scriptural illustrations in the early 1870s. Noye 'Photohistory SA.'

There were other ways in which clerical lantern slide practices were of benefit in the colonial context. One of Hughes' justifications for using the lantern was that on some occasions services 'cannot be held in some parishes, and there are many who cannot attend.'²⁴ This was the case in Edwards's parishes in rural Victoria. At Western Port, for example, where his district covered forty kilometres from Flinders to Sommerville, he had to spread his ministry amongst the little centres of Tyabb, Flinders, Shoreham, Balnarring, Somers and Hastings. In locations lacking a church, a small hall or local schoolroom might be used instead; the congregation might need coaxing to make the troublesome journey to a service. In these circumstances the lantern service promised a sense of occasion and spectacle as a substitute for the ceremony of a normal church service and an attraction to the less motivated.

As Cole has shown, Edwards also made effective use of his lantern in the wider community. The concept and practice of an outreach ministry in the community was familiar to Edwards. Before emigrating, to Victoria in 1889, Edwards had been a missionary in London working with the homeless in the Thames area.²⁵ It is likely that both his practical approach to ministry and his lantern practice began there. From that experience he would have acquired the technical and directorial skills necessary to negotiate 'the great dangers of such a devotion' of which Hughes warned. When he came to the Parish of Hastings in 1895 Edwards found a situation where the social life of the district had become centred around the attraction of the Hastings Battery. Established to protect the colony from invasion by sea through Western Port Bay, the moveable battery consisted of four 40-pounder Armstrong Breech Loading guns with a range of almost two miles and was operated by local volunteers. With the young men of the area gravitated to such a spectacular piece of technology, it is not surprising that, as Cole observes, community social life came to be centred around the Hastings Battery and its activities.²⁶ The magic lantern became part of an arsenal of modern visual technology deployed by Edwards to entice parishioners back into a church-centred community life. His surviving collection of slides attests to a variety of entertainments on a diversity of general topics including travel and description, comic slides, life model melodramas, advertisements for Pears soap and local, photographic views including a group portrait of the uniformed volunteers with their 40-pounder. (figure 6.7) The lantern was also played a very practical educational role when Edwards gave illustrated lectures on health issues, including the avoidance of venereal disease, to the young men of Hastings who were later sent to the Transvaal as part of the Victorian 2nd Contingent in the Anglo-Boer War.

In this way, Edwards's work with the lantern extended beyond the church walls to become a unifying force and a social service within the parish. These

²⁴ Hughes, *The art of projection*, p. 104.

²⁵ Cole 'Western Port cameo'; Interview with Dr Ian Edwards, 27 March 2001.

²⁶ Cole, 'The magic lantern: a Western Port cameo.'

activities were thus not simply an example of the magic lantern in the service of religion, they represented a democratization of church ministry and the emergence of a new social practice. The strengthening of community through the gathering of inhabitants of thinly populated parishes of rural areas is a significant social characteristic of the magic lantern show in rural colonial Victoria. Cole evokes the powerful effect Edwards's 'legendary' lantern exhibitions had on his community:

It nurtured warm and rich memories for parents and their children and aided in the well-being of country people – even if the effort in getting to the local hall meant catching and harnessing the horse before driving over rough bush tracks on cold, wet nights.²⁷

At the same time practitioners in similar circumstances to Edwards's brought the experience of medium and its visual technological message to marginalised communities distant from urban centres and out of the way of touring lecturers.

As an Anglican, Edwards was among the more progressive of his colleagues in his enthusiasm for adopting magic lantern technology in the face of conservative opposition to its use particularly within the traditional liturgy. Non-conformist groups such as the Methodists were less constrained by such dogma. A widespread and well-resourced lantern practice was supported through the Methodist movement in the colonies as in England. Methodist and Baptist archives can usually be relied on to reveal a dusty collection of lantern slides.²⁸ Prominent Melbourne lantern slide supplier T. W. Cameron moved into the trade after he was forced through ill health to retire from the Primitive Methodist ministry and retained a close connection with religious lantern slide practice. The Central Methodist Mission (Wesley Church, Melbourne), held a monthly Lantern Service for many years during the 1890s. Alexander Gunn noted that 'the congregation often numbering over 2,000 ... The pictorial representation of the Scripture has undoubtedly largely contributed to the success of the above Mission.'²⁹ These and other instances attest to the widespread use of this technology by Protestant clergy, thus contributing to the exposure of colonial population to the medium and its message.

Temperance

*She had heard his faithful promise,
Heard her wayward father say
He would sign the pledge and keep it,
Then her spirit passed away.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ For example the Methodist archives Christchurch and Wellington, Dunedin City Baptist Church Records, Hocken Library, University of Otago, have glass lantern slides dated from the 1880s to the 1950s.

²⁹ Gunn *Catalogue* pp. 2-3.

Beyond the confines of the mainstream churches Victorian middle-class social reformers were responding to plight of the unsaved and unwashed among city dwellers. The 'demon drink' was the culprit at whose feet were laid the responsibility for all the social ills of the era, poverty, homelessness, insanity, abandoned children, moral decay.³¹ In England from as early as the 1820s temperance advocates had begun organising vociferous and energetic campaigns aimed at educating the lower classes on the perils of even the least amount of alcohol. Known to have been used by the Band of Hope from at least the early 1850s, the magic lantern was one means by which middle-class reformers could communicate effectively with their target audience.³²

Perceiving there were similar issues with alcohol in the colonies, emissaries of the English temperance movement launched into similarly framed campaigns. In a survey of temperance movements in Australia, Milton Lewis notes that the earliest appeared in Van Diemen's Land and Sydney in the 1830s, and in Melbourne in 1847.³³ Temperance advocates in the colonies were just as vociferous and energetic as their counterparts in England. In addition to publishing literature promoting their message, they set up book-rooms, alcohol-free hotels and coffee-palaces. Public lectures exhorted patrons to pledge and to renew pledges to total abstinence. Appropriate to the highly emotional tone of these lectures, visual technology was employed to strengthen the message with illustrated moral tales depicting the consequences of the drunkenness.

'Cruikshank's celebrated plates on *The Bottle* were given top billing at an exhibition by 'powerful magic lantern' at the North Adelaide Temperance Hall in May 1865.³⁴ *The Bottle*, also known as *The drunkard's home* was originally published in 1846 as a set of eight steel engravings by British social and political satirist George Cruikshank (1792-1878).³⁵ It was perhaps the most popular of temperance tales around the middle of the century.

The eight images translated adapted well to the medium of projection from the magic lantern. In print the series had been an immediate success. One hundred thousand copies at a shilling a print were sold out within a few days, with further reprints. Large presentation copies, both coloured and

³⁰ Reproduced in Household *To catch a sunbeam* pp. 19-23.

³¹ For a fuller discussion of this movement see Lilian Lewis Shiman *Crusade against drink in Victorian England* London: Macmillan 1988.

³² 'A chat with the officials of the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union' in *The optical lantern and cinematograph journal* November 1905, vol. 2, pp. 13-15. Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 324, entry 469D.

³³ Milton Lewis *A rum state: alcohol and state policy in Australia 1788-1988* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992 pp. 49-51.

³⁴ *South Australian Register* May 2, 1865, p. 1. May 3, 1865, p. 3.

³⁵ Cruikshank's work was in turn inspired by *The Drunkard: A poem* of 1842 by John O'Neill who later became known as the 'Laureate of the Temperance Movement.

uncoloured, soon followed.³⁶ The wide distribution of Cruikshank's engravings meant that plates would have been known to many colonists. As Louis James points out, the resounding success of the series was largely amongst the lower middle-class and working-class of England.³⁷ This was due in part to the cheapness of the prints and the timeliness of the themes, but also to the large following maintained by the artist himself throughout the Victorian era, for both his work as engraver and caricaturist and his eccentric behaviour.³⁸ His personal style was reflected in an idiosyncratic graphic style, which had its roots in the early nineteenth century taste for the grotesque, and in a Hogarthian approach both to social commentary and to iconography and composition as the narrative and allegorical link running through a series of images.³⁹ These were the qualities that gave his images such resonance and broad appeal and translated so effectively into the projected medium.

Extant lantern slides for *The Bottle* closely follow the engravings (figure 6.8).⁴⁰ Depicting the relentless, downward progress of a drunkard from rosy domestic bliss to the madhouse, the series presented the case for total abstinence from alcohol. As the *South Australian Register* observed, 'The scenes showing the results of drunkenness and the insensible way in which it stole over its victims were good exemplifications of temperance principles.'⁴¹ In the manner of Hogarth's famous serials the narrative is played out on an several levels: at an overt theatrical level through the actions, gestures and expressions of the human characters; on a slightly more subtle, allegorical level by the incidental details included; and the carefully and tellingly repeated compositional structure and positioning of staffage which holds the eight images together. For example, the hearth situated on the right hand side in all but one of the images stands as a metaphor for the deteriorating

³⁶ E. D. H. Johnson 'The George Cruikshank Collection at Princeton' in Robert L Patten (ed) *George Cruikshank: a revaluation* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992 pp. 1-33, p. 28. All eight engravings are reproduced in Richard A. Vogler *Graphic works of George Cruikshank* New York: Dover Publications, 1979 illustrations 220-227.

³⁷ Louis James 'An artist in time: George Cruikshank in three eras' in Patten *George Cruikshank: a revaluation* pp. 157-211, p. 165.

³⁸ Indicative of his global following was the appearance of lengthy obituaries in several colonial newspapers following his death in 1878. Cruikshank was, as Eric De Maré describes him, 'excitable, irascible, and constantly in police custody for boisterous and bibulous behaviour until he reformed in his fifties and became an obsessed temperance campaigner.' Eric De Maré, *The Victorian wood-block illustrators* London : G. Fraser, 1980 p. 128.

³⁹ The place of *The Bottle* series within that tradition consolidated by eighteenth century English painter and art theoretician William Hogarth, is outlined by Natalie E. Smith 1998 'The Hogarth tradition: Cruikshank and Frith' in *Apollo* Vol. 148, no. 438, August 1998, pp. 22-25.

⁴⁰ A full set of coloured slides can be seen on line at <http://hometown.aol.com/larrykench/index.html>, accessed 15 January 2001. The captions included are taken from the original, the site owner's extraneous comments may be disregarded.

⁴¹ *South Australian Register* August 28 1866, p. 2.

domestic and psychological situation.⁴² Synecdochal details such as these provided a particular satisfaction to the viewer who was willing to peruse and interpret each detail, in this way the series could be read almost as directly as a text, an aspect of aesthetic appreciation highly valued in academic and mainstream Victorian culture.

Although something of the original image is lost through cropping to a circular frame, and with a reduction of linearity through chromolithographic reproduction, new possibilities were offered by the combination of such a series of linked images with performance techniques unique to the lantern. Most notably, as the advertisement pointed out, the scale, colour and luminosity inherent in lantern projection brought the figures to life. Extant slides sets with hand colouring usually reveal judicious use of the emotive charge of colour, as the warm, bright tones of the first scene give way to more drab and sinister greens and greyish hues. The strong narrative allegorical device of maintaining the compositional and iconographical link between the images was enhanced by the dissolving view technique. The effect was much admired. The *South Australian Register* wrote, 'Many of the representations were strikingly beautiful, and they acquired an additional charm from the exquisite manner in which they seemed to grow out from the ruins of their predecessors; the one gaining distinctness as the other faded away.'⁴³ The sequence upon another important characteristic of the traditional lantern slide performance. The ekphrasis or 'stopped moment' delineated by each slide allows time for the detail of the image to be examined and contemplated by the viewer and expounded upon by the narrator.⁴⁴

The Bottle appeared in the colonies regularly through the early wave of the movement temperance in 1860s and 1870s, with its sequel, *The drunkard's children*.⁴⁵ Although lacking the strong visual cohesion of its predecessor, this second series of eight images, engraved to Cruikshank's drawings, followed a similar sensationalist trajectory of tragedy and desolation, describing the progress of son and daughter 'Neglected by Their Parents Educated Only in the Streets and Falling into the Hands of Wretches who Live upon the Vices of Others' to the final scene where, 'The Maniac Father and the Convict Brother are Gone, - the Poor Girl, Homeless, Friendless, Deserted, Destitute, and Gin-

⁴² James comments in detail on the iconography of the plates. James 'An artist in time' pp. 166-168.

⁴³ *South Australian Register* August 28, 1866, p. 2.

⁴⁴ The term 'stopped moment' is used by Miriam Bailin in her discussion of the visual in Victorian literature. Miriam Bailin 'Seeing is believing in *Enoch Arden*' in Christ & Jordan *Victorian* pp. 313-326. This is a quality of the projected image which was, in much early cinema, eclipsed by and devalued in the obsession with the representation of movement on the screen.

This way of telling a story through a sequence of vignettes, adapted from literary conventions, became so closely associated with magic lantern performance that it could be re-appropriated as literary trope, as in the story of 'Sulky Tom' Appendix

⁴⁵ First published in print in 1848.

Mad, Commits Self Murder.'⁴⁶ McCure promised the spectacle 'will be represented LIFE-LIKE and LIFE-SIZE.'⁴⁷

The exhibition of Cruikshank's narratives using this visual technology draws attention to a unique combination offered by the medium of the delight of close perusal of detailed narrative iconography, the impact of life-size and life-like images, with an evocative representation of the passage of time, within the performative and communal context of theatre – teaching both the principles of temperance and the principles of the medium.

When Cruikshank's *The Bottle* was shown at the North Adelaide Temperance Hall in May 1865, its message of the alcohol's 'evil effects ... as shown by the crime and misery existing wherever it is indulged in' was reiterated in a short lecture by the local member of Parliament G. W. Cole who recommended it as 'a strong moral lesson for children,' and made 'an earnest appeal to parents to keep the intoxicating cup from their children, it being the first drop from which all misery would spring.'⁴⁸ The following year, when Adelaide and surrounding townships were again treated to Cruikshank's homily on the big screen, schoolchildren were actively encouraged to attend. A special session was arranged at the Adelaide Town Hall in August 1866 for the Rev. J. B. McCure's double bill of *The drunkard's home* and *the drunkard's children*. Admission was 'little more than minimal' and three-quarters of the audience in the packed that night were children. 'Nothing can be more amusing and delightful to juveniles than exhibitions of this sort,' *The South Australasian Register* wrote. The effect of the 'strong moral lesson' on the children, reportedly 'in the highest spirits' before the show began, is not, however, recorded.⁴⁹

Lecturer J. T. Headley boasted of two 'powerful phantasmagoria lanterns with dissolving apparatus' when *The Bottle* was again shown at a series of lantern shows for the Band of Hope at Primitive Methodist chapels around Adelaide in July 1872.⁵⁰ The term 'phantasmagoria' had by that time come to indicate back-projection, the slides being projected from behind a translucent screen, thus heightening the illusory quality.⁵¹ But the term also serves as a reminder of the way in which the medium could function as a spectacle of hyper-reality based on the emotive treatment of life and death issues through the manipulation of visual technologies and graphic images. Stocks of graphic, that is painted, drawn or printed images were plundered by commercial manufacturers and individual as sources for slides to meet populist aesthetics. Many Victorian artists worked to that audience,

⁴⁶ Reproduced in Vogler *Graphic works*, illustrations 228-235, and Harry Stone 'Dickens, Cruikshank, and Fairy Tales' in Patten George *Cruikshank: a revaluation* p. 226.

⁴⁷ *South Australian Register* September 7, 1866, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *South Australian Register* May 2, 1865, p. 1. May 3, 1865, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *South Australian Register* August 28, 1866, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *South Australian Register* July 5 1866, p. 3.

⁵¹ See for example Carpenter 'A short account of the copper-plate sliders and a description of the improved phantasmagoria lantern' in Mannoni *Light and movement* pp. 125-131.

producing thousands of sentimental genre paintings eminently suitable for translation to the lantern slide medium. One of these whose images were shown in the colonies was British genre artist Edward Villiers Rippingille (1798-1859).⁵²

Also on Headdey's program, with an earlier piece by Cruikshank, *The Gin Palace*,⁵³ was the less common-place but equally apposite narrative sequence *The Progress of Intemperance* by Rippon Gill [sic].⁵⁴ Headdey listed the titles as *The Ruined Farmer; The Teetotal Farmer; The Whiskey Demon or The Awful Effects of Strong Drink; and the Contrast or Blessings of Temperance*. Although the painter's style was altogether different from Cruikshank's, his practice was situated firmly within the same broad narrative tradition, but preoccupied with a sentimentalised construct of rural life. The titles locate these images in a tradition of country-life genre, popularised in the eighteenth century and of epidemic proportions in the Victorian era.⁵⁵

Of the numerous temperance advocates active in the colonies, not all used the lantern, but those who did could usually rely on drawing an audience for the visual entertainment alone. In August 1866, on the same night that Rev McCure screened *The Bottle* before a packed audience at the Adelaide Town Hall, lack of patronage forced the cancellation of a lecture at the Temperance

⁵² Graves *The Royal Academy of Arts* vol 3, p. 304; Thieme & Becker *Allgemeines lexikon* vol 28, p. 376.

⁵³ Shiman points out that a poem by Cruikshank *The Gin Shop* was published in 1868 the *Band of Hope Review*. 'In this tale,' she writes, 'the pastor rescues the drunkard, who 'crosses over' from the drinking world to the teetotal community.' Shiman *Crusade against drink* p. 271 n. 81.

⁵⁴ Rippingille produced a series of six pictures under this title, also known as *Progress of Drunkenness*, around 1834. The original paintings are in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, England.

⁵⁵ Rippingille was a member of The Bristol School of genre painters, the most recognised of whom is Francis Danby. They, and other similar genre schools, flourished from the early decades of the nineteenth century responding to a vigorous market for picturesque renditions of English country life and landscapes amongst the growing urban middle-class in a context of increasing industrialisation. In these idyllic settings in which quaintly archetypal characters, good, bad, ugly, innocent, fallen, redeemed and so forth, accompanied by masses of incidental descriptive detail, enacted human melodramas based loosely on contemporary social conditions (such as the eviction of rural labourers). The narrative unfolded in paired or sequenced images which portrayed contrasting, or sometimes complementary, states, the passage of time, moral and/or psychological cause and effect, often called 'a progress,' and more often than not with a moral didactic agenda. Popularised in print form the genre consolidated into a tradition which continued to be adapted throughout the nineteenth century.

Both Rippingille and Danby also sought subject matter in France and Italy. Painted slides of the mid nineteenth century were clearly influenced by, if not directly copied from, their original oil-paintings, water-colours and drawings, and widely available mechanical reproductions. Their style lent itself to reproduction for projected images for several reasons: careful detail would respond well to enlargement; the watercolour technique with its use of translucent and luminous colour; preoccupation with narrative genre scenes. See: Francis Greenacre *The Bristol School of Artists: Francis Danby and painting in Bristol, 1810-1840* Bristol: Bristol City Art Gallery 1969; E. D. H. Johnson *Paintings of the British social scene from Hogarth to Sickert* London; Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1986.

Hall on 'Money: its use and abuse' by as significant a local figure as the Mayor. In the face of populist resistance temperance advocates needed to use all means possible to attract an audience and the sentimental ballads served a valuable role both in attracting and persuading an audience. Nevertheless, the heavy handedness of temperance messages was not unnoticed, at least by *South Australian Register* who noted that 'from their sensational tendency [the scenes from *The Bottle*] must have been highly palatable to temperance tastes.'⁵⁶

The positive effect of such strategies is unclear. Within the period many were critical of the temperance philosophy encoded in *The Bottle*. Brian Harrison, in his study of temperance in Victorian England, is sceptical about the reforming value of these strategies, citing nineteenth century English commentator Paul Mayhew who wrote that he 'saw a man who had vigorously praised Cruikshank's *Bottle* drunk three hours afterwards.' Harrison continues, 'while such spectacles might have been popular, they probably had little effect on daily conduct.'⁵⁷ Even so *The Bottle* was still included in the temperance repertoire at the end of the century.⁵⁸ The visual technological lesson may have been stronger, however, in the long term than the moral lesson.

The new level of virtual reality created by the photographic life-model slide as a medium for depicting sentimental ballads and moral tales depicted in life model slides, was fully exploited by the proliferation of temperance advocates and social reformers appearing throughout the Australasian colonies in the nineteenth century. The arcadian promise of Wakefield's settlements, such as Christchurch and Adelaide, had been that they would leave behind the corrosive social ills of the old world.⁵⁹ Yet to the dismay of middle-class idealists, outside the cosy world of church and country parish life lay a harsher reality for many colonists of poverty and homelessness.⁶⁰ Although disputed by some, prevailing discourse held that personal misfortune, such as unemployment, poverty, homelessness and abandoned children, were the result of personal and individual irresponsibility, rather than symptoms of systemic political and economic failure. If the fault lay with the individual, then it would follow that the solution lay there too. As Milton Lewis has pointed out, the social reform and temperance movement in the colonies was permeated with the same cluster of classist assumptions as in England – that alcohol dependence and a lack of self-discipline, not social and economic

⁵⁶ *South Australian Register* August 28 1866, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Brian Harrison *Drink and the Victorians: the temperance question in England 1815-1872* London: Faber and Faber, 1971 p. 356; Mayhew *London Labour* Vol I p. 25.

⁵⁸ *Gunn Catalogue* p. 4.

⁵⁹ Richard Garnett *Edward Gibbon Wakefield: the colonization of South Australia and New Zealand* New York: Longmans, Green & Co 1898.

⁶⁰ James Belich 'The Pakeha myths of settlement' in *Making peoples : a history of the New Zealanders: from Polynesian settlement to the end of the nineteenth century* Auckland, N.Z.: Penguin Press 1996, p. 297-312.

structures, were at the root of social problems.⁶¹ The middle-class colonists who formed philanthropic groups such as the Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society saw their own role in addressing social problems as one of educating, instructing and persuading the disadvantaged under-class to reform their ways and thus progress to a better situation in life. To concerned middle-class social reformers, the magic lantern show presented itself as an eminently suitable medium to instruct and educate the underclass in moral virtues, good character and Christianity, which would immunise them against social ills. This discourse of reform through self-help and Christian values was embedded in the Victorian genre of inspirational melodramas from which the main subject matter of life model slides was drawn, from classics such as Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* to the sentimental ballads and moral tales of George R. Sims and others published under titles such as 'Penny Stories for the People.'⁶²

Jessie's Last Request, depicted in life-model slides by Bamforth, enacted a strong moral lesson with as much appeal to the emotions as could be evoked with an iconography of dying children, parental guilt, angelic visions, with versified oratory and music, as from her deathbed a young girl successfully argues the case for complete abstinence, reminding her errant father of the words of a temperance worker some years before.⁶³ While the text wallows in sentiment, the photographic images tend to be rather stilted and barren, even minimalist in comparison to the imaginative renderings of Cruikshank or Rippingille. The potency of these images lay instead in the immediacy and literality of photographic representation of contemporary people in generically familiar settings, such as the lower middle-class parlour and the tavern.

Among a number of 'life-model' favourite narratives in the colonies through the 1890s were the maudlin ballads *Neddie's Care* and *Jessica's First Prayer*. These tales of destitute children trying to survive in English cities were presented as an argument for the work of middle-class social reformers, such as the Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society, who cared for the many of

⁶¹ Lewis *A rum state* pp. 49-51. In 1890 the secretary of the Melbourne Ladies' Benevolent Society gave the opinion that drinking was the principle cause of poverty. Richard Kennedy *Charity warfare: The Charity Organisation Society in colonial Melbourne* Melbourne: Hyland House, 1985 p. 14.

⁶² OMLJPE cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 262, entry 386F.

⁶³ She said that tens of thousands, through / Drink, die every year, / Who proudly boasted once they drank / *Only a glass of beer.* / You got angry with her, father, / You said your moderate plan / Was sanctioned by the Holy Book, / And drink was good for man; / ... you can never, never come / Where I am going to-night, / Unless you give the drinking up, / And strive to do the right. / The Bible says of drunkards, father, / They cannot enter there, / I've prayed to Jesus o'er and o'er / To answer Jessie's prayer. / ... Then he started - gazed upon her, / Pressed her little ice-cold brow, / Clasped her hand again, - and staggered, - / It was all too lifeless now / She had heard his faithful promise, / Heard her wayward father say / He would sign the pledge and keep it, / Then her spirit passed away. J. J. Lane *Jessie's last request*, reproduced in *Household To catch a sunbeam* pp. 19-23.

homeless children of the colonies and introduced them to Christian teaching. Neddie, the protagonist, is a young girl who seeks help for her gravely ill companion, Dickey. Both are rescued by the philanthropic middle-class women of the Children's Home. Although well cared for at the Home and brought to 'salvation' Dickey fails to fully recover. Then, even as he lies on his deathbed, Neddie herself is run over by a carriage and dies of internal injuries. Jessica, on the other hand, another abandoned London child who comes close to death, finds salvation, a foster parent and a useful occupation.⁶⁴

At the same time the taste and interests of the middle class reformers themselves were served by less histrionic lantern lectures of a social documentary genre, such as those brought to the colonies by international touring temperance lecturers. 'The world-famed temperance orator' Mrs Harrison Lee, for example, concluded a week of public addresses for the No-License Campaign in Dunedin in July 1902 a limelight illustrated lecture 'Beautiful Britain: its blessings and its blights as seen by an Australian.'⁶⁵The magic lantern thus continued to be used to entice audiences to an illustrated lecture, and as an effective means of communicating ideas and educating viewers in a specific ideology.

'The evangelisation of the world'⁶⁶

Contemporary with the burgeoning of temperance and social reform movements at home, the great religious project of western imperialism in the nineteenth century, and into the next, was the spiritual conversion of subject peoples to Christianity. The spiritual welfare of the people of the islands of the Pacific and Asia proved irresistibly attractive to Christian evangelists. Antipodean colonial settlements themselves quickly became established as centres for missionary work both within the colonies themselves and beyond reaching into the wider geographical region of Asia and the Pacific. The colonies were thus central to a new wave of colonisation in which visual technology played a role.

The combined persuasive power of the authoritative voice of the Christian missionary, the literality and immediacy of photographic representation, and the entrancing spectacle of the magic lantern, strengthened and promulgated the prevailing discourse of white Christian supremacy, and asserted the

⁶⁴ *Jessica's First Prayer* was based on a novel by English writer Hesba Stretton in the 1870s by the Religious Tract Society. See article in Crompton et al *Magic images*, pp. 54-59. *Neddie's Care*, subtitled *Suffer the little children*, is retold in *Household To catch a sunbeam* pp. 62-77. Neither of these should be confused with *Jessie's Dream* (11 slides Gun catalogue p. 5), *Jessie's Last Request* or another Sims title *Nellie's Prayer* (13 slides in Gunn catalogue p. 5) reproduced in Calder-Marshall *Prepare to shed them now* pp. 71-81. Alexander Gunn's catalogue of 1898 listed these titles with 25 and 30 slides respectively. Gunn Catalogue p. 4.

⁶⁵ *Otago Daily Times* July 28 1902, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Stead, 'Magic lantern mission.'

location of the Australasian colonies as central to a new wave of Euro-colonisation. As emissaries of western culture and world domination, missionary lanternists played a role in disseminating information within the broader imperial-colonial project. In bringing images and information of areas seen by few Europeans to the colonial centres of Australia and New Zealand, missionary lantern performances in the colonies presented colonists with knowledge of the people of their region mediated through the values and concerns of the missionary movement. In this process they shifted the conceptual location the colonies from the margins of empire to quasi imperial civilised centres of expansion capable of sending colonising expeditions to outlying and 'uncivilized' regions. The strength of this fresh wave of colonisation was manifested over the 1890s and 1900s a period in which the Australasian colonies had achieved, or were close to achieving, independent nation status, and viewed themselves as spiritual and political caretakers of their region. It is significant that such middle-class missionary projects were so extensive at this moment and continued into the twentieth century to occupy a large segment of lantern practice.

The Melanesian boys, mentioned in chapter three, who had their first experience of the magic lantern at St Johns, Auckland, were protégés of the Melanesian Mission, an evangelistic project of the Church of England. Under the leadership of the first Bishop of New Zealand, George Augustus Selwyn, from its base in New Zealand the Mission was regarded as 'fountain diffusing the streams of salvation over the islands and coasts of the Pacific.'⁶⁷ Until the establishment of new mission headquarters on Norfolk Island in 1867, young Melanesians were brought to St John's from island communities scattered over an area of more than 700,000 square kilometres of ocean.⁶⁸ After being educated, partly by the magic lantern, in 'all social and civilized habits' and Christian doctrine it was hoped that the students would return home to teach their own communities the new faith and culture.

By the late 1890s lantern bearing missionaries based in the colonies were making their way even more assertively into non-European communities throughout the Pacific region and Australasia. Missionaries of different denominations competed, sometimes quite aggressively, for territories of influence, between themselves and also against inroads by commercial interests, traders and those who sought cheap labour. They readily adopted any means that might help them reach their audience, making liberal use of the lantern and photography to further their aims, to entertain and educate, and to illustrate the advantages of Western civilisation and Christianity. Josiah Martin, editor of *Sharland's New Zealand Photographer*, observed in 1898

⁶⁷ Hilliard, *God's gentlemen* St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1978 p. 2. The name 'Melanesian Mission' came about in around 1852. Selwyn was not happy with the Church Missionary Society administration system and, in association with other Australasian colonial Anglican bishops, set up an independent board of missions 'thereby bypassing the CMS.' Hilliard *God's gentlemen* p. 13.

⁶⁸ *ibid.* p. 17.

that: 'One of the most popular methods of amusing a native audience is by means of the magic lantern, for pictures speak in a language which is easily understood by the young or old of every nation.'⁶⁹ Martin went on to describe a lantern lecture given in Fiji by the local missionary:

We had provided a special selection of pictures, illustrating native and mission life in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Guinea, New Zealand, New Hebrides, etc. These included portraits of natives, groups, village scenes, etc., depicting the manners and customs peculiar to the different islands. Our native audiences were most enthusiastic in their appreciation of pictures from a [s]tate of civilisation nearest to their own. The portraits of well-known natives, and the pictures of Fijian life were immediately recognised and heartily applauded. By this means they were able to compare the condition of the various native races, their arts of life and their peculiar ceremonies, and some instructive examples were afforded of the progress and influence of civilization.⁷⁰

In this way the verisimilitude of the photographic slide was first established with recognisable scenes from audience's own environment, and then deployed to the transmission of a cultural lesson.

As a result of the user-friendly photographic technology of the 1890s and the increasing dominance of photographic images in slide repertoires of all kinds, the camera had become an important travel accessory not just for professionals or enthusiasts, but for all travellers including missionaries. On return to their home base, overseas missionaries gave slide lectures to bring the work of the missions to the attention of philanthropic colonists, and to gain financial support for their projects. Indeed, as early as 1863 a correspondent to *The British Journal of Photography* claimed that it had been 'proved beyond all doubt that the magic lantern may be made useful to clergymen and others in elucidating the noble work of the mission field.'⁷¹ The Church of England's Church Missionary Society, for one, used hand-painted lantern slides amongst a range of visual media to promote their work in foreign countries to the English public (figure 6.9).⁷²

⁶⁹ Sharland's June 7, 1898, p. 77.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ 'A country clergyman' in *The British Journal of photography* 2 November 1863 cited in Hecht p. 142, 235A

⁷² Marion Minson curator of painting and prints, Alexander Turnbull Library, drew my attention to the connections between these artefacts in the collection. It is unlikely that these slides were shown in the colonies and for that reason have not been included within the parameters of this thesis. However further research into the conditions of production and reception of the CMS slides is required. In addition a worthwhile comparative study could be made between them and the Baines slides at the NLA, with regard to the depiction of indigenous peoples through painted magic lantern slides in England in the 1850s/60s.

On the strength of this success the use of newly developed photographic technology was recommended with the suggestion that bishops and missionaries 'beyond the seas' send photographic images for conversion into lantern slides 'as a means of increasing an interest amongst the many in missionary operations.'⁷³ Beginning in Australia in the 1860s, in New Zealand from 1875, missionary lecture tours reached a high point in the early 1890s. As David Hilliard notes, 'continued financial support was dependent upon regular tours through each diocese by missionaries with dramatic stories to tell.'⁷⁴ Promotional strategies included 'special services and prayers, meetings, lantern slide lectures, collection boxes, sales of work, children's pageants, exhibitions of 'curios' sent from the field.'⁷⁵ Christian missionaries progressively became significant users of the lantern lecture, persuasively presenting the case for their work with projected documentary photography illustrating their 'eye witness' accounts of the people they worked amongst. Two examples from New Zealand are Church of England missionary Sister Kate and Presbyterian Alexander Don.

Two Missionary Lantern Lecturers in New Zealand: Sister Kate CSN and Alexander Don

In November 1895, Kate Spencer Ivens (1869-1953), a probationer in the newly established Community of the Sacred Name, Christchurch, a sisterhood committed to pastoral work, was sent to serve at the hospital of St Barnabus' College, Norfolk Island, headquarters of the Melanesian Mission since 1867 (figure 6.10).⁷⁶ Ivens, Sister Kate, was thus part of a new generation who, forty years after Selwyn, joined the Mission in the 1890s making it 'the largest body of Europeans and the only Christian mission, operating in the huge area between New Britain and the central New Hebrides.'⁷⁷ She was also one of an increasing number of single women in British missionary societies between 1884 and 1900, a period coinciding with the enfranchisement of women in New Zealand.⁷⁸ From 1896 to 1898, and from 1900 to 1908, Ivens worked as a nurse and teacher to the Melanesian children brought to the Mission, who had, from 1874, included a small proportion of girls to be trained in the 'household arts' for their roles as 'Christian wives for our Christian lads.'⁷⁹

Photographic documentation of Mission life also occupied Ivens, an interest she shared with a missionary colleague, English born Anne Firmstone, with

⁷³ *The British Journal of photography* 2 November 1863 cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p. 142, 235A

⁷⁴ Hilliard, *God's gentlemen* p. 45.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* p. 123.

⁷⁶ 'Ivens, Kate Spencer' in Michael Blain 'Clergy in the Diocese of Christchurch 1890-1925, a directory' 1994 Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives.

⁷⁷ Hilliard, *God's gentlemen* p. 107.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* p. 123.

⁷⁹ *ibid.* p. 6, quoting R. H. Codrington, then headmaster of the school.

whom she established their own darkrooms at the Mission.⁸⁰ Their carefully composed photographs depict students' activities at the Mission: learning to read; girls at 'household arts' such as washing clothes; and boys at games.⁸¹ Although no direct evidence has been found it is more than likely that a magic lantern was used at the Mission. For her illustrated lectures in New Zealand, however, Ivens chose to use commercially produced slides. The black stained slide box at the Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives labelled 'Sister Kate's lecture - Melanesia' contains 60 slides taken directly from Hobart commercial photographer J. W. Beattie's Melanesia series, with Ivens' labels and numbering system added. Ivens had met Beattie at Norfolk on 1906 during his five months tour of the south and western Pacific at the invitation of the Melanesian Mission on board their steamer *Southern Cross*.⁸² Beattie's photographic images, subsequently reproduced and published as slide sets, postcards, and booklets, widely disseminated a view of Pacific life.

This alliance of missionary, commercial photographer and magic lantern had a ready colonial audience 'amongst the committed' as David Hilliard observes, with an 'insatiable appetite for facts and results' and an 'interest in the "science of missions", their history and strategy.'⁸³ Beyond the circle of the 'committed,' many were happy simply to be enthralled by the spectacle and illusion. Tasmanian resident Mrs Hilyard's recollections of missionary lectures in Yorkshire, England during the 1910s, make it seem more leisure than instruction. 'Money was short, but each Sunday evening I was given a penny for the Magic Lantern Show.'⁸⁴ Missionary lectures also fed a voyeuristic curiosity about the 'manners and customs' of the colonies' neighbours. Although culturally remote, the islands of the Pacific, China, South East Asia, South America, were geographically on the colonial doorstep, and immigrants from these societies, especially Pacific islanders and Chinese, increasingly constituted significant sectors of colonial settler society.

Active in over the same period as Sister Kate, Dunedin based missionary Alexander Don (1857-1934) used the magic lantern in a similar way to promote the exchange of visual information about the Pacific region in which New Zealand held a central position. When this intrepid traveller and his son John set out on their arduous journey through Central Otago in the winter of 1899, the primary intention was to foster support amongst the rural population for missionary work in the Pacific and China. At the same time Don was no doubt aware that his snowbound audience would be drawn at least as much by the spectacle of a magic lantern show and its power to

⁸⁰ Barbara Hall & Jenni Mather *Australian women photographers: 1840-1960* Richmond, Victoria: Greenhouse, 1986 pp. 133, 134, 136.

⁸¹ Three images from the Collenzo collection at the Norfolk Island Historical Society are reproduced in Hall & Mather *Australian women photographers* pp. 134, 136.

⁸² Tassell & Wood, *Tasmanian photographer* p. 8.

⁸³ Hilliard, *God's gentlemen* p. 123.

⁸⁴ Barry et al., *Magic lantern-slide show* p. 1.

transport viewers to another time and place as by a factual report on missionary activities. Don's account of the expedition, during what turned out to be the most severe winter 'since the white man came' was published in 1899 in a twelve page pamphlet entitled 'Twenty days ice and snow: a lantern tour in Central Otago' (figure 6.11). It focused firstly on the extreme conditions for example 'the six miles to St. Bathans ... took us 2 1/2 hours, for the snow lay 8in to 13 in all the way and we were the first through' – in sharp contrast to the heat and dust confronting many touring entertainers in the Australian bush and cities.⁸⁵ Secondly, Don provides a rare view of the enthusiasm of tiny colonial outpost communities for a glimpse of the wider world through the magic lantern.

The people of St. Bathans, Don wrote, were astonished to have 'a lantern to visit them in their frozen-up condition.'⁸⁶ At Kokonga 'despite frost and snow and measles 32 came to see 'The Pacific.' At Roughridge after days of intense cold, '23 people – six of them children – greeted 'The Pacific.'⁸⁷ 'Hyde lies high, and was snowed up, but our congregation numbered 16 – three women, six men, two girls, and five boys.'⁸⁸ The tiny audiences were generous with their donations. At Hindon:

After tea we rushed up the screen and lantern in the school, and had 28 spectators – six of them children. They handed me £1, given in pennies by the S. S. children to the Canton Village Mission.⁸⁹

At Ranfurly, there were 'over 100 spectators in the church – proceeds only 1s 2 1/2d short of £4.'⁹⁰ As well as bringing recreational relief to isolated villages and allowing them to practice a little telescopic philanthropy there was another dimension to Don's mission.

Scattered throughout Otago was a beleaguered population of expatriate Chinese men, who, having been drawn to the gold-fields in the 1860s in the unrealised hope of making their fortune, were, in the 1890s, just managing to survive working on their small claims. Don's primary mission in the region was in fact, as his biographer J. S. Murray writes, 'to visit the Chinese in all the lonely isolated places where they live and worked and [do] whatever his Christian heart prompted him to do in the way of meeting their needs.'⁹¹ Although this pastoral work was mainly undertaken during the summer months, it could not be avoided in the winter. At Cambrians, 'we visited all five Chinese in their huts, cleared a path from school gate to door through 8in of snow, and had 30 adults (including the five Chinese) and nine children

⁸⁵ Alexander Don 'Twenty days ice and snow: a lantern tour in Central Otago, N.Z., July, 1899' Dunedin 1899 p. 7.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 11.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 12.

⁸⁹ *ibid.* p. 3.

⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 6.

⁹¹ J. S. Murray 'The remarkable Alexander Don' *Otago Daily Times* September 27, 1975.

present.⁹² Yet strangely Don had little to say in 'Twenty days' about the response of these men to the magic lantern show. The Chinese in Otago were largely from the Canton region, and it was there that Don had been sent in 1879, before taking up his ministry, specifically to learn Cantonese to enable him to communicate with his flock. At Naseby, Don wrote, 'I found some 30 Chinese in the three stores: the poor fellows mostly looked as if they rued leaving their tropical Canton villages. ... Fifteen were among the 90 Europeans that saw the exhibition in the evening.'⁹³

Two lantern lectures in Dunedin in 1906 indicate the geographical extent of Australasian based missionary projects. New Zealand agent for the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev F H Spencer, delivered a lantern lecture on the Society's work entitled 'What was seen in Fiji, North-West America, India, and Ceylon.'⁹⁴ Two weeks earlier 'All interested in missionary work' were urged to attend Dunedin's Congregational Church on September 12 1906, for Charles T. W. Wilson's lecture, illustrated with '120 beautiful limelight views' on his missionary travels in Argentina and Bolivia.⁹⁵ The Melbourne based Australasian South American Mission, established in 1898, had already sent twelve workers out to take part 'in evangelising ... the 40 millions of natives and Indians on the continent.' 'Elaborately illustrated by a series of lantern slides, and, from an educational point of view, Mr Wilson's remarks could not do other than impress those present with the magnitude and unwieldiness of this comparatively unknown continent,' the *Otago Daily Times* wrote. Wilson's lecture 'took his hearers to the heart of the great continent, where the missionaries have penetrated in order to convey the Gospel to the Indians and the Spanish natives.' As has been shown the lantern illusions of earlier years had the power to 'transport' colonists back to their cultural centre; here though the illusory journey became one from a position at the centre to the edges of a new frontier of Christianity.

In an era when church attendance constituted a significant aspect of public, social and community life for many, the use of the magic lantern in church related activities brought both the visual technology of the magic lantern and its international language of images to a wide cross-section of colonial population.

Clerical lanternists like Edwards assessed and responded to local conditions and social and spiritual needs of the community as they perceived them. Lantern evenings not only promulgated church teachings, religious instruction, they were also a means of drawing the community together for wholesome entertainment. Their programmes show a deployment of the

⁹² Don 'Twenty days ice and snow' p. 7.

⁹³ *ibid.* p. 5.

⁹⁴ *Otago Daily Times* September 19, 1906, p. 1, September 20, 1906, p. 8.

⁹⁵ *Otago Daily Times* September 13, 1906, p. 3.

potent nature of the medium for visual communication – applied to the performance of inspirational narratives and songs skilfully wrought visual effects were used to enhance church services. Precisely because it was performance, the magic lantern could have an impact on the social life of a community and because the magic lantern performance could be adapted to suit a specific audience, the audience in its turn helped shape the performance.

This does not exhaust, however, the list of religious magic lantern practitioners in the Australasian colonies. The largest, best organized and most influential, the Australasian Salvation Army's Limelight Department, is deserving of a chapter in its own right.

Chapter Seven

‘Spiritual Barnums’: The Salvation Army

God bless the Limelight! It will bring light and blessing to many a dark soul.

The War Cry Christchurch 1893.¹

The magic power of light ... is the creation of God, and it can only honour Him, and glorify His own handiwork, to utilise this invention for the salvation and blessing of mankind.

Herbert Booth, Melbourne, 1901.²

The Salvation Army invaded the Australasian magic lantern scene in the early 1890s. Recognising the power of the magic lantern both to attract an audience and to communicate a message at different levels, the Army leaders of the time set up a specially designated corps, the Limelight Department, with the sole function to produce and tour lantern shows throughout the Australasian colonies from its headquarters in Melbourne. Over the next two decades they went on to occupy a significant place as exhibitors in the public realm and as developers of the visual technology.

The practice of the Limelight Department from its first exhibitions in 1892 until its demise in 1909 inserts itself into several areas of this discussion of colonial magic lantern practice. Firstly, the Department attempted to emulate and rival the style, scope and technical sophistication of contemporary commercial entertainment spectacles, and to redeploy and exploit the magic lantern’s affective capacities to a new level within the movement’s project of religious evangelism. Secondly, the Limelight Department reached and influenced a wider audience, geographically and socially than any other contemporary lantern practice in the Australasian colonies could. Thirdly, the Limelight Department quickly developed into a major corporation devoted to visual technological communication. Its progress demonstrates the processes through which public entertainment and technology combined with corporate motivation and backing lead to the rapid rise of a localised slide/film industry.

‘This Napoleon of Limelight enterprise’

Time was when the Army’s ‘kine’ expert, Brigadier Perry stumped the country with a ‘lantern’ outfit that might have been comfortably carried in a large ‘grip bag.’ When the ‘chef-de-oeuvre’ was ‘Jane Conquest,’ which the

¹ *The War Cry* Christchurch July 1 1893 p. 1.

² Herbert Henry Booth (1862-1926), Commandant of the Salvation Army in Australasia from 1896 to 1902, in *Victory* September 1901, cited in *MLSGB Newsletter* No 4, June 1981.

energetic and perspiring operator used to recite, the effect being heightened by alarming 'Sheridan pauses,' and all punctuation marks being put in by the fizzing of the limes and explosion of tubes.

The War Cry Wellington 1909.³

Pivotal figure in the Limelight Department, Joseph Henry Perry (1864-1943) was 'discovered' within the Army's ranks by Major Frank E. Barritt in 1891 on a visit to the Ballarat Prison Gate Home where Perry was using a 'biunial' lantern in the township and in the Home (figure 7.1). Barritt brought Perry to the Army's colonial headquarters in Melbourne to collaborate with him in using the magic lantern to publicise the visit of the Salvation Army's founder William Booth to Melbourne in September 1891.⁴

The deployment of such a populist medium was a strategy congruent with the Army's out-on-the-streets, crowd pleasing, drum beating, evangelistic style. Their gatherings and services, indoor and outdoor, were highly orchestrated performances of rousing tunes, brass bands, fulsome choirs and heartfelt oratory. The magic lantern had already been used in Salvation Army work in Britain.⁵ Other evangelistic, populist movements of the nineteenth century such as the Band of Hope and the Church Army of the Church of England, itself modelled to a large extent on the English Salvation Army, were active in the lantern field during the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.⁶ The Charity Organisation Society, founded in Melbourne in the 1890s on a British model of far more middle-class origins than the Salvation Army, also deployed the magic lantern as means to reach and reform the poor.⁷

Soon after the publicity experiment, The Limelight Brigade, as it was first named within the movement's extended metaphor of bellicosity, embarked on a trial lantern lecture tour. Starting in South Melbourne on Boxing Day 1891, Perry and Barritt spend the next nine weeks visiting cities and townships of Eastern Australia with a programme of around 50 slides illustrating Booth's social work text *In Darkest England*. In his report on the tour, *Rays from the lantern* (figure 7.2), in the Army's weekly *The War Cry*, Barritt wrote, 'Captain Perry (the operator) and I are now in full swing as a kind of spiritual Barnums, to the astonishment of all and sundry.'⁸ Certainly not a circus, the enterprise was, however, quite consciously located within the arena of popular entertainment. In contrast to the anxiety in mainstream churches, the more evangelistic movements were happy to adopt commercial

³ *The War Cry* Wellington June 1909 p. 8.

⁴ Long 'Australia's 'first films: facts and fables. Part 7: Screening the Salvation Army' in *Cinema Papers* No 97/98 April 1994, p. 35.

⁵ Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* p. 264.

⁶ Their use of lantern slides well into the twentieth century, is discussed in 'Winged arrows' in Crompton et al *Magic images* p. 31. The extent of Church Army activities in the colonies needs further investigation.

⁷ Kennedy *Charity warfare* p. 25. This reference was drawn to my attention by Dianne Reilly.

⁸ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p.13, February 20 1892 p. 11, March 19 1892 p. 10.

and technological means of communicating their message. At the outset Perry's and Barritt's entire repertoire was drawn from the same body of commercially produced slides illustrating ballads, recitations, hymn, songs, and Scriptural scenes, available to any lanternist, religious or secular, and from any supplier throughout Australasia in the 1890s.

Illustrated ballads and recitations.

'Neddie's Care' caused the tears to flow freely. God bless Horsham.'

The War Cry September 1892.⁹

As temperance advocates and social reformers, Perry and his team drew heavily from the latest British life model slides illustrating moral and sentimental poems and recitations which constituted a large part of the commercially available repertoire. *Neddie's Care* and *Billy's Rose*, histrionic renditions of the plight of homeless children in large cities, were regularly featured (figure 7.3).¹⁰

Like *Neddie's Care*, *Billy's Rose*, a George R. Simms ballad, is the story of two abandoned children living amongst the 'sin and dirt and misery' of an urban slum. Older sister Nell sets out on a quest to grant her dying brother's wish for a rose. As Billy passes away in the dismal garret, Nell herself freezes to death in a snowstorm – but not before a rose falls at her feet, emanating not from heaven as she supposes but from a fretful young woman passing by in her carriage.¹¹ Enthusiastically rendered by the assembled company of the Limelight Department, *Neddie's Care* and *Billy's Rose* were always well received by audiences. Although set in an English context, showing the girls barefoot in snow-covered London streets, both ballads were highly apposite to colonial centres such as Melbourne and Sydney in the late nineteenth century where the economic depression of the 1890s and the absence of social support for the poor had exacerbated the problem of colonial children suffering from neglect, a situation the Salvation Army sought to address. Narratives like *Neddie's Care* and *Billy's Rose* were thus useful in drawing attention to the issue in order to win support for the Army's refuge work.

Also immensely popular with the Limelight Department's audience was the ballad *Jane Conquest* (figure 7.4).¹² Here a mother leaves her dying infant to struggle 'through blinding sleet and snow' and climb a belfry in order to raise the alarm for a burning ship. It lent itself to liberal use of dissolving view and

⁹ *The War Cry* September 17 1892 p. 16.

¹⁰ *Neddie's Care* is referred to in chapter six of this thesis. See also Household *To catch a sunbeam* pp. 62-77.

¹¹ The confusing similarity of characters and names in *Neddie's Care* and *Billy's Rose* may have given rise to alternative titles *Nellie's care* and *Nellie's prayer* (another Sims ballad) cited in reports in *The War Cry*.

¹² Riley Bros' life model slide version of *Jane Conquest*, also known as *The ringing of the bell* by James Milne, is described and illustrated in Gordon *By gaslight in winter* pp. 90-94. A seventeen slide version listed in Gunn *Catalogue* pp. 4,6.

sound effects. At the Prahran screening in June 1894, with Perry narrating, 'This poem and the pictures illustrating it are alone worth any charge that is likely to be made for the whole show,' enthused 'Milk and Honey' in *The War Cry*:

The effect of the picture of the wild tempest was heightened by the introduction of lightning and the noise resembling thunder; and another time while the heroine of the piece was looking out from the window of her lone cottage by the sea on the stormy night, there could be heard a sound resembling the breaking of waves on the cliffs and the roar of the wind. Then came the picture in which Jane is seen up in the church belfry, pulling the rope and ringing the bell that was to summon the lifeboat crew to the rescue of poor souls who were aboard the burning ship. Here, by another well-managed piece of mechanism, we were enabled to hear the loud clanging of the bell, and, by sheer force of imagination, transplanted to the scenes represented. These appropriate additions were heartily and deservedly applauded.¹³

This proto-feminist story of heroinism was a favourite and repeated feature of Limelight programs. Variations on themes of childish innocence, loss and redemption, along a spectrum from poignant to mawkishly sentimental such as *Daddy*,¹⁴ *The Little Hero*,¹⁵ and *Little Match Girl* (see figure 7.3), were also well received. Although spectators occasionally constructed their own readings from the screened image as this report of a screening of *Little Match Girl* indicates:

One of the slides depicts a poor little half-frozen girl proffering her matches to the passers-by in a busy street. The snow is falling fast, and has settled somewhat heavily on her match-box. Ensign Hammond's little Willie had been watching the proceedings with silent wonderment, and at last touched Mrs. Hammond's arm, and pointing, exclaimed: 'Mother, is that a dear saved little boy selling WAR CRY?' So much for young Australia's imagination.¹⁶

Another Sims titles favoured by the Limelight Department was 'the interesting narrative, entitled, *In the Signal Box, or the Station-Master's Story* (figure 7.5). 'Illustrated as it was with scenes that were life-like to the highest degree, such a thrilling tale of pathetic tragedy seemed to hold the congregation spell-bound, compelling them to almost hold their breath in

¹³ *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11, June 16 1894 p. 9.

¹⁴ *The War Cry* October 5 1900 ; August 1 1903. Listed in *Watson Catalogue* p. 4; *Gunn Supplement* p. 4 (9 slides). Extant slides are held in the State Library of Victoria. See figure 2.15.

¹⁵ *The War Cry* August 1 1903. The *little hero* text and illustrations are reproduced in *Household To catch a sunbeam* pp. 11-18; listed in *Watson Catalogue* 1902 p. 5; *Gunn Supplement* 1898 p. 4 (new series 7 slides); extant slides are held in the State Library of Victoria.

¹⁶ *The War Cry* July 11 1896 p. 2. Listed in *Gunn Catalogue* p. 6 (9 slides).

their wonder or dread at what might next be seen or heard.¹⁷ The story is told of a father who, like Jane Conquest, torn between doing his duty and saving his child, is justly rewarded: 'If I hadn't a-done my duty – had I ventured to disobey – / My bonny boy and his mother might have died by my hand that day.' On occasions the life model slides for the recitation were complemented with mechanical effects. 'A wonderful train, which in obedience to an energetic signalman, rushed at express speed over a viaduct, was heartily encored' in July 1896.¹⁸ This melodrama is not only highly suspenseful and moralistic it is also located in a contemporary setting of awe-inspiring modern transport technology.

Hymns and songs

everybody sang lustily, because everybody had a song-book with good type.

Centenary Hall, Sydney, 1896.¹⁹

Rousing hymns and songs were characteristic of Army meetings, congregational singing aroused feelings of community and enjoyment, and the message of salvation was conveyed through 'modern' hymns and songs accompanied on the screen with text slides and illustrations (see figure 6.2). 'There is no need for special song-books at these meetings, seeing that before they begin the gas [light] is turned out and, moreover, the song that appears on the screen is large enough for anyone to see quite easily.'²⁰ In Sydney's Centenary Hall in 1896, 'The scenes were interspersed by occasional songs that afforded opportunity for congregational singing. The band also was much in evidence, and provided music galore.' With a demonstrably crowd-pleasing result:

after the eyes and ears and lungs of the crowd had been feasted for some time, an interval of five minutes was announced and immediately the lights blazed forth and delighted faces beamed on one another, while the merry hum of conversation flowed rapturously, for it is very hard for human beings not to talk.²¹

Rock of Ages, widely used by religious lanternists, was 'among the most admired' of hymns displayed by the Limelight Department, often repeated at

¹⁷ *The War Cry* Sydney July 25 1896 p.3; see also *The War Cry* Melbourne July 21 1894 p. 2; *The War Cry* New Zealand March 7 1896. July 11 1896 p.2. In *the Signal Box – A Stationmaster's Story* is reproduced in Calder-Marshall *Prepare to shed them now* pp. 136-140. Listed in Gunn *Catalogue* 1898 p. 5 (6 slides).

This title should not be confused with another of the *Dagonet Ballads* in a similar setting, *The level crossing*, centred around the honour of a young woman and the self-sacrifice of an older man for her happiness. George R. Sims *The Dagonet ballads* London: Fuller, 1881 pp. 16-23. Listed in Gunn *Supplement* (9 slides) p. 4.

¹⁸ *The War Cry* Melbourne July 11 1896 p.2; *The War Cry* Sydney July 25 1896 p.3.

¹⁹ *The War Cry* Sydney July 25 1896 p.3.

²⁰ *The War Cry* June 16 1894, p. 9.

²¹ *The War Cry* Sydney July 25 1896 p. 3.

local request and frequently closing the evening meeting on an emotional crescendo, as described in Sydney in July 1896 (figure 7.6):

Finally came the 'Rock of Ages.' The billows dashing round the base of the mighty memorable Cross; the appearance of the white-robed figure clinging to it for dear life; of the struggling soul in the angry waves, and the clinging figure, releasing one hand to help her perishing fellow being on to the Rock, held the crowd spell-bound, and taught a practical lesson at the same time. This, the last and masterpiece, was accompanied by a softly-sung song from the galley. 'I am Clinging to the Cross.'²²

The theme of rescue from the storm at sea was all too familiar for colonists and gave the metaphor its emotional resonance. *Rock of Ages* was one of the long list of commercially available hymn and song titles, from which the Limelight Department compiled a repertoire that reflected their creed and the taste of their audience. Their selections were almost a 'greatest hits' of the period which included: *Will you go? The Bleeding Lamb, He pardoned a rebel like me, A (the) better land, Abide with me, Rocked in the cradle of deep, Star of Bethlehem* (see figure 6.3).

Scriptural views

As the pictures appeared, one after the other, the audience fairly shivered, and a sob seemed to burst from them as they beheld their crucified Lord. One could see the Spirit of God at work, too. He spoke to those who were unsaved, and his words brought conviction.

Melbourne, January 1892.²³

Not unexpectedly, Scriptural subjects were an important component of the Limelight service. Favoured sources of images were the 'Doré Bible' engravings:

Some magnificent pieces from the life of Christ were introduced. These are from Doré's pictures, and are superb. They speak very loudly, as they are flung upon the sheet, and stand out in bold relief on the canvas. One could see the vindictive look on the faces of those who were driving the nails into the hands and feet of Christ.²⁴

And photographs of statuary:

The bust of Christ, photographed from a beautiful sculptural work, is a general favourite. The vividness with which the prominent points stand out is striking. Many of the pictures are reproductions from the work of the great masters of art.²⁵

²² *ibid.* *Rock of Ages* is listed in *Watson Catalogue* p. 6 (6 slides) p. 12 (4 effect slides for dissolving, 15 shillings); *Gunn Catalogue* p. 7 (10 slides). Extant slides are held in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

²³ *The War Cry* January 16 1892 p. 9.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *The War Cry* July 11 1896 p. 2.

Following contemporary practice, the Limelight Department further enhanced their slides by hand-colouring applied directly onto the glass, described in Melbourne in July 1894, 'The colours of some of the slides were warm with the touch of pungent life.'²⁶ Sculptural views were tinted with coloured gels held in front of the projector: 'One of the features of the evening,' it was reported in Queensland in November 1893, 'was the statue representing David and Goliath, the various tints which were dissolved on the canvas causing a marvellous effect and rendering a beautiful and entrancing picture.'²⁷ The combination of the aesthetic quality of the original images, with judicious hand colouring, the large scale of the images and the lecturer's oration affected audiences deeply. At Castlemaine in April 1894, for example, 'a great many were moved to tears as the sufferings of Jesus were depicted on the canvas and so ably explained by the Captain [Perry]' (figure 7.7).²⁸ Notwithstanding that one of the crucifixion scenes was 'perhaps, too realistic for all tastes,' the *Richmond River Times*, in June 1895, commented that it:

produced a wonderful impression, and many women were moved to sobs and tears. There can be no doubt about the efficiency of this new method of stirring up religious feeling ... probably many who went away with enlarged ideas such as the tenth-rate engravings of Scripture subjects so common could never give them.²⁹

Orchestration, music and narration

Over its first years of operation from 1892 to 1895/6 the Limelight Department built up an impressive repertoire of religious evangelistic and spectacular performance, drawn from the same body of commercially produced slides illustrated ballads, recitations, hymn, songs, and Scriptural scenes, available to any lanternist, religious or secular, and from the any supplier throughout Australasia. Their repertoire not only matched contemporary popular exhibitors of the early 1890s, they also rivalled them in the level of supporting acts and orchestration (figure 7.8). All these aspects of the performance visual, musical rhetorical, were drawn together in a carefully orchestrated sequence, itself the subject of development and modification over time, with the aim of achieving the greatest emotional psychological affect. A report from the Tasmanian tour of 1893 indicates how a programme might be constructed to take the assembly through a series of discernible shifts in tone and emotional temperature.

Ulverstone programme:

1. Photos of leading officers
2. Poems entitled, 'Billy's rose,' 'The road to heaven,'

²⁶ *The War Cry* July 28 1894 pp. 9,10.

²⁷ *The War Cry* November 4 1893 p. 6.

²⁸ *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11..

²⁹ *The War Cry* June 22 1895 p. 7.

3. Picturesque views of statuary and other realistic scenes,
4. Chromotrophs [sic], several David and Goliath photos and
5. Scenes from the life of Christ.³⁰

Photographic portraits of local officers were greeted with enthusiasm and some gentle humour set everyone at ease.³¹ Then followed a selection of sentimental and moralistic narratives and views which not only entertained and instructed but raised the emotional tone of the meeting, especially useful to soften a hard audience. Before the collection, a lightening of emotional mood, perhaps including reference to the Army's social work, then the collection plate signalled by the chromatrope. The climax is built on scriptural scenes, culminating in the emotive rendering of the crucifixion and ascension, the goal being to attract converts to the Christian message of salvation through dedication to Christ. The subjective experience of such a production was described after the exhibition at the Russell Street Temperance Hall, Melbourne, in July 1894:

A programme of musical productions in unison with the pictures had the effect of deepening the meaning and impressing upon the memory the scenes typified on the canvas. A mechanical piece entitled 'No cross, no crown,' was exceptionally good, the colouring being rich and lambent. The closing scenes in the life of our Lord were, however, the best in our eyes, peradventure because upon those scenes and actions depended the salvation which we now enjoy. Plaintive melodies accompanied these, which were rendered by the singing company. ... The clarions of triumph were sounded in the invigorating chorus 'Christ died but rose again,' as a representation of the ascension was thrown upon the canvas ...³²

Limelight Department performances of the early 1890s rivalled the best contemporary commercial spectacles, even the professional international companies such as G. H. Snazelle's (referred to in chapter two), not only in content but also technologically. Indeed their initial success was not built on offering a repertoire that differed in substance greatly from that of other religious lantern practitioners. The way in which they distinguished

³⁰ *The War Cry* July 8 1893 p. 14.

³¹ For example, Barritt reported that the audience was greatly amused by these (now obscure) 'sight-gags' in Fremantle in 1892:

Staff-Captain Knight's photo was the signal for great applause. 'Now we'll have Captain Harris,' says the operator and a full tattooed Maori, in all his war paint and feathers, appeared on the screen.' Then later on: "Who is this fellow?" asked the Adjutant' as a 'somewhat ancient picture' of Staff-Captain Hendy appeared. 'A dead silence followed for the space of a five seconds, and then a voice piped from out the back, 'Friends, we want half-a-crown, please!'"

The War Cry October 1892 p. 11.

³² *The War Cry* July 28 1894 pp. 9,10.

themselves, however, was in the high standards of performance they were able to achieve both creatively and technically.

The bulk of these songs and narratives were well known favourites, readily available from commercial slide suppliers in colonial centres to clergy of all denominations as well as the general public. But the Army's use of them was particularly effective, combining skilful operation and teamwork with a degree of creative direction and collaboration not evident in other practice. With strong institutional financial support Perry could take his pick of the slides locally available and continually introduced fresh material. Audiences were often surprised and delighted to be offered a new repertoire at each exhibition, in contrast to less well stocked lanternists who had only a limited set of slides to show repeatedly. Careful selection was made, however, with consideration of how commercially produced material inserted into a limelight service could acquire new layers of meaning and religious resonance. Perry seems to have introduced this use of allegory in 1894. At the Russell Street Temperance Hall, Melbourne, it was noted that:

The scenes which followed depicted some of the choicest incidents in the life of 'the Man of Sorrows,' with here and there pictures of a symbolical character thrown in. Perhaps it is superfluous to say that spiritual allegory is only understood by those whose spiritual eyes have been opened. To such the picture, 'Behold \, I stand at the door and knock,' would be as an open book;\ For in every breast that liveth\ Is that strange, mysterious door.³³

The report does not elaborate on the particular images used, but the allegorical use of one of the most common-place mechanical slides was noted in 1896, at a meeting of the Melbourne corps where the chromatrope was given new meaning as a symbol of the collection plate. Minnie L. Rowell wrote in *The War Cry*:

The proceeds of the service were to be devoted to reducing the electric light bill of the corps, and the collection was foreshadowed by the appearance on the sheet of a kaleidoscopic slide resembling a plate. By some wonderful means the patterns on the plate began to turn in and out and round and round in a most indescribable way, till I almost wondered if my head or this comical arrangement would turn inside out.³⁴

The Limelight Department's triunial lantern, newly acquired in 1896 to replace the old biunial destroyed by fire was major technological addition which extended the range of dissolving views and other visual effects that could be produced (figure 7.9). The dissolving technique lent itself particularly well to the representation of angels. Typically these melodramatic poems were populated with spiritual beings. Represented usually with

³³ *The War Cry* July 28 1894 pp. 9,10.

³⁴ *The War Cry* July 11 1896 p. 2. Interestingly the chromatrope, a favourite of decades past, was new to her.

overlays of suitably dressed and arrayed painted or photographed figures, either painted images or photographed life-models could be mounted onto separate slides, to be overlaid on the screen by multiple projection. Now with a triple projector at his command, Perry delighted audiences that year with effects that were proclaimed as 'all new' even when applied to familiar title such as *Rock of Ages* and *Jane Conquest*. 'But how can the angels be described?' the *Sydney War Cry* exclaimed after the Sydney debut of the Triunial:

angels separately and angels collectively; angels watching over Jane Conquest's babe while she is intent on saving the lives of the crew on board the burning ship, her husband among the number; angels floating through the air in great companies. The onlookers were completely enchanted at the angelic vision.³⁵

Despite the reliance on still images, a theatricality and sense of action were created by the sequence of transitions of a 'beautiful set of dissolving views', and overlays projected 'in-register' from the Triunial lantern. In the same program it was noted that dissolving views of a lighthouse 'with lightning and storm effects, were very striking'.³⁶ A mechanical slide representing a collision at sea was less successful however, showing, 'a number of icebergs with a boat steadily gliding over the water, and running right into an iceberg and knocking lumps of ice into the air, where they apparently rested, and showed no desire to fall down again.'³⁷ Such mishaps were rare however in what amounted overall to a sophisticated reinvention of the magic lantern as a performance medium combining vision, music and oration.

On tour: from 'the busy haunts of men' to 'the remoter villages'

How the lanternist bulked large on the horizon of public imagination! The busy haunts of men were invaded, besides the remoter villages in the Gippsland wilds, and a wondering public were willingly bound captive to the chariot-wheels of this Napoleon of Limelight enterprise.

Wellington June 1909.³⁸

As well as fulfilling their own criteria for success the Limelight Department was responsible for making high quality lantern exhibitions available to a wider public audience, geographically and socially than any other contemporary lantern practice could. The initial nine week tour of the eastern Australian colonies from December 1891 to March 1892 which had taken them as far north as Brisbane during the hottest part of the year inaugurated a pattern which persisted over the next eighteen years of continual and extensive travel interspersed with intense periods of production at the Melbourne headquarters. A second tour of five weeks, visiting twenty-five towns in South Australia and Victoria, returned to Melbourne on May 30

³⁵ *The War Cry* Sydney July 25 1896 p. 3.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *The War Cry* Wellington June 1909 p. 8.

1892. Barritt proclaimed that he and Perry had given 'forty-three exhibitions, comprising six on Sunday nights, twenty-five on week-nights for adults, and twelve on week-nights for children.'³⁹ Within that first year a further three tours were undertaken through south-western Victoria and the Wimmera, and by sea to Western Australia.⁴⁰ In 1893 'special' touring parties were sent to NSW Tasmania, Queensland and New Zealand's South Island, with Captain (Mrs) Perry leading the entourage in Christchurch for the first Salvation Army Limelight Service in New Zealand (figure 7.10).⁴¹ Joseph Perry toured both islands of New Zealand the following year, in between a tour of Victoria and another to Western Australia. Additional officers were assigned to Perry's project and delegated to undertake separate tours throughout Australasia (figure 7.11). The Limelight Department covered thousands of miles annually, by land and sea. Perry estimated that by 1898 he himself had travelled over 90,000 miles. He and his colleagues had moved themselves and their cumbersome equipment over all sorts of terrain and in all sorts of transportation.

The first tours carried relatively modest paraphernalia which nevertheless weighed nearly 6cwt (300 kilograms), projector, slides, gas bags, a gasometer which required ten buckets of water, which on at least one occasion had to be fetched up from a nearby creek.⁴² All of which had to be transported from township to township, over rough country roads, by whatever horse-drawn vehicle could be supplied on the spot. In 1895 Perry reported that they had 'travelled by train 1162 miles, by coach 335 and by steamboat 118.'⁴³ While the sea journeys from Melbourne to Western Australia or to New Zealand may have offered a short period of relaxation between preparation and touring, Perry, who rarely complained, admitted to having 'a terrible voyage and being generally shaken up' on the steamship *Glenelg* on the way to their first tour of Tasmania.⁴⁴ The rail system, 'long, weary second class' journeys, was also relied on for long distance travel.⁴⁵ From the railway station they transferred to horse-drawn coach or open wagon. These shorter journeys were frequently bone-shaking and exhausting, often at a rapid pace to keep up with a breakneck schedule of bookings, and in the challenging extremes of weather conditions and with inevitable mishaps. 'The travel is very fatiguing, especially in this hot climate,' Barritt wrote in 1892 after tortuous journey of

³⁹ *The War Cry* June 11 1892 p. 13.

⁴⁰ *The War Cry* August 13 1892 p. 14; October 22 1892 p. 11.

⁴¹ Perry, a widower, had found time to marry Captain Julia Lear on April 8 1893. *The War Cry* May 6 1893 p. 8. They were each referred to as Captain Perry until Joe Perry's later promotion. Within a few weeks of the wedding both were on separate limelight tours, Joe to Tasmania and Julia to New Zealand.

⁴² *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13. More detail on the processes and problems of illumination is given by Long in 'Australia's 'first films: facts and fables. Part 16: New light on the Limelight Department' in *Cinema Papers* December 1995, pp. 34-37.

⁴³ *The War Cry* June 22 1895 p. 7.

⁴⁴ *The War Cry* July 8 1892 p. 14.

⁴⁵ *The War Cry* June 11 1892 p. 13.

84 miles (125 kilometres) through Northern NSW at the height of summer. Nevertheless he and his colleagues seemed to relish these difficulties or at least the retelling of them: of their struggles with recalcitrant 'old grey mares'; of 'three hours and a half ... in a broiling sun, and not a single milk palace or soft drink shop *en route*'⁴⁶ 'Mud, jolts, jerks, sometimes our heads nearly through the roof of the coach, and at other times miles of corduroy to travel over,' wrote O. H Purnell wrote of the trip to Walhalla in August 1892; then onto Morwell with:

more shaking, heads aching, bones sore, and we got down the mountains safely, after chopping two fallen trees off the coach track, and nearly getting bogged a few times, especially about Jubilee, where the holes are quite dangerous.⁴⁷

For the 1893 tour of Tasmania the Limelighters travelled around the entire island with a hired wagon and two horses (figure 7.12).⁴⁸ In 1896 the Adjutant and Mrs Perry travelled over 1,000 miles by bicycle on the tour of NSW and Victoria, their appearance causing a 'great deal of stir' in country towns, particularly Mrs Perry, as a woman astride a bicycle represented a serious challenge to Victorian gender stereotypes (figure 7.13).⁴⁹

In many towns the ineptness of previous operators had dampened enthusiasm for lantern shows. By the 1890s the appealing novelty of the magic lantern could no longer be relied on as in decades past and the Limelighters suffered the backlash from this prejudice. At Laidley, Queensland in February 1892 Barritt reported that they would 'have had the building full only the people were afraid, as some local amateur had nearly blown three men to atoms while experimenting with a lime-light some little time prior to our visit.'⁵⁰ They succeeded nevertheless in rapidly building up a reputation by overcoming the failings of their predecessors. On leaving Queensland Barritt commented:

Our only regret is that we were unable to do more spiritually and financially on account of the wide-spread prejudice that exists against limelight exhibitions, owing to the unsatisfactory and blundering manner in which these affairs have been exhibited and worked by unscientific men. For our part, we have not had a single accident.⁵¹

Understandably there was some reluctance among audiences to spend a couple of hours in a hot darkened enclosed space with erratic, noisy, strange smelling, mechanical and chemical processes with a reputation for sudden and violent self-destruction. The reward for enduring these conditions might be little better than a small, badly focussed picture or slides that had already

⁴⁶ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13.

⁴⁷ *The War Cry* August 22 1892 p. 16.

⁴⁸ *The War Cry* July 8 1892 p. 14.

⁴⁹ *The War Cry* November 28 1896 p. 6..

⁵⁰ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13.

⁵¹ *The War Cry* February 20 1892 p. 11.

been seen many times before. During the tour of Tasmania 1893, for instance, it was observed that:

there seems to be a general impression that the 'show' is like the circus
– a take in, or, rather, a take (money) out, or some small magic lantern
– so that its reputation has to be made first of all.⁵²

But Barritt, Perry and their team overcame this resistance, rapidly acquiring a reputation for the kind of performances that drew huge audiences particularly from the urban working classes and in rural communities. Word quickly spread that the exhibitions were not to be missed. As Barritt had predicted in June 1892:

A good sign of future success may be found in the fact that wherever we put in two nights the building was invariably crowded on the second night. In Broken Hill, where we spent three days, the barracks was literally besieged long before the doors were opened on the last two nights, and crowds were reluctantly refused admittance.

He was confident that 'a second visit will be hailed with delight at any place to which we have been.'⁵³ Two years later at Shepparton, Victoria, 'The people seemed to run away with the idea that it was an ordinary magic-lantern, but all who came went away surprised and delighted.'⁵⁴ By 1894 Perry and the Limelight Department were becoming well known in many Victorian townships, and boasted that they could hold their own against counter attractions such as the touring theatrical company with whom they coincided in Kyneton and in Castlemaine.⁵⁵ 'A magnificent display on the Market Square in Castlemaine on Saturday night,' was put on for an audience of a thousand, 'the unanimous verdict being that nothing to compare with it has ever been seen in this town before.'⁵⁶

At the same time many rural townships were so bereft of amusement that the prospect of any event out of the ordinary and cause for a community gathering was most welcome. During the economic downturn of 1893 the financially stressed population of Cobar in northern NSW flocked to the limelight. From the central Queensland mining town of Copperfield, 'Semper Fidelis' wrote: 'As very few choice entertainments come to this part, the inhabitants thereof know how to show gratitude and appreciation when something good comes along, the small boys especially taking the whole matter in with open eyes and mouths.'⁵⁷ From North Pine Camp, Queensland, Barritt commented: 'The wonder is where the people came from to fill the building, but come they did, notwithstanding the stormy weather; many had to travel twelve and fifteen miles.' In the isolated town of Kobbie after a day

⁵² *The War Cry* July 8 1892 p. 14.

⁵³ *The War Cry* June 11 1892 p. 13.

⁵⁴ *The War Cry* June 16 1894 p. 9.

⁵⁵ *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *The War Cry* November 4 1893 p. 6.

of scorching heat in the middle of January: 'The folks began to roll up about half-past seven in vehicles of all shapes and sizes, and on scores of horses, women riding on men's saddles. We had a splendid meeting. The folks were just delighted, interested and most enthusiastic.'⁵⁸

Reassured that the operators were competent and would not blow the place up, the inhabitants of outlying regions would come along for the show, but it did not necessarily follow that they would stay on for the serious part, once the slide show was over. At Narrabri, northern NSW, in early February 1892, for example, the limelight exhibition on Saturday night had been 'a great success, the Public Hall being crowded with a good, appreciative audience.' The next day, however, those who attended Sunday's lantern service were only willing to endure the intense heat of a 'very small, low-ceiled barracks,' as long as the entertainment continued. 'Unfortunately,' wrote Barritt, 'the people rushed *en masse* from the hot building at prayer-meeting time.'⁵⁹ It might be not only the temperature but temperament that had to be overcome. The Limelighters found some tough audiences attracted by the spectacle but less impressed with the message. At Nyngan, for instance, where they showed *Darkest England* and *Billy's Rose*, it was noted that, 'These people are very hard', and at Dubbo 'the folk were very sorry to part with us (I mean the lantern).'⁶⁰ 'When the collection was announced' at an open air exhibition in Melbourne in 1894, 'it was noticed that all the wheezy-looking persons who seemed to be suffering from chronic catarrh and inherent meanness of soul, buckled up their ulsters and with nervous irritability made off.'⁶¹

Nevertheless, at least by their own accounts, it is evident that the Limelighters' creatively and technically superior performances could generally win over resistant audiences in difficult circumstances. At Rockhampton, Queensland, city of 'sin, sweat and sorrow,' in November 1893 it was reported that:

With the exception of a baby or two, who were nearly suffocated with the heat, the utmost silence prevailed on the part of the audience, broken only at intervals by a sigh or sob, as the scenes of Calvary were so vividly brought before the minds of all.⁶²

Venues: 'Churches, wheat stores, and all kinds of buildings'

Spurred by a commitment to spread their message of salvation to a wide audience they were willing to set up their lantern shows in some unlikely venues. 'Were we to give a full account of the meetings in churches, wheat stores, and all kinds of buildings, it would fill a special edition of the War

⁵⁸ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13.

⁵⁹ *The War Cry* March 19 1892 p. 10.

⁶⁰ *The War Cry* March 4 1893 p. 10.

⁶¹ *The War Cry* July 28 1894 pp. 9,10.

⁶² *The War Cry* November 4 1893 p. 6.

Cry,' Barritt reported in June 1892.⁶³ They had the advantage of a network of Army corps at every stop to set them up but not every corps had a specially built barracks suitable for services, let alone a lantern exhibition. The exhibitions were held in a variety of, sometimes astonishing, conditions. 'A very difficult task' confronted Barritt and Perry, in 1892 at Rosewood on their first tour of Queensland. 'The building was very low, so we had either to take out the tie-rod or show a picture as big as a pocket-handkerchief. We chose the former course, engaged the blacksmith, and succeeded in showing a decent-sized picture, though at the risk of the building collapsing.'⁶⁴

1894 was a year for open-air limelight exhibitions. Open-air meetings were a common Army strategy to attract attention, collect donations and raise interest before the indoor service or meeting that followed. In Castlemaine, Victoria, Perry gained permission to put on an open-air exhibition in Market Square on Saturday night (figure 7.14). The free entertainment drew an audience of 1000, and, 'being only a foretaste of the good things, caused the barracks on Sunday night to be filled to overflowing...'⁶⁵ The successful strategy was employed again at Walhalla. Nicholas Turner wrote that at Walhalla in July 1894:

We started on Saturday with an open-air lantern exhibition. This cheap sight was the means of arousing the interest for the next three days. Sunday night the hall was filled to overflowing ... By 6.45 [on Monday] the hall was a busy scene; children crying, mothers excited, and everyone pushing and scrambling to get in at the door of the hall. ... On Tuesday night the people were at the door at six o'clock clamouring to get in.⁶⁶

Back in Melbourne, they employed the same strategy. On a Saturday night in late July 1894, Perry and his team occupied 'a vacant block of ground at the rear of the Cyclorama in Russell-street' (figure 7.15).⁶⁷ 'A large spread of white canvas had been erected against the side wall of a public-house, upon which Captain Perry was flashing at intervals views, announcements, songs and subjects by the aid of the limelight apparatus.' They were supported by 'a large staff were present, as also the renowned Rescue Rovers' brass band. Thus the musical and oratorical part of the programme was assured.'

The scenes and pictures thrown upon the canvas were alike varied and calculated to stir the sensibilities of all classes. ... What with firefloods on the prairies and wonders on the great deep, with the vivid lightning

⁶³ *The War Cry* June 11 1892 p.10.

⁶⁴ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13.

⁶⁵ *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11.

⁶⁶ *The War Cry* July 21 1894 p. 2. Its use was reported from Bairnsdale on the same tour: 'Position was taken on a vacant piece of ground, and the pictures thrown on to a large white wall.'

⁶⁷ The Cyclorama, an entirely secular enterprise, was showing the Siege of Paris, Jerusalem and others, but only operated during day-light hours, needing natural light for their effects, two shows daily at 10 am and 5pm. See Colligan 'Canvas and wax' and *Canvas documentaries*.

speaking of belching thunder in the distance playing o'er the deep, as some majestic vessel ploughed her way through swinging smoking seas, or yet again with the picture of a great ocean liner wrapped in a winding sheet of flame, Russell-street was fairly alive with sensations which caught on admirably with the crowd.⁶⁸

Some of the best special effects, the magic of the lantern, were employed fully, the dissolving technique, mechanical slides and sound effects and here is proof of the power of the open-air projected image to entice passersby to linger in the street in the middle of winter. 'The sharp biting wind swooped and whistled around the corners of the streets,' Brigadier Hammond wrote:

The intense cold and unfavourable atmospheric conditions alone interfered with complete success of the affair, the condenser freezing every now and again and exploding lengths of piping, much to Captain Perry's chagrin and the delight of small boys, who possibly thought another anarchist plot was coming to light. The ground, having been saturated with rain during the day, was cold and damp, and this fact perhaps accounted for the shiftiness of the crowd.⁶⁹

Nevertheless, a lead-up to the Sunday night meeting, it was a great success and resulting in a full hall, where the special effects of the limelight were again fully deployed although this time with explicit evangelical intent, scenes from the crucifixion and the ascension, favourite hymns and so forth. Perry again used the open-air exhibition strategy with great success during the Limelight tour of New Zealand in early 1896. In Nelson:

the crowd was at once struck by the immense size of [the screen] ... hung up on a hotel wall. ...About 2,000 people were present, and, judging from the tremendous applause that every now and then would break out, it was evident that they were really delighted.

The following evening's Sunday Limelight Service filled Nelson's Theatre Royal despite torrents of rain.⁷⁰

'Captain Perry's latest triumphs'

The War Cry April 28 1894 p. 11.

The success of the Salvation Army's Limelight Department can be ascertained in several ways. From the outset Barritt and Perry clearly understood the magic of the medium and did not hesitate to use its emotive power to the fullest extent. They also had the skill and aptitude to achieve technically superior performances, despite occasional hitches like the iceberg incident, which enabled the medium to work its magic. As Major Peart, the new colony commissioner, commented after seeing them in action in Toowoomba in February 1892: 'Major Barritt and Captain Perry, the operator, understand

⁶⁸ *The War Cry* July 28 1894 pp. 9, 10.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *The War Cry* New Zealand April 11 1896.

each other, and the whole business works like clockwork.⁷¹ The enterprise was also a success in terms of funds netted for the Army's social programmes and in terms of souls saved. At the conclusion of the first tour Barritt reckoned up:

Souls have been saved, a good round sum netted for the War, and it has been clearly demonstrated that the limelight, conducted on right lines, can be made a most God-honouring means of soul-saving and money-raising to help forward the kingdom of God.⁷²

Six years later Perry quantified the achievements of the early years in *The Victory* of August 1898:

in the 1000 odd meetings I have held, 1186 souls have sought salvation; over 50,000 people have been brought into contact with salvation truths, and within a pound or two £4000 has been raised as clear profit for the Colony War Office, Social, or other funds.⁷³

Even if an evaluation can be made only by recourse to its own account, the Salvation Army's Limelight Department achievement was clearly unique, not only in the dissemination its message of salvation throughout the colonies. It brought superior magic lantern exhibitions to a broader colonial audience than could be consistently reached by individual itinerant practitioners. The Limelight Department covered thousands of miles annually, by land and sea. To Brisbane in the north, to Perth on the west coast, the islands of Tasmania to the South and New Zealand to the east, their tours encompassed the small rural townships as well as the colonial urban centres. Their target audience was identified primarily, but not exclusively, amongst the poor and disadvantaged, 'the forgotten tenth' as Salvation Army founder William Booth described them. The 50,000 colonists who were 'brought into contact with salvation truths' were also exposed to the most up to date visual technology, which might otherwise have passed them by.

'Distinctly Army pictures'⁷⁴

The Limelight Department was also significant for another reason. Under the progressive leadership of Perry it rapidly developed into an industrialised production house for life model slides, and subsequently moving pictures, to be disseminated through an intercolonial distribution network. The Limelight Department's creativity and skill was not limited to the manipulation of commercially produced slides. In 1893, less than two years after the first Limelight exhibition, Perry commenced production of the Australasian Salvation Army's own photographic life model slide series. Specifically created to be taken on tour the slides were first shown in Castlemaine and Kyneton in April 1894, and a little later in Melbourne at a special view at the

⁷¹ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 4.

⁷² *The War Cry* March 19 1892 p. 13.

⁷³ *The Victory* August 1898, p. 304.

⁷⁴ *The War Cry* June 16 1894 p. 9.

Prahran barracks.⁷⁵ Two 'distinctly Army' narratives were chosen for this treatment, *Are the colours safe?*, based on a narrative verse by Mrs H. A. Beavan, of Cardiff, Wales, and *A Daughter of Ishmael* written by a local officer (figures 7.16-17). The latter, based on the testimony of a young immigrant woman Maggie O'Donoghue, whose life was marred with illegitimacy, alcoholism and murder until her rescue by the Salvation Army, had already been an Army best-seller in print.⁷⁶ In early 1894 it was announced that Perry had produced 'a beautiful set of slides' using life models following 'Maggie right through her career from the Munster [Ireland] mountain hamlet to the [Salvation Army's] Brunswick Rescue Home.'⁷⁷

These early life model productions represented the beginning of a 15 year career in visual technology production and distribution for Perry and the Limelight Department. The appointment in 1896 of Herbert Booth, son of General William Booth, as colonial Commandant raised the activities of the Department to a new level. In his first year, 'determined to enlarge and so widen the influence and the scope of the Limelight' he ordered £1000 worth of new equipment including three biunial lanterns, three kinematographs, six phonographs and three gramophones, and had 'a commodious and well-lighted studio ... erected at the rear of the Melbourne Headquarters' for the production of life-model slides.⁷⁸ Perry was promoted to Staff-Captain and subsequently to Major. The combination of lantern slides, moving film and sound recording was celebrated as the 'Triple Alliance' and increasingly elaborate scenarios were devised using the technology to its fullest (figure 7.18).⁷⁹ Short documentary film sequences showing Army social work in action were included in Limelight programs from September 1897. In 1900 Herbert Booth announced the production of *Soldiers of the Cross*. This major visual technological performance proposed to depict the life stories of Christian heroes and martyrs in lantern slides interspersed with short moving film segments. Previewing the two hundred life model slides prepared for the epic, *The War Cry* hailed them as 'beyond doubt the most beautiful and artistic set of slides that have yet been designed in Australasia, while, as the Commandant himself declares, they are unrivalled in any part of the world. Every picture has been posed or designed by himself.'⁸⁰ *Under Southern Skies* followed in 1902 with '200 choice views and entrancingly realistic Bioscope films, including the Discovery of Tasmania, Captain Cook's landing at Botany

⁷⁵ *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11; June 16 1894 p. 9.

⁷⁶ Also referred to as *The Life of Maggie O'Donoghue*. *The War Cry* April 24 1896.

⁷⁷ *The War Cry* February 24 1894 p.8. *The War Cry* December 8 1894 p. 2. See also Long 'Screening the Salvation Army.'

⁷⁸ Brief prepared by Commandant Herbert Booth in connection with the proposed visit of General Booth in 1899. Cited by Colonel Percival Dale, letter to J. Cato, 23 June 1953, Salvation Army Heritage Centre. The abandoned attic still bears traces of its use for slide and film production. The photographic studio has been converted to a meeting room. See Long 'New light on the Limelight Department' in *Cinema Papers* No 107 December 1995 pp. 34-57.

⁷⁹ *The Victory* August 1898 p. 300.

⁸⁰ *The War Cry* September 1 1900 p. 8.

Bay, Hoisting the Union Jack, Sydney Harbour – past and present, Melbourne – past and present, Burke and Wills’ tragic end.’⁸¹

‘The business of the firm is – All branches of Kinematography, Photography, Optical lantern work and Slide making.’

Business registration certificate, Melbourne 1901.⁸²

The Limelight Department was able to achieve and sustain this level of performance effectively and efficiently because of several factors. While Perry’s personal dedication and passion for the medium was pivotal, a crucial factor was the backing of an institution with a favourable administration convinced of the value of the medium within Salvation Army culture. The commitment of the Army’s administration at the highest level to the limelight was demonstrated repeatedly and clearly over the course of almost two decades. One significant example occurred after a fire at Marton during a tour of New Zealand in 1896 destroyed Perry’s ‘whole limelight apparatus, and entire collection of slides which [he] had been accumulating for years.’⁸³ Fire was an ever-present danger in colonial life stemming from a variety of circumstances, but exacerbated by the volatile nature of limelight paraphernalia.⁸⁴ Such accidental loss was not an uncommon occurrence in lantern practice leaving an individual practitioner to face loss of livelihood. In Perry’s case however he was sent to England to buy not only a replacement, a superior triple Docwra lantern, but also purchased a cinematograph, opening up a whole new field of endeavour.

The geographical extent of the Limelight Department’s distribution was made possible only through the logistical support of a pre-existing itinerary and infrastructure for inter-colonial touring. A network of corps, extending throughout the colonies from Western Australia to New Zealand, from Tasmania to North Queensland, was used regularly for touring lecturers and

⁸¹ *Orange Leader* NSW August 17 1903. Both of these multiple media spectacles have been well documented already by Chris Long in his examination of the Limelight Department’s extensive film production work and their significance as pioneers of the Australasian film industry. This thesis will not duplicate that study. See Chris Long ‘Soldiers of the Cross: Milestones and myths’ in *Cinema Papers* No 99 June 1994 pp. 60-67; ‘Under southern skies (1902)’ in *Cinema Papers* No 106 October 1995 pp. 38-41. See also Cato *The story of the camera in Australia* pp. 118-123. A set of slides for *Soldiers of the Cross* is held in the National Screen and Sound Archive, Screensound Australia, Canberra.

⁸² Registration certificate, 9539. Salvation Army archives.

⁸³ *The War Cry* July 11 1896, p. 2; Sydney July 25 1896, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Reports of fire rarely if ever appeared in Salvation Army publications. *The Herald* (Melbourne 4 July 1899) however reported on an explosion at an Army lantern lecture at the Hawthorn Town Hall. In response to the reporter’s concerns of the ‘great danger of a catastrophe when working the limelight lantern, especially before a crowded audience,’ an Army officer argued that in the previous ten years ‘nothing of the kind ha[d] ever happened before.’ (press cutting in Salvation Army Heritage Centre)

ministry, and could be relied on for venues, accommodation, local transport, advance promotion – ‘its advent being heralded by staring poster and garish handbill’ – and for a warm welcome at any hour of the day or night.⁸⁵ Thus supported, the Limelighters were able to travel more efficiently and extensively, and to operate at a much higher pitch than any individual itinerant commercial lanternists could hope to achieve. In addition subsidiary Limelight troupes were established based both at the Melbourne headquarters and other colonial centres, at one time 28 of these ‘Specials’ were in action in the field.⁸⁶ Since beginning his involvement with the Limelight in 1894 Captain William Fleming, for example, had ‘travelled from end to end of New Zealand, visiting every corps and outpost nearly, and also many towns where a Salvationist is a curiosity, towns where the Army has not set foot in’ (figure 7.19).⁸⁷ With resources such as these, Army lanternists had distinct and significant advantages over both their commercial counterparts and their colleagues who were affiliated to other religious institutions.

The Limelight Department represented a merging of divergent forces: altruistically motivated charity work on one side; and on the other an enterprise valuing expansion, progress and large scale production, using the medium and forms of popular entertainment and the economic, managerial and industrial systems of the business realm. The project was clearly approaching the status of a commercial entity when *The War Cry* reported in March 1898: ‘Slides can now be made from life models and turned out on such as scale as will astonish all.’ Not only was Perry ‘almost submerged’ in slide-making, the department was also prepared to undertake ‘unlimited work’ making photographic portraits of local and visiting officers.⁸⁸ In 1899 an official press release was published in the *Australasian Photographic Review* extolling the work of the Limelight Department, with Perry as its head and his assistants.⁸⁹ Among their boasts, it was noted that: ‘A scenic artist is continually kept with a brush in his hand painting the various backgrounds needed for the work, some of the sets of slides needing 30 or 40 grounds.’⁹⁰ In 1901, Commissioner Herbert Booth registered the venture as ‘a new firm about to commence business’ under the name of ‘The Australian Kinematographic Company’ dealing in ‘all branches of kinematography,

⁸⁵ *The War Cry* New Zealand June 1909 p. 8. A ‘staring’ poster has survived in the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum. 75 x 31.5cm; red and green ink; wording: ‘SALVATION ARMY / LIMELIGHT / MAGNIFICENT DISSOLVING VIEWS / Given by the aid of a most powerful Oxy-Ether / Lantern, worked by a skilled operator / at CASTLEMAINE / SUNDAY & MONDAY, APRIL 8 & 9 / A WONDERFUL DISPLAY / ... / AND THE LIFE OF CHRIST ... / A SINGING COMPANY ASSISTING.’ Undated possibly 1894, 1900 or 1906.

⁸⁶ Lindsay Cox, Archivist, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne.

⁸⁷ *The War Cry* New Zealand February 2 1895, p. 3.

⁸⁸ *The War Cry* March 12 1898 p. 5.

⁸⁹ *The Australasian Photographic Review* January 21 1899 p. 2-3.

⁹⁰ *The Australasian Photographic Review* January 21 1899 p. 2-3.

photography, optical lantern work and slide making.⁹¹ Herbert Booth's successor Thomas McKie was just as enthusiastic and supportive. The company rapidly expanded into contract film production for government and local businesses as well as the Army's own projects.⁹² The final demise of the whole venture illustrates the central significance of corporate motivation and backing for the success of such an industry.

In early 1909 Perry and his colleagues were working on their most ambitious projects yet, *Heroes of the Cross* (a remake of *Soldiers of the Cross*) and *The Scottish Covenanters*, in moving film and slides, photographed and filmed at their new studios in Caulfield, Melbourne, and on location at Buller Gorge 18 miles from Melbourne.⁹³ Within months however a newly appointed Commandant James Hay announced that the Department would be decommissioned. Hay was clearly not averse in principle to the use of lantern slides by the Salvation Army, for he used them for his own lectures until the end of his career.⁹⁴ The new Commandant's concerns lay with the Department's cinema production. Although Hay's action seems unwarranted and even tragic from an outsider's point of view, it was not without support within an organisation which looked with great disfavour on anything of a worldly nature. An ongoing debate revealed itself from time to time in the columns of *The War Cry*.⁹⁵ In 1897, for example, an announcement of the newly purchased cinematographe proclaimed:

'Salvation versus Sensation / Some good friends accuse the Salvation Army of Sensation; but we ask, should we not employ the latest inventions of science in the service of the Salvation Army?'⁹⁶

Again in 1901 Booth's emotional endorsement of the appropriation of technology for spiritual ends, was clearly a response to criticism from within the organisation. He argued that:

⁹¹ Registration certificate, 9539, dated 26 January 1901. Salvation Army Heritage Centre.

⁹² These included: the Naval Contingent marching to Port Melbourne to embark for the Boxer Rising in 1900; the opening of the first Federal Parliament by the Duke and Duchess of York and their visit to New Zealand in 1901; Victorian scenic resorts for the Victorian Government, these were screened nightly over Princes Bridge Station, Melbourne; the activities of local industries MacRobertson's chocolate making, Swallow & Ariel's biscuit factory and Chaffey Bros irrigation scheme at Mildura; the visit of the American Navy in 1908; the first Australian nature documentary of the islands of Bass Strait for the Royal Australian Ornithologists' Union.

The Limelight Department's main in-house productions, combining cinema and lantern slides, to date had been *Are the colours safe?* and *Daughter of Ishmael* (slides only), *Soldiers of the Cross* (1900), *Under Southern Skies* (1902), *The Scottish Covenanters* and *Heroes of the Cross* (1909).

⁹³ 'Heroes of the Cross' *The War Cry* April 10 1909 p. 8

⁹⁴ 'Missionary wonders: Commissioner Hay gives a lecture on the Army's native work in Africa' *The War Cry* July 3 1926 p. 10.

⁹⁵ Barbara Bolton *Booth's drum: the Salvation Army in Australia, 1880-1980* Sydney: Hodder & Stoughton 1980 p. 64.

⁹⁶ *The War Cry* Saturday October 30 1897

These means are employed by the worldling; they form a source of attraction in the theatres and musichalls. Why should they be usurped by the enemy of souls?⁹⁷

Other detractors argued that these activities were at the least a distraction from the real work of the Army. But the final word came from Hay who wrote in his autobiography that: 'the cinema, as conducted by the Salvation Army, had led to weakness and a lightness incompatible with true Salvationism, and was completely ended by me.'⁹⁸ By Easter of 1910 the Limelight Department's entire slide collection, film stock and apparatus had been destroyed or disposed of.⁹⁹ Perry, his sons and a number of his colleagues went on to further their own successful careers outside of the Army, making significant contributions to Australian cinema industry.¹⁰⁰ In June 1909, the Wellington edition of *The War Cry* had already unwittingly published the Department's obituary. While extolling the achievements of the new Kinematographe, the writer fondly recalled earlier times when Limelighter's brought the latest in visual technology, the dissolving view lantern and life model slides, to a generation of colonists:

The 'Biunial' is a memory, and, like old friends, is mossed and ivied in grateful affection. And What of 'Jane Conquest' and 'Billy's Rose?' Well, probably they repose, embalmed not only in the memories of the rustics in the 'way back,' who rubbed many a horny hand across weeping eyes, but amongst the dust, and shall we say cobwebs? of the 'Old Curiosity Shop' sacred to the heart of a lanternist. There let them rest. They served their generation well, and made many an otherwise leaden-heeled hour pass rapidly.¹⁰¹

Progressive religious and temperance organizations, such as the Salvation Army and those surveyed in the previous chapter, which embraced unconventional methods and new technologies substantially increased opportunities in the Australasian colonies for encountering modern visual

⁹⁷ *Victory* September 1901, cited in *MLSGB Newsletter* No 4, June 1981.

⁹⁸ James Hay *Aggressive Salvationism: the life of James Hay* Melbourne 1951, cited in Bolton *Booth's drum* p. 66. Hay's decision was part of a wider international reaction amongst Salvation Army leaders to an over-dependence on secular media. For a further discussion see Dean Rapp, 'The British Salvation Army, the early film industry and urban working-class adolescents, 1897-1918' in *Twentieth century British history* Vol 7 No 2 1996 pp. 157-188.

⁹⁹ Remnants of the original collection survived only by chance, most significantly the set of lantern slides of *Soldiers of the Cross* (now held in the National Film and Sound Archive, ScreenSound Australia, Canberra) which had been taken to the US by Herbert Booth in the early 1900s.

¹⁰⁰ Typescript [author unknown donated by Mark Perry 1998] Chris Long's 'Limelight research' Box 1, Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Melbourne; 'Stan Perry of Co-operative Films' *Everyones* January 10 1923 p. 3; Australasian Films in Java' *Everyones* March 7 1923 p. 3; '134 years in the industry: the Perrys' record' *Everyones* December 13 1933 p. 44, 48; Bill Menary *Reg Perry remembers* Adelaide CAE: Adelaide [1990s?] 16mm film.

¹⁰¹ *The War Cry* Wellington June 1909 p. 8.

technology and its globalised world view. Rivalling the style, content and technical sophistication of contemporary commercial lanternists, such as G. H. Snazelle, the Salvation Army's Limelight Department was particularly significant. Not only did they provide a consistently superior standard of lantern exhibitions they achieved the monumental task of taking the technology to its audience. With the support of the Army's infrastructure and networks, however, the Limelight reached and influenced a wider audience, geographically and socially than any other contemporary lantern practice could. Their exhibitions were energetically promoted and open to all, at low cost or even free of charge. Thus within their broader project of evangelism they created the conditions where a generation of colonists on the lower socio-economic levels – the urban poor and labouring classes and the isolated rural communities – were exposed to up-to-date visual technological culture. Furthermore the speed with which Perry and his colleagues embraced modern visual technology placed them among the pioneers of local slide and film production, and created a training ground for several significant contributors to the Australasian cinema industry

The extent of 'religious' lantern practice at the turn of the century made this context one of the major mediators of a globalised 'proto-cinematic experience' for the majority of colonists of the middling and lower classes. Of this large body of practitioners the Limelight Department was arguably the most significant promulgator of an emerging social ritual of 'going to the pictures' amongst the general colonial population ensuring the entrenchment of visual technology into colonial culture.

Chapter Eight

‘Santa Claus in Maoriland’: projecting colonial identities

He had previously taken the photographs of the schoolchildren and teachers. These were reduced to lantern plates and exhibited. It was a sight ... not easily to be forgotten, as the whole classes tried to yell out – “That’s me up there.

Bairnsdale, Victoria, 1894.¹

The preceding chapters have established the extent of magic lantern practice and reception in Australasia. By the late nineteenth century the visual technology was commonplace, accessible, widely utilised, and supported by the ready availability of imported materials, apparatus and images. The exhibition and consumption of the magic lantern located the colonies within a global culture of consumption of visual technology, and an internationally exchangeable repertoire of images. The content and practice of magic lantern shows were also implicated in the construction of an identity for Australasian audiences, heavily inflected with notions of Britishness. At the same time, however, colonial lantern practitioners were also engaged in producing lantern slide images which suggest that the dominance of that identity was not total. Despite the abundance of lantern slides imported into and widely available throughout the Australasian colonies, local initiatives in commercial slide production had become evident from the middle of the nineteenth century. An emerging body of images, generated at a local level, demonstrate an appropriation of the medium and imported conventions by Australians and New Zealanders for their own consumption. Local slide production expanded into a substantial aspect of trade for commercial photographers and formed a significant leisure activity for middle class amateurs. This chapter considers the ways in which the medium of the magic lantern slide was used to construct and broadcast a sense of place and local identity for colonial audiences. They reveal an enthusiasm for colonial events and stories, a sense of place, and a celebration of local identity.

Magic Lantern Slides Painted to Order.

Charles Palmer, Auckland, 1872.²

At least three Auckland artists active in the 1860s and 1870s produced hand-painted slides commercially for the local market. A single report by *The New Zealand Herald* in October 1868 noted that:

¹ *The War Cry* 21 July 1894, p. 2.

² *Daily Southern Cross* 25 January 1872, p. 1.

We have been shown by Mr Featon, optician, of Queen-street, a number of magic lantern slides, embracing a number of comic subjects. The slides in question have been painted by an artist in this town, and are quite equal in their execution to any London productions of the same kind.³

Again comic subjects were the choice of Auckland professional draughtsman Charles Palmer (c1840-1928).⁴ The series of 'excessively laughable' slides he showed to *The New Zealand Herald* in September 1871 were taken from the work of English illustrator Ernest Henry Griset (1844-1907) whose anthropomorphic fantasies delighted contemporary British audiences.⁵ *The Herald* was greatly impressed with the technical qualities of the Palmer's illustrations 'as specimens of art.' 'It is a drawback to the use of the comic magic lantern that they are usually very ill drawn,' the *Herald* complained. The problem was not only that poor illustrations offended those of artistic sensibilities but also that as 'they are exhibited chiefly before children, the tendency is to teach wrong lessons in art.' The *Herald* foresaw no such danger with Palmer's slides 'which, for grotesque humour and excellence of finish, we have seldom seen equalled,' and would undoubtedly 'command a ready sale.'⁶ Palmer, whose technical skill is evident in his business card, followed up this free publicity with prominent newspaper advertisements for his draughting practice (figure 8.1).⁷

Although these passing references to hand-painted slides attest to a place, albeit limited, for this specialist medium in the colonies, they do not reveal any more about the Anglocentric nature of colonial visual culture than is already known. Examples do exist, however, of local slide making and

³ *New Zealand Herald* 12 October 1868, p.3.

The unidentified artist may have been Sarah Anne Porter (1848-1927) who married Edward Henry Featon (1840-1909) in Auckland in 1870. It is possible that Porter, at the age of twenty, was willing to apply her artistic skill to comic subjects and her penchant for fine detail to slide painting as a marginally socially acceptable means of earning a little money. She later achieved recognition under her married name (Sarah Featon) with the publication in 1889 of forty of her botanical illustrations in *The Art Album of New Zealand Flora*, the first full book of chromolithographs printed entirely in New Zealand, presented to Queen Victoria on the occasion of her Jubilee. Bee Dawson 'Sarah Anne Featon: The Art Album of New Zealand Flora' *Lady painters: the flower painters of early New Zealand* Auckland: Viking, 1999 pp. 60-75; Edward & Sarah Featon *The Art Album of New Zealand Flora* Auckland: Bock & Cousins 1889.

⁴ *New Zealand Herald* 7 September 1871. Charles Palmer, painter, lithographer and cartoonist was an active participant in the Auckland art community. Una Platts *Nineteenth century New Zealand artists: a guide & handbook* Christchurch, N.Z.: Avon Fine Prints, 1980, p. 188.

⁵ At the height of his popularity in the late 1860s Griset's drawings were published in British periodicals *Punch*, *Fun* and *Hood's Comic Annual*, all which were available in the colonies. The appropriation of published images in this manner was a common practice. Griset's work and career are described in Lionel Lambourne *Ernest Griset: fantasies of a Victorian illustrator* London: Thames and Hudson 1979.

⁶ *New Zealand Herald* 7 September 1871

⁷ *Daily Southern Cross* 25 January 1872, p. 1.

exhibiting practices more concerned with the articulation of a sense of place and local identity.

John Barr Clark Hoyte (1835-1913), who later became prominent in both Australia and New Zealand as a painter of fashionable landscapes and an art society member, was commissioned by Auckland merchant Mr. Waddel to paint a set of lantern slides in the early years of his career. Like many artists before and since, Hoyte was not averse to applying his artistic skills to glass lantern slide painting as a means of producing income. Survival was a continual struggle for Hoyte even after the eventual popularity of his exhibition paintings. 'It is not for the sake of trying,' the artist wrote in reference to his attempts to make a living, 'I never leave a stone unturned.' Lantern slide painting seems to have been one of those stones.⁸ In 1868, with a wife and two young children to support, he was employed at up to three Auckland schools as a drawing master. Not long after the notice regarding Featon's slides, in December 1868, Hoyte's slides were publicly exhibited for charity (as already mentioned in chapter three). *The New Zealand Herald* reported that:

The views exhibited were really excellent, more especially some of the scenes of the North, Middle, and Southern Island of New Zealand, the whole of which were beautifully painted by Mr. Hoyte. The falls at Wangerei [sic.] and the Bay of Islands were particularly good, as also an excellent sketch of the ship Siam in full sail, enlivening the port of Auckland.⁹

Hoyte's images embodied an aesthetic, ideological and political relationship to the land characteristic of the early colonial landscape genre.¹⁰ The aesthetic conventions encouraged a proprietorial gaze over panoramic vistas of scenic beauty, and picturesque inhabitations; the visual expression of imperialist notions of ownership of a whole geographical and political region. 'On the whole,' the *Herald* continued, 'the exhibition was very creditable to Mr. Waddel's taste and judgement, being greatly superior to the average of such displays.'¹¹ Significantly, this visual celebration of European possession of the land was presented 'for the benefit of those who suffered by the late massacre at Poverty Bay' just a few weeks earlier.¹² On 10 November 1868 Maori

⁸ R. D. J. Collins 'Hoyte, John Barr Clark 1835-1913' in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* Vol. 2 pp. 231-232; Peter Stupples & Roger Collins *John Clark Hoyte* Auckland: Mural Books 1987.

⁹ *New Zealand Herald* 18 December 1868, p. 3. Not uncharacteristically a number of the images were based secondary sources. In 1868 Hoyte had not yet visited the Middle (South) and Southern (Stewart) Islands. As his biographer Collins explains: 'In January 1866 he exhibited views from Whangarei, Coromandel, Auckland, Waikato, the Wellington region and Nelson, although some of these pictures were not painted from the subject. In the 1870s he travelled each summer, progressively adding the thermal region, Taranaki, Nelson, Christchurch, Arthur's Pass, Banks Peninsula and Otago to his repertoire between 1872 and 1876.'

¹⁰ For a discussion of this see Francis Pound *Frames on the land: early landscape painting in New Zealand* Auckland: Collins, 1983.

¹¹ *New Zealand Herald* December 18, 1868, p. 3.

¹² *ibid.*

resistance leader and prophet Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki (d.1893) of Rongowhakaata had led an attack on the mainly Pakeha community at Matawhero, Poverty Bay on the East Coast of the North Island.¹³ Te Kooti's campaign, which continued across the North Island until 1872, came after decades of conflict between Maori and Pakeha, and between tribes, a period currently referred to as the New Zealand Wars.¹⁴

Hoyte's magic lantern slides, combining the affective forces of Western aesthetics and technology, not only created an impressive exhibition. In the current climate of insecurity, they enabled the local Pakeha community to reaffirm their claim to the land and its riches. The Anglo-imperial renaming of geographical features, and a ship bearing the Anglicised Asian name *Siam* depicted in the slides reassuringly positioned the audience within the wider frame of the British Empire. From that perspective indigenous resistance campaigns like the New Zealand Wars were regrettable but unavoidable confrontations on the road to imperial domination. This sense of empowerment held true regardless of whether viewers had any personal connection to the individual sites or not, and indeed despite the fact that the artist himself had not even seen them all (figure 8.2). The public celebration of European ownership made possible through visual technology fostered a shared sense of identity.

Regrettably the Featon, Hoyte and Palmer slides have been lost. Only extant works on paper by these artists can provide a sense of the quality of their slide images. However, a rare set of hand-painted slides of Australian scenes from the 1850s indicate the high aesthetic and technical standard achievable in this medium (figure 8.3).¹⁵ There are no inscriptions to indicate the painter, the slide-maker or the locations depicted, or the intended audience. The images consist of a series of scenes of gold-diggings and urban development, tentatively identifiable as the Victorian gold-fields and Melbourne in the early 1850s. Images such as these, in various media and corresponding texts, were produced for British and European audiences from the earliest years of colonial settlement to meet the huge demand for descriptions of distant lands,

The Poverty Bay massacre was the subject of a 'Monster Moving Diorama of The New Zealand War' at the Auckland Mechanics' Institute the following year. *The New Zealander* April 29, May 10, 1869. Press cuttings private collection Wellington.

¹³ At Matawhero about fifty-four people were killed, including more than twenty Maori. For an extensive history of Te Kooti and his mission see Judith Binney *Redemption songs: a life of Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki* Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press; Bridget Williams Books, 1995.

¹⁴ Since 1843, when the ink on the Treaty of Waitangi was barely dry, disaffected tribes had mounted successive campaigns of resistance to Pakeha occupation of lands over which ownership, declared useage and leasing arrangements were disputed. When Te Kooti 'decided to attack Poverty Bay' Judith Binney relates, 'he declared that: "God would give the Turanganui country, and all the best places of the Europeans, back to him and his people"' (Binney *DNZB*) An introductory overview of and links to further reading on the New Zealand Wars can be found at <http://www.newzealandwars.co.nz/>

¹⁵ Royal Historical Society of Victoria, GS-WF-0001-9.

and to inform prospective immigrants, settlers and investors of conditions in the colonies. Their survival in a local archive implies that they were exhibited locally. In that context they can also be read as a testament of proprietorial appropriation of land and the celebration of possession, occupation and profitable development of natural resources.

Despite this evidence of a market for locally made painted slides and that the slides themselves may have been of high standard, it is unlikely that they were produced in significant numbers in the colonies. Hand-painted lantern slides were labour intensive and required a high level of skill. This made them expensive to produce and therefore of limited commercial potential. The affluent middle-class sector who could or would purchase these luxuries was too small to support viable commercial production. Nonetheless, demand for local lantern slide views did exist and innovations in photography provided the impetus and technological momentum for an emerging local industry. As soon as a convenient reproduction technology for transparent images on glass became available local slide production entered the market place more fully.¹⁶

Impact of photography on local slide production

Photographic views of local events, places and personages fed an international demand for the travel and description genre, in both visual and print media. Early New Zealand professional photographers, such as Meluish, Mundy, and the Burton Bros, were well aware of this. Meluish's use of local images for his 'Tour from Dunedin to Hokitika over the Southern Alps,' for example, were received enthusiastically by local audiences. The road between Canterbury and Hokitika, opened up with the West Coast goldrush, had in itself already become a tourist attraction offering a thrilling, frequently dangerous, coach ride across the Southern Alps by way of the Otira Gorge.

Translated to the screen Meluish's photographs acquired a monumental quality. The *Otago Daily Times* emphasized that: 'These views, it must be understood, are photographs, magnified to about 15 ft or 18 ft by 12 ft; so that every detail of buildings and the lines of the hills is shown, under a perfect light.'¹⁷ Using the familiar visual technological trope of the Grand Tour, Meluish's exhibition encouraged his audience to consider their own region as a tourist destination, and to enjoy a sense of proprietorial pride in 'their' region and its colonisation. The tour took in magnificent alpine scenery,

¹⁶ As described in earlier chapters, colonial photographers were already active in slide production for the local market in the 1860s. Nicholas Caire, in Adelaide, reproduced slides photographically from printed images, both for his own use and for sale. *South Australian Register* September 4, 1868, p.2.

Professional photographers were regularly commissioned to produce slides sets from published illustrations. In Christchurch E. W. Seager had a friend make photographic slides of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Seager, *Edward William Seager* p. 126.

¹⁷ *Otago Daily Times* March 17, 1868, p. 4.

celebrated material progress with perspectives of the main street of Dunedin, handsome public buildings, quays and jetties (important nodes of trade and communication), and gold diggings (sources of the colony's wealth) – a repertoire of imposing images from which to construct a sense of regional identity.

The scenic views trade flourished, echoing the nineteenth century passion for scenic grandeur in academic art. The next boost to photographic slide production came in the 1880s with the removal of constraints on outdoor work imposed by the wet-plate process, which required a portable darkroom and additional cumbersome apparatus. This instigated an avalanche of scenic view lantern slides, exhibition photographs, postcards, stereographs, and albums. Through the 1890s local and international sales of photographs and lantern slides of New Zealand and Australian scenery burgeoned to become a significant sector of business for many commercial photographers and dealers. Auckland photographer Josiah Martin used his editorial in the Photographic Section of *Sharland's Trade Journal* to advocate supplying the huge international trade in slide sets of travel and description. 'New Zealand is rich in material particularly suitable for a series of international slides' he wrote in November 1892.¹⁸

The abundance of material Martin referred to lay in the remarkable geographical features of the islands, the lush and picturesque photogenic forests and birds, and picturesque, rural landscapes, occasionally populated by Maori villages and European settlements. While it is undeniable that these were indeed significant features of the visual environment, their selection as suitable for international dissemination conformed to a Eurocentric view of the colony.

Landscape lantern slides and political lobbying

The preparation of lantern slides is a very important and profitable department with many of our landscape photographers.

Josiah Martin, Auckland, 1895.¹⁹

When professional photographers found their trade under threat, first from imported slides and soon after from the colonial government itself, commercial lantern slide production in the colony became the subject of a political tussle. In March 1895 readers of *Sharland's* Photographic Section were alerted to an impending threat from a major English manufacturer with an international market when the editor, New Zealand photographer Josiah Martin, wrote:

Messrs York and Son, the well-known lantern slide makers, are anxious to procure a set of negatives from which to prepare a new series of lantern transparencies of New Zealand scenery, and in order

¹⁸ *Sharland's* Photographic Section. November 7 1892, p. 85.

¹⁹ *Sharland's* August 7 1895, p. 73.

to have as large a variety of subjects to choose from they invite those who have anything specially good to send them prints with full particulars of price etc. The best of these will be issued as slides in wholesale quantities and low rates. This does not offer any particular inducement to those photographers who have been making a specialty of lantern slides to part with their negatives, but it warns them to expect still further competition.²⁰

Later that year the photographers sought the colonial government's protection in the form of a tariff on imported slides of New Zealand views, and Martin again used *Sharland's* to explain their concerns and to increase solidarity amongst independent slide producers:

in admitting lantern slides free of duty [the government] were evidently unaware of the importance of excluding from this privilege lantern slides of New Zealand scenery. The preparation of lantern slides is a very important and profitable department with many of our landscape photographers, which the possible introduction of cheap slides of British manufacture will probably destroy.

We think it will be readily conceded that our photographers should be protected from the importation of English-made slides of New Zealand subjects, for it has frequently happened that slides copied from pictures by New Zealand photographers have been introduced into and sold in the Colony, to the manifest loss of the original photographers.²¹

By February 1896, the photographers took the step of forming a Photographers' Copyright Union to protect their work.²² But in the early years of the twentieth century New Zealand photographers and slide makers again faced competition, this time from the New Zealand government itself.

In 1903 Martin and his colleagues came into conflict with the government's recently established Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, an initiative of the Minister of Railways who envisaged that promoting greater use of the colony's 'unrivalled scenic attractions' and health resorts would increase rail traffic.²³ Over the next decade the Department concerned itself with the development of resort facilities, the improvement of access, the establishment

²⁰ *Sharland's* March 7 1895, p. 73.

²¹ *Sharland's* August 7 1895, p. 73.

Victorian painters had already attempted a similar strategy in 1889 to protect themselves from outside competition. See Tim Bonyhady *Images in opposition: Australian landscape painting 1801-1890* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985 p. 4.

²² *Sharland's* February 7 1896 p. 67.

²³ Dominic Alessio 'Coloured views: images of the New Zealand city and town, 1880-1930.' Ph. D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 1992 pp. 22ff.

Australian government bodies were also busy with parallel projects for regional promotion, in which lantern slides were similarly deployed. Time and space have not allowed them to be covered in this thesis. The dispute between Martin and the Department outlined here can not be taken as a template for the situation in Australia. However further investigation should reveal many similarities in the aims and methods used across the region.

of a network of travel agencies in all main centres of the colony as well as overseas, and a central advertising office which included a photographic section (figure 8.4). From the outset the combination of photographic image and lantern slide was recognised as an effective promotional medium. However, 'serious drawbacks in this direction' were identified by the Department. It criticised local photographers for 'the high prices for copies, the heavy charges asked for the right of reproduction [such as for lantern slides], and especially the difficulty in getting the class of picture required from professional photographers.'²⁴ As a solution the Department employed a photographer and built up its own photographic library.²⁵ In 1903 the Department reported that it 'now possesses one of the finest selection of photographic negatives in New Zealand' and 'lantern slides of New Zealand scenery have been in great demand in overseas countries, including Australia, America, and England' (figure 8.5).²⁶ Later that year the Department encroached further on the colonial photographers' territory. This announcement in the *New Zealand Herald* of August 1 was reprinted in *Sharland's* September issue:

In view of the frequent applications received by the Government Tourist Department for photographic views and lantern slides, the Superintendent has now arranged to stock a supply for retailing at its branches.²⁷

Martin and his colleagues accused the Department of preparing to 'enter into competition with them in the sale of views to tourist visitors.'²⁸ Professional photographers in Auckland and Dunedin were indignant and wrote to their local members of Parliament. In defence, the Dunedin Tourist Bureau claimed that their views were 'all purchased wholesale from private photographic firms and retailed by the department.'²⁹ The Superintendent of the Tourist Department argued that they were in fact doing the photographers a favour, purchasing photographs from local photographers at ordinary market rates and:

In every case where the photographer's name was on the front of the photograph it has been allowed to remain, thus giving the photographer a gratuitous advertisement not only in New Zealand, but all over the world.³⁰

²⁴ Annual report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts 1902 p. 3. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

²⁵ 'Notes on the early history of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, 1901-1915' NZTP Domestic Research Series 1986/8, p. 1. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

²⁶ Annual report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts 1903 p. iii. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

²⁷ *Sharland's* September 7 1903 p. 7.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *Otago Daily Times* August 12 1903; cited in *Sharland's* September 7 1903 p. 7.

³⁰ *Sharland's* October 7 1903 p. 5.

The government stood firm, advising the member for Dunedin in November 1903 that it was not considered that 'any injury will be done to private photographers,' but that instead they would stand to gain as tourism grew.³¹ The annual reports of Department of Tourist and Health Resorts over the next few years show a regular distribution of slides and photographs for advertising and lecturing both locally and overseas.³² Wellington entrepreneur A. J. McCurdy borrowed slides from the Department for several weeks at a time, apparently at no cost, thus enabling him to exhibit them repeatedly without having to pay hireage to a commercial supplier.³³ Although the real impact of these activities on private business is difficult to gauge, it is evident nevertheless that the Department had no hesitation in positioning itself in the trade with little consideration of the potential harm to independent producers. It is also clear that the visualisation of New Zealand as a scenic wonderland was central to identity which both the government and commercial operators chose to project to the world.

The New Zealand government was not only producing slides for the tourist trade. It was also involved in ongoing projects to publicise the colony's material assets, development, and progressive social conditions in Britain with the aim of encouraging immigration and investment. Colonial officials and prominent figures visiting England were frequently contracted to present public lantern lectures on the colony's social and material progress. One such figure was New Zealand politician William Pember Reeves who vigorously promoted the colony using lantern slide lectures during his post as Agent-General.³⁴ In his study of this widespread practice, known as 'boosterism,' Dominic Alessio has described the effect these 'coloured views' had on English reformers and others.³⁵ The practice may however have been overused by the New Zealand government. In October 1905, when Christchurch headmaster and professional lanternist H. R. Wilkinson, on a visit to his birthplace in Burnley, England, delivered an illustrated lecture entitled 'New Zealand, as it was and is. An account of Thirty Years in Brighter Britain. 200 pictures of the Wonderland of the South and its People' he was careful to emphasise that 'Mr Wilkinson is NOT A GOVT. AGENT.'³⁶ This

³¹ Annual report of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts 1903 p. iii. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

³² Annual reports of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts 1904-1907. Archives New Zealand, Wellington.

³³ Letter to McCurdy 25 July 1906. Cleveland collection.

³⁴ *Sharland's* September 7 1896, p. 68. Alessio 'Coloured views' p. 23. Reeves was also enthusiastic about the use of the lantern for visual communication in education, as referred to in chapter five of this thesis.

³⁵ Alessio 'Coloured views' chapter 1 'The boosters' pp. 13-44. For a fuller discussion of boosterism see David A. Hamer *New towns in the new world* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

³⁶ Thomson collection of lantern slides, Canterbury Museum. Wilkinson's work with the lantern in education and public entertainment is referred to in chapter five of this thesis.

boosteristic construct, nevertheless, constituted another significant aspect of the internationally identifiable construction of the colony as the best of British culture transplanted and flourishing in sunnier more fertile conditions.

The construct of New Zealand as a 'Wonderland' of scenic beauty complemented and contrasted with the view of a progressive 'Brighter Britain.' These paired views constituted a 'branding' of New Zealand for promotion internationally to attract tourism, immigration and investment.³⁷ A similar process of constructing a national identity for international consumption was paralleled in the Australian colonies, and, as in New Zealand, persisted throughout the twentieth century.

'silent but telling protests'

Melbourne, 1893.³⁸

The skilfully and aesthetically crafted scenic lantern slide work of local amateur and professional photographers was also deployed within the Australasian colonies as propaganda in the politicisation of environmental issues. In reality the colonies' material progress depended upon the destruction and harvesting of the land's natural features. Tim Bonyhady's discussion of environmentalism in Australia in the nineteenth century cites the example of amateur photographers Archibald Campbell and R. S. Sugars who used the latest visual technology for a political purpose.³⁹ Campbell and Sugars were part of a colonial network of field naturalists, amateur and professional recreational botanists, geologists, bird watchers, hikers and health advocates with an enthusiasm for exploring mountain and forest regions. Field naturalists generated large quantities of photographs, and particularly lantern slides, which were used for reliving, celebrating and sharing their passion for the outdoors.⁴⁰ Many areas traversed by the field naturalists were also threatened by development, a situation which often drew the movement into political debate. In 1893 Campbell and Sugars presented their case for environmental preservation with a lantern lecture on the 'Beauties and Wonders of the Dandenong State Forest' to a full house at Melbourne's Working Mens' College, employing the pair's own photographs, taken over the previous three years as a personal response to the beauty of the landscape. Enlarged and illuminated through the lantern 'views of the wonderful foliage, charming scenery, waterfalls, and other picturesque effects

³⁷ For further reading in this area see *100 years pure progress: 1901-2001: Tourism NZ, one hundred years of tourism* Wellington: Tourism NZ, 2001.

³⁸ *Argus* May 22 1893, p. 9. cited in Tim Bonyhady *Colonial earth* Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press 2000, p. 123 n 63

³⁹ Bonyhady *Colonial earth* pp. 8, 122-3.

⁴⁰ Field naturalists' slide collections are held in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Hobart, the Canterbury Museum Christchurch and the Hocken Library Otago University.

... were silent but telling protests against the intention of the Ministers of Lands.⁴¹

Hobart photographer John Watt Beattie (1859-1930) used a similar strategy some years later. From the 1880s Beattie had photographed the Tasmanian landscape for illustrated lantern lectures and other commercial interests. His views subsequently reached a wide intercolonial audience through albums, postcards, booklets, enlarged prints and lantern slide sets with printed lecture notes. In 1906, when the Gordon River region and Schouten Peninsula Reserve were under threat of destruction from commercial logging, Beattie used his lantern slides on several occasions at The Royal Society in Hobart to argue for preservation of these areas.⁴²

The trade in scenic views in all media was rampant throughout Australasia from the 1890s and, despite competition from imports and from their own government, local slide producers prospered. Locally made scenic and urban views were produced in their thousands and account for the large proportion of extant glass lantern slides. Images produced for the views trade essentially conformed to a set of generalised and internationally transferable paradigms: a high culture construct of landscape, a boosterist construct of urban progress and a touristic construct of national identity. These 'received' views – emphasising a pristine wilderness on one hand, and on the other material abundance and economic and social progress embodied in agricultural and pastoral development, urban architecture and middle class housing – constituted a sense of place to which Australasian colonists wholeheartedly subscribed, happily purchasing the slides themselves in for their own consumption at home and in public. The quantity of slides of this genre found collections described earlier on the West Coast and Hawke's Bay, attest to this.⁴³

The vernacular

At the same time the immediacy and accessibility of modern photography and the 'modern magic lantern' gave rise to a genre of locally generated

⁴¹ *Argus* May 22 1893, p. 9.

⁴² Jack Thwaites 'John Watt Beattie' in *The Tasmanian Tramp* (Hobart Walking Club) no. 23 June 1979, pp. 72-80; Tassell & Wood *Tasmanian photographer* p. 9. See also notes and slides for many of Beattie's lectures held in the archives of the University of Tasmania, on loan from the Tasmanian Museum. RS. 29. Among them is 'Schouten Peninsula: its adaptabilities as a natural reserve for the protection of the native flora and fauna of Tasmania' a paper given to the Royal Society 15 August 1906.

The strategy was repeated in the 1980s when a successful campaign to protect the Franklin River in Tasmania used slide images by Tasmanian photographer Peter Dombrovskis. See Claire Runciman [et al.] *Effective action for social change: the campaign to save the Franklin river* Melbourne: [The authors] c1986.

⁴³ The Falla and Hastings collections are discussed in chapter three of this thesis.

images which presented an alternative to the dominant Eurocentric 'received view.' Both professional and amateur photographers were increasingly able to work outdoors and take 'instantaneous' views of their immediate surroundings – documenting local events and people in a less contrived manner. This opened the way to greater possibilities for articulating colonists' ideas about themselves, and how they fitted into, and inscribed their own stories upon, their surroundings.

As early as 1868 D. L. Mundy had experimented with reporting of local current events with his 'instantaneous pictures, from twelve different points of view' of the Christchurch flood. (see figure 1.10) Screened within hours of the event, the views were 'very truthful, and to those who have read of but did not see the flood, will give a good idea of the calamity,' the *Lyttelton Times* reported, 'Amongst others, there were two of the Government Buildings, one with a full front, and the other looking down Oxford Terrace from Victoria Bridge.'⁴⁴ Spontaneous, informal and of local interest, Mundy's 'instantaneous pictures' contrasted markedly with the formulaic sublime and picturesque images usually selected for public exhibitions. The innovation was well received. 'The original part of the entertainment appeared to be much enjoyed by the audience,' the *Times* commented.⁴⁵ The intersection of reportage and spectacle placed the spectator in a relationship to the screened image that was of a quite different character to that premised by the formal standardised views of public buildings and 'beauty spots' typically displayed at public lantern exhibitions.⁴⁶

The excitement of this newly intimate relationship between the screen and a local audience was expressed in an incident in the Victorian township of Bairnsdale in 1894 where Salvation Army Captain Joe Perry had arranged a treat for the local state school children, described in *The War Cry*:

He had previously taken the photographs of the schoolchildren and teachers. These were reduced to lantern plates and exhibited. It was a sight (or more correctly speaking a sound) not easily to be forgotten, as the whole classes tried to yell out – "That's me up there! Look at Bill Jones! There's Polly Jenkins!" &c., &c. Bedlam was not to be compared to 300 schoolchildren on their night out.⁴⁷

Others performed a similar service for local communities. Rev P. J. Edwards, referred to in chapter six, for example, screened images of the local artillery in Victoria in the 1890s. His contemporary, schoolteacher H. R. Wilkinson recorded informal views of local people and activities around his school at Bromley, Christchurch (figure 8.6).⁴⁸ Anglican chaplain to the Chatham

⁴⁴ *Lyttelton Times* February 7, 1868, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *The War Cry* 22 October 1892, 8 July 1893, 4 November 1893, 16 June 1894, 28 April 1894, 11 July 1896 p. 2.

⁴⁷ *The War Cry* 21 July 1894, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Thomson collection. Pictorial Archives, Canterbury Museum.

Islands from 1905 to 1913, John de Burgh Galwey regularly visited this remote community with his lantern. His extant slide collection, although largely a typical repertoire of religious and teaching subjects, is enlivened by photographs of life and leisure activities of Maori and Pakeha children on the Chathams in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁴⁹ These sort of views might not have had a place in the professional repertoire he advertised to the wider public, but would have been enjoyed by the local community familiar with the people and places depicted.

Adult audiences were just as entranced as their children by projections of themselves and familiar people and places on the big screen; and only a little less enthusiastic in their response, as this report of Joseph Check's visit to Coraki, northern NSW, shows. 'The [imported] scenes shown were new and varied, but the special attraction was the local views, taken by Mr. Check during his stay in town and these awoke much enthusiasm,' the *Richmond River Herald* noted.⁵⁰ Photographic views of the dairy, the sawmill and other local businesses presented an alternative to European icons and sublime scenery, and one which Coraki audiences warmly appreciated. Highly praised were views such as 'Messrs. Yabsley's Holstein cattle [which] formed a pretty group, and their milking shed, with the cows bailed up, was also very realistic.' 'Much admired' were interior views taken by flashlight of 'McMullen's blacksmith's shop, Mobb's Hotel, Moorhead, Nesbitt, and McMaster's store, Nolan's Hotel,' and the *Richmond River Herald's* office. A number of views were shown of Yabsley's sawmill 'with the employees in a group.' This important regional industry owned by a prominent local family had recently processed a 'forest giant,' one of the remaining 'monster' red gums in the area, 70 ft long with a girth of over 16ft within two hours, 'a rare occurrence that one so big is handled in a mill, and manipulated so quickly.'⁵¹

By the 1890s colonists were familiar with photography and photographic portraits, but photographic illustrations in newspapers were still a novelty and of limited quality. The 'big screen' was a public visual medium through which local people places and events became literally and metaphorically larger than life and were publicly celebrated. To see familiar sights and sites captured and enlarged and displayed in the same context raised their mundane and the commonplace to the level of celebrity, presenting new populist icons with which they could immediately identify. For colonial communities, they spoke to a sense of place, of local conditions and of their lived experience.

⁴⁹ Canterbury Anglican Diocesan Archives.

⁵⁰ *Richmond River Herald* 28 January 1898 p.2. Joseph Check's practice is referred to in chapter two of this thesis.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

'The hand camera and what to do with it'⁵²

The Salvation Army and individuals like Wilkinson, Galwey and Check served an audience drawn largely from working class, rural and remote communities. At the same time many colonials were documenting their own lives for the screen. From the 1890s a huge proportion of the local slide output came from amateur enthusiasts amongst the more affluent middle classes for whom the photograph and the lantern slide provided an absorbing leisure activity. Martin described the phenomenon in *Sharland's* in 1897:

The Craze Photographique has spread like an epidemic, almost as cosmopolitan as the influenza, and almost as universal as the measles. The first symptoms may usually be noticed when the victim purchases a small or cheap camera and begins immediately to snap-shot his friends or to make incessant demands upon his relatives for sittings which are recklessly taken, regardless of time or circumstance. The second stage may be called the developing mania, and at this time every article in the house is defiled by various horrid messes. This culminates in its acute form in the printing fever, with its well-known and disturbing symptoms, and reaches its highest point in lantern slides and enlargements.⁵³

Those at the highest point of the disease, the lantern enthusiasts, had the fullest encouragement from the networks of photographic journals and photographic societies which paid attention to their interests and concerns and the circulation of information around the colonies. 'The Craze Photographique' was by no means short-lived; nearly a decade later *Sharlands'* affirmed that 'One of the best ways of showing hand-camera work, if not the very best, is in the form of lantern slides.'⁵⁴

Businessman and amateur photographer, Charles A. Brown, was such an enthusiast. His slide collection records aspects of middle-class suburban life in Grey Lynn, Auckland, in the 1890s and 1900s. Brown's subjects for home viewing – feeding hens, pumping water, family games, football matches, neighbourhood streetscapes, the premises of his brush-making business and other local businesses – contrast with the contemporary scenic views sold by Auckland professional photographer Josiah Martin of 'the sublime, the picturesque and the wonderful' although both are now stored in the same archive.⁵⁵ Among Brown's many counterparts in Australia and New Zealand were Melbournians Arthur Fox and Harold Godfrey Myers whose family slide collections provide a view into their private lives and interests in the

⁵² 'The hand camera and what to do with it' *Sharland's* September 7 1905 p. 6.

⁵³ Martin 'The Craze Photographique' in *Sharland's* February 8 1897, p. 67.

⁵⁴ 'The hand camera and what to do with it' *Sharland's* September 7 1905 p. 6.

⁵⁵ Auckland War Memorial Museum.

first decade of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ The children of both families were actively involved too, evidently putting on their own slide evenings, using magic lantern technology in celebrating their experience of contemporary life (figures 8.7, 8.8).

Local history

The 1890s coincided with a stage in Australasian colonial society which saw new generations of native-born inhabitants coming into adulthood and the passing of the early colonists who had immigrated in the middle of the century. This resulted in a stronger sense of identity amongst colonists with their locality. Documenting and constructing local histories became popular, and the magic lantern proved to be an effective medium for relating the local histories of colonisation to a general audience.

Hobart photographer John Watt Beattie not only extensively photographed the Tasmanian landscape, he was also interested in the history of human occupation of the colony. During his travels around Tasmania he acquired a collection of historic documents and artefacts which he exhibited in a private museum at his photographic studio in Elizabeth Street, Hobart.⁵⁷ At a time when the local community preferred to obscure the less favourable aspects of its past, Beattie compiled and marketed sets of slides for illustrated lectures with readings on the colony's history as a penal settlement and the demise of the Aboriginal population. The images were drawn from a range of sources: photographs of his own collection; negatives of Port Arthur penal settlement just after its closure in 1877 inherited from the Anson Brothers; the work of other early Tasmanian photographers; early engravings such as Colonel G. C. Mundy's *The convict railway*; and, as Chris Long notes, photographs of watercolour illustrations commissioned to match written descriptions in primary sources.⁵⁸ During the Tasmanian Centenary celebrations of 1904, Beattie presented and subsequently published a further lantern lecture series on local history 'Glimpses of the Life and Times of the Early Tasmanian Governors.'⁵⁹ Beattie's lecture sets were popular and influential well into the twentieth century. Tassell and Wood note that:

As late as 1927 Beattie remarked ... that this ['Port Arthur and Tasman Peninsula'] particular series of slides and lecture notes 'seems to be the standard Port Arthur seller, and we dispose of a great number of them during the season.'⁶⁰

⁵⁶ State Library of Victoria: PCV LTLS 36, Victorian events including the U.S. Great White Fleet visit in 1908, boy scouts, and mining at Maldon; PCV LTLS 42, Scenes of Melbourne, Victoria, other parts of Australia and overseas, ca. 1900-1914.

⁵⁷ Chris Long *Tasmanian photographers* p. 13.

⁵⁸ *ibid.* pp. 12-15. A set of these slides can be found in the collection of the State Library of Victoria.

⁵⁹ Tassell & Wood *Tasmanian photographer* p. 8.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* p. 11. The slide images and descriptive lecture are reproduced on pp. 28-50.

Only a few professional photographers pursued local history as conscientiously as Beattie, and extant collections reveal that colonists were more concerned with celebrating their progress and modernity than in contemplating their less than noble beginnings. The planned settlements of New Zealand, however, tended to have a greater interest in their history and origins. In Christchurch and Dunedin around the turn of the century interested groups sought to document local Pakeha history by compiling and exhibiting slides from early photographs and other visual resources. For example, A. J. Barth, lantern enthusiast and Dunedin Photographic Society member, showed 'Views of Old Dunedin 1860-64' to his colleagues in 1898.⁶¹ The Otago Settlers' Museum holds a collection of slides of portraits of early European settlers, dating from an anniversary of settlement around the turn of the century, evidence again of that province's interest in its colonial history and founding Pakeha families.

In this way, Australasian colonists used visual technology to promulgate and communally celebrate local specificity – to construct an historical entity from their own recent past on which to base a sense of regional identity, community and nationhood separate from England – to map the existence and form of a local history and path to the future.

Life model slides

Just as interest in the local production of colonial histories and of informal views of colonial people and places was flourishing during the 1890s, the popularity of English life model slides was reaching its peak. Colonial slide makers were quick to adopt the technique. An indication that life model slides were being made in the colonies appeared in 1892 in Dunedin when William Densem included in his series of performances of 'Music Art and Song' entitled 'Densem and his Lantern.' 'A special feature ... the 'Young Hero,' with scenoscopic effects ... illustrated by a series of pictures from life models prepared by Mr De Maus of Port Chalmers.'⁶² Prominent local photographer and public figure David Alexander De Maus (1847-1925) has achieved recognition for his voluminous photographic documentation of the life of this major provincial port, but his work with life models slides has been largely unrecognised and the location of the slides unknown.⁶³ The title of Densem's recitation suggests that the subject was a widely available ballad *The Little Hero*, the story of a young stowaway on a modern steamship 'triumph of engineering skill'⁶⁴ crammed with associations with contemporary life in the port town (see figure 2.7). Although not a local story *The Little Hero* would have offered plenty of scope for retelling in a local

⁶¹ Harrington's *Australasian Photographic Journal Exchange and Mart* November 21 1898, p. 281.

⁶² *Otago Daily Times* September 24 1892 p. 3.

⁶³ Knight *New Zealander photographers* unpaginated.

⁶⁴ Author unknown (not Sims). Reproduced in Household *To catch a sunbeam* pp. 11-18. Alexander Gunn's catalogue of 1898 lists this title with 7 slides. Nine slides in SLV.

setting at a time when Otago was flourishing, Dunedin was the most prosperous city in the colony, and trade and communication by sea were central to colonial life.

Local photographers and lantern slide makers continued to apply the English life-model slide technique to specifically colonial stories and settings. For example two undated slides by Melbourne photographer J. H. Browning may be remnants of an original dramatic production for the screen (figure 8.9).⁶⁵ Titled *The Start* and *The Picnic*, these carefully posed outdoor scenes show four male figures in a forest setting out on a journey with a horse and cart.⁶⁶ Although the narrative significance of these scenes is lost, the images reveal affinities with both English life model slide production and recent innovations in colonial painting. A familiarity with the widely available 'life model' slides of English producers Bamforth and Riley is indicated in the careful posing of models, the sequencing of the images, the enhancement of the image with hand colouring, and in the use of a natural outdoor setting. A great deal of Bamforth's work was shot outdoors in the nearby village of Holmfirth or on the wooded sloping site of their studios.⁶⁷ Browning's bush setting suggests additional connections with an innovative style of painting that arose in the 1880s and 1890s amongst a group of Melbourne artists which presented an alternative to formal academic genre painting.⁶⁸ Influenced by contemporary French realist and impressionist artists, the Heidelberg School, as it came to be known after one of its favoured outer-suburban painting sites, eschewed traditional compositional formats, highly 'finished' studio painting, and academically approved subjects, in favour of capturing the special qualities of light and air and colonial life, by means of outdoor work practice, free handling of paint and informal subjects (figure 8.10). Like the Heidelberg artists, Browning would not have had to travel far outside the suburban sprawl of Melbourne to find locations which suited a newly emerging sense of national identity from the 1890s onwards particularly amongst Australian city dwellers which privileged 'the bush' and a healthy outdoor life.⁶⁹ There he deployed modern visual technology to take up a similar project to that of the Heidelberg artists representing the freedom and informality of an idealised rural Australia.

⁶⁵J. H. Browning was the son of H. Browning & Son, Royal Arcade Melbourne fl 1890s. Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p.138.

⁶⁶ Collection of J. H. Harvey (1835-1938). State Library of Victoria. LTLS 14, H92.150/553,554. The location seems to be the same for both images. One of the slides has been reproduced in reverse on the Multimedia database. J. H. Harvey (1855-1938) was a Melbourne architect, amateur photographer and recreational bush-walker. A set of photographic lantern slides by him is held in the National Library of Australia, one of which shows a group of men in the bush, Marysville, Victoria, c 1905. PIC P765 LOC C4.

⁶⁷ *The Photogram* February 1899, cited in Gordon *By gaslight in winter* p. 82.

⁶⁸ This artistic movement is explained by Leigh Astbury *City bushmen: the Heidelberg School and the rural mythology*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1985.

⁶⁹ Identified by commentators such as Astbury *City bushmen*. A similar phenomenon was occurring in New Zealand, Alex Calder *The writing of New Zealand* Auckland: Reed, 1993.

Browning's undated slides were roughly contemporaneous with the earliest life model narrative which can be verified as entirely written, produced, and set in the colonies. This was the Salvation Army Limelight Department's *A Daughter of Ishmael* (see figure 7.17).⁷⁰ With the encouragement of Army administrators, Joseph Perry and his Limelight Department colleagues used the latest visual technology and image production techniques to represent a local contemporary 'social realist' story in which lower class audiences might recognise either something of their own situation or the lives of others. Based on the life of Irish immigrant Maggie O'Donoghue, *A Daughter of Ishmael* brought to audiences a sense of identification or (mediated) familiarity comparable to that cultivate locally produced late twentieth century dramas – particularly when the story line addresses a topical social issue. At Ballina June 1895 it was reported that: 'Daughter of Ishmael [was] all the talk ... Everyone was wonderfully interested, for the people clapped and stamped out their appreciation of the show.'⁷¹

Spurred on by Commandant Herbert Booth's enthusiastic support, Limelight Department production accelerated using the specially constructed studio at the Melbourne Headquarters and an 'extra large studio' in a Melbourne suburb 'for subjects with a greater number of models.'⁷² Life model slides were being turned out on an industrial scale.⁷³ The Salvation Army remained the only colonial organization, however, to take up life model slide production on a scale approaching that English manufacturers. The content gradually shifted away from the contemporary narrative form of *A Daughter of Ishmael* and became primarily concerned with two main genres: firstly, the representation of the Army's social work and secondly, Booth's great inspirational epics based on Scripture and Christian legend, which combined life model slides, film and sound, and used large casts and elaborate scenery and effects.

These depictions of the Army's social work were a hybrid of photographic documentation and 'life-model' practice. In slides taken at locations such as the Army's Rescue Homes, the residents held more or less natural poses in contrived compositions to illustrate their daily activities. In the life model studio at Melbourne headquarters, Army men, women and children re-enacted scenes of Army social workers in action against painted backdrops (figure 8.11). In this way they dramatised and exposed to public view aspects of colonial life normally neglected by the medium, and presented a counter to the idealised construct. It was not their aim to propose an emblem of regional identity but to promote their own social work activities. In the process, these images revealed some of the painful realities of lived experience for many colonists.

⁷⁰ Discussed in the previous chapter. *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11; June 16 1894 p. 9.

⁷¹ *The War Cry* June 22 1895

⁷² *The Australasian Photographic Review* January 21, 1899 pp. 2-3.

⁷³ *The War Cry* March 12 1898 p. 5.

The rise of this genre of locally generated lantern slides accompanied rapid developments in visual technology and coincided with a period of growing sense of a national identity in the colonies. The content of a number of surviving slide collections attests to a growing fascination with a less formal, frequently candid, and vernacular view of colonial life on the big screen. Documenting local life, events, society, places and identities, these images fostered a locally generated sense of place. At the same time the Salvation Army's Limelight Department countered the socially limited view of affluent middle class colonial life presented by amateur lanternists like the Brown, Fox and Myers families.

Colonial comical

Comic subjects remained a significant and popular genre on the lighter of side magic lantern repertoire, which though dominated by imported content, provided a site for the expression of a vernacular voice. Two New Zealand examples reveal aspects of how colonial Pakeha society understood itself in relationship to Maori culture at the turn of the nineteenth century. Compared to the anxious years of the New Zealand Wars, by this time Pakeha no longer perceived Maori as threatening. Alternative racist discourses of assimilation and extinction were now in general circulation. The Treaty of Waitangi, though still held to by Maori, had largely faded from the minds of Pakeha, and a belief in the inevitability of the extinction of the tangata whenua and their culture had taken hold.⁷⁴ This white supremacist ideology which positioned Maori as a 'dying race' was exemplified in the hugely popular academic portraits of Maori and depictions of traditional Maori life and customs by C. F. Goldie and Gottfried Lindauer.⁷⁵ The material aspects of traditional Maori culture still held a great fascination for Pakeha artists, collectors and ethnographers.

The Alexander Gunn slide *Santa Claus in Maoriland* signals a jolly cross-cultural appropriation characteristic of this period (figure 8.12). New Zealand cartoon historian Ian Grant comments that : 'pre European [or 'Creole'] celebration of Christmas was a cartoon stock-in trade of the popular periodicals'⁷⁶ in the early twentieth century. The slide may have been based on an original engraving by Auckland artist, illustrator and cartoonist Trevor Lloyd, 1863–1937.⁷⁷ Throughout his career Lloyd illustrated stories and

⁷⁴ For the history of the Treaty see Claudia Orange *The Treaty of Waitangi* Wellington, N.Z.: Allen & Unwin; Port Nicholson Press; Historical Publications Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, 1987.

⁷⁵ Roger Blackley 1997 'Smoothing the pillow' in *Goldie* Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki; David Bateman, pp. 50-51. Briar E. R. Gordon & Peter Stupples 1985 *Gottfried Lindauer : his life and Maori art* Auckland: Collins; Malcolm McGregor.

⁷⁶ Ian F. Grant *The unauthorized version: a cartoon history of New Zealand* Auckland: Cassell 1980 p. 14, 15.

⁷⁷ Perry, John F. 'Lloyd, Trevor 1863 - 1937'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 4 April 2003 URL: <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

articles and cartoons on a variety of topical as well as political issues in New Zealand periodicals. A concern of his work is the creation of an iconography of New Zealand identity and he is attributed with initiating the use of the kiwi as a national symbol in 1905. He had a particular interest in Maori culture and language, and employed Maori motifs and characters in his cartoons, as in this image, to create a hybrid national identity for Pakeha consumption.

While this benign hybridity asserts an antipodean bicultural idyll, another set of lantern slides exposes the darker side of bicultural New Zealand. A set of four hand-painted slides c.1905 from the collection of Wellington entrepreneur A. J. McCurdy is an example of locally produced comic slides which attempt to work within the tropes of the traditional slide genre, with minimal technology, resources and expense. The four slides play out a narrative sequence illustrating a real or imagined event from everyday life where something went wrong: a couple's efforts to slaughter a fowl in their suburban backyard (figure 8.13). The distinctly dark complexions of the couple indicate that they are Maori. So these 'grotesque and shockingly painted'⁷⁸ images need to be considered within the context of bicultural relations in the newly emerging nation and contemporary forms of racism expressed in visual culture in New Zealand and globally.

In contradiction to the Pakeha view of the 'dying race,' the Maori population was, in reality, regenerating after the disruption of the previous century and the proportion of part-Maori was increasing.⁷⁹ Maori had largely embraced and assimilated aspects of Pakeha culture and technology. This cohabitation of the races, rather than resulting in harmonious integration, may only have increased anxieties in the Pakeha psyche. Denigration in the form of humour reveals this anxiety. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse has explained in his study of the representation of African peoples in Western popular culture, 'the feature of such humour is contempt. This kind of humour serves as part of a culture of domination.'⁸⁰

At the same time American influences had imported into New Zealand popular culture the comic genre of 'coon humour.'⁸¹ One of five dominant stereotypes recognised by Donald Bogle in the way black Americans are represented in American visual culture, coon humour has been defined by Nagueyalti Warren in *Images of Blacks in American culture* as a 'Black, adult,

⁷⁸ Hughes, *The art of projection* p. 104.

⁷⁹ Blackley 'Smoothing the pillow.'

⁸⁰ Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on black: images of Africa and Blacks in Western popular culture* New Haven; London: Yale University Press 1992 p. 98.

⁸¹ As they had also into the Australian colonies. Richard Waterhouse has examined the influence of American popular cultural constructs of Black-Americans on representations of Aborigines in nineteenth century Australia. Richard Waterhouse 'The Minstrel Show and Australian culture' in *Journal of popular culture* (Bowling Green) Vol. 24, Iss 3 1990 pp. 147-166.

male idiot or a Black child (piccaninny) cast as a clown or buffoon.⁸² Coon humour was in evidence in visual culture in New Zealand in the first decade of the twentieth century and closely associated with photographic and lantern slide practice. A prototype, the nursery rhyme *Ten Little Nigger Boys* which was published as a picture book from 1868 in England, could be found in lantern slide catalogues of the 1890s⁸³ and an image from this comic slide set was selected by E. S. Pegler for the letterhead of his Photo Supply Stores to represent the magic lantern department.⁸⁴ The foremost practitioners of this trade in New Zealand were Northland photographers Northwood Bros. Arthur Northwood's demeaning images of Maori in 'comic situations' were published in the *Auckland Weekly News* in 1905 and 1906.⁸⁵ Typically in these situations Maori were depicted adopting European culture, clothing and customs, but revealed as inept and a comical. This brand of 'westernization humour,' as Nederveen Pieterse terms it, in which 'the point is that the western look is only superficial,' undermines the cross-cultural appropriation characteristic of the colonial context.⁸⁶ This set of lantern slides thus represents the 'anxious repetition' of this trope as part of a trade in demeaning and insulting stereotypes of Maori culture in the domain of popular visual culture around the period that New Zealand was aspiring to its independence as a nation.⁸⁷

The McCurdy slides were available only to a limited audience. *Santa Claus in Maoriland*, however, was clearly for wider distribution, being stocked by Melbourne dealer Alexander Gunn. Both reveal responses to a local hybrid culture as national identity. While *Santa Claus in Maoriland* validated Pakeha appropriation of Maori motifs to 'indigenise' a European tradition, the McCurdy series discredited and demeaned assimilated Maori. Through images such as these it can be seen that the magic lantern projected not only the dominant stories of colonial progress but its neglected or repressed aspects as well.

⁸² Donald Bogle *Toms, coons, mulattoes, mammies and bucks: an interpretive history of Blacks in American films* New York: Continuum, 1989, Chapter 1 'Black beginnings: from *Uncle Tom's cabin* to *The Birth of a nation* pp. 3-18. Nagueyalti Warren 'From Uncle Tom to Cliff Huxtable, Aunt Jemima to Aunt Nell: Images of Blacks in Film and the Television industry' in Jessie Carney Smith (ed.) *Images of Blacks in American culture: a reference guide to information sources* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988. p. 54.

⁸³ Jessie M. Birta 'Images of Blacks in children's books' in Carney Smith *Images of Blacks in American culture* p. 194.

⁸⁴ E. S. Pegler Photo Supply Stores to A. J. McCurdy, 3 July 1906. Cleveland collection.

⁸⁵ William Main *Maori in focus* Wellington: Millwood Press, 1976 pp. 105-106; Michael King *Maori: a photographic and social history* Auckland: Heinemann, 1983, p. 89.

⁸⁶ Nederveen Pieterse *White on black* p. 98

⁸⁷ This notion of 'anxious repetition' is discussed in Bhabha 'The other question.'

Intercolonial communality

The circulation of locally produced slides between the Australasian colonies also fostered a sense of commonality through the region. Australian cultural historian Alan Atkinson has argued that improved mail delivery and the telegraph sped up communication across the huge land and sea distances over which the colonies were spread and contributed to the creation of a geographically enlarged sense of location. Not until the telegraph shortened the emotional distance between colonial communities was a sense of federation able to take root as a populist notion.⁸⁸

The magic lantern, it could similarly be argued, contributed to an emerging sense of regional unity by circulating and publicly exhibiting large scale photographic, literal and compelling views of people, places and events from across the region. Views were circulated and regularly exchanged across the colonies in several ways. Colonial subjects of all kinds, from *Santa Claus in Maoriland* to scenic views, were stocked by dealers and suppliers across the region. New Zealand views turn up in Australian family collections, for example the Myers collection, and vice versa. Itinerant lanternists such as the Dooners and the Salvation Army Limelight Department regularly circulated items of reportage and description of colonial people, places and events through and between the colonies in Australia and New Zealand. One of the contexts in which colonial views were circulated was in the presentation of a geography lesson. In South Australia Howard Haywood showed:

All parts of New Zealand showing the snow-capped ranges, lakes, rivers, hot springs, boiling cauldrons, Maoris, etc., were exhibited, followed by beautiful scenes in Victoria and South Australia,⁸⁹

Colonial views being typically of scenic wonders or agricultural and urban development, readily fell into the category of geography or history. In this context the next generation learnt through visual technology about the characteristics of their wider region.

Perry's and his colleagues in the Limelight Department also played a significant role in the circulation of local views through the colonies. From the early 1890s, they regularly photographed the people and places they visited and exhibited the resulting images around the colonies – a practice which enhanced the exchange of information about the Army's activities within the Army's colonial network.

The War Cry reported that, in Christchurch in 1896: 'The Coolgardie [a Salvation Army Rescue Home in Western Australia] views were naturally

⁸⁸Alan Atkinson "'He filled us with laughter": contact and community in Australian experience' in Hsu-Ming Teo & Richard White (eds) *Cultural history in Australia* Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003, pp. 38-51.

⁸⁹ Cited in Noye 'Photohistory SA' (reference not provided).

watched with great interest, as also those other places, hitherto only known by name, but which henceforth will be more familiar.'⁹⁰

The Limelight Department's concerns lay with promoting the Army's social work such as in half way houses for newly released prisoners, refuges for 'fallen' women, and destitute children. In Brisbane, for example, in 1895:

Adjutant Perry gave us many fine views representing our Social advances. Pakenham [Victoria] was well represented, and we had fields of corn, stacks, orchards, bridges, tramways, and heaps of other things. Then we saw the carpenters' shops, the vegetable gardens and sewing rooms of other Rescue and Prison-gate Brigade Homes.⁹¹

They were at the same time recording aspects of the lives of colonists who lacked the means to document themselves. These views thus exposed a harsher side of colonial life – the social problems, poverty, crime, lack of social support systems and hardships to which many succumbed – than that conveyed by the 'received' views. The necessity of 'the Army's work in the reclamation of the masses'⁹² was clearly understood by their audiences. If viewers themselves were not in need, they were well aware, nevertheless, of the social problems in their midst. While the Salvation Army's particular message was equally optimistic and ideologically based, with it was circulated visual information about local conditions and lived experience which contradicted the idealised constructs of colonial life and conditions projected in commercially produced lantern slides.

The magic lantern was also deployed in the intercolonial circulation of up-to-date news including, for instance, the activities of bushranger Ned Kelly in Victoria in the late 1870s. The Kelly saga has since achieved iconic status and continues today to act as a contested focus for discourse on Australasian national characteristics. But at the time it was already a hot topic in contemporary communication media, as both reportage and sensationalism. In 1879 the Dooners' *Pantechnatheca* brought colonial audiences views of 'the Kelly bushrangers, showing their encounter with police, the sticking up of the hawker, the sticking up of the bank at Euroa, the black trackers in search, and their numerous exploits.'⁹³ Incidents such as the war between Russia and Turkey or Dr Livingstone's African expeditions had taken place years or even decades before,⁹⁴ but the Kelly story was something different; it was breaking news, 'reportage' and history in the making. The Kellys had robbed the Euroa bank in December 1878 and held-up the police at Jerilderie in February 1879. Aboriginal trackers were brought into Benalla in March 1879 and as early as April the Dooners were reportedly showing their Kelly slides in Strathalbyn,

⁹⁰ *The War Cry* (New Zealand) March 1896.

⁹¹ *The War Cry* October 19 1895 p. 15.

⁹² *The War Cry* April 28 1894 p. 11.

⁹³ *Northern Argus* July 18, 1879, p.2.

⁹⁴ The Russo-Turkish war took place in 1854. Livingstone's began his missionary work and expeditions to Africa in 1840 and continued until he died in 1873.

South Australia.⁹⁵ The representation of contemporary events in a travelling magic lantern show not only informed colonial audiences about a subject of local and topical interest. It repositioned the events and people involved as components of an exciting and thrilling spectacle.

Interest in the Kelly events was widespread, assisted by improved communication networks and a press which now broadcast events throughout the colonies in both image and text. The *Illustrated Australasian News* regularly published engravings to accompany their reports of events as they unfolded. Everyone had an opinion on the matter. In April the *Northern Argus* published a lengthy editorial deriding the police forces of both Victoria and New South Wales for their failure to put an end to the Kelly gang. 'Surely,' the *Northern Argus* declared, 'if there is a multitude of cowards congregated together anywhere on the face of the earth that place is Jerilderie, New South Wales. With all the vaunted superiority of the police of that colony over that of Victoria, they have not as yet distinguished themselves by capturing the bank robbers.'⁹⁶ Although, unfortunately, no glass lantern slides on this subject have been as yet located, photographs of the Kelly gang are known to have been in circulation by the end of 1878; an advertisement in the *South Australian Advertiser* of January 10, 1879 invited inspection of a 'Great Picture of the notorious Bushranger, painted by Fry, from a photograph taken on the ground where the murder of Sergeant Kennedy was committed' and offered a photograph of Ned Kelly to every visitor.⁹⁷ Presumably such slides were available through other lanternists and suppliers, thus contributing to the dissemination of the Kelly story throughout the colonies, along with the promulgation of representations in print, in photographic 'tableaux' reconstructions and even waxworks.⁹⁸ The representation of contemporary events in a travelling magic lantern show not only informed colonial audiences about a subject of local and topical interest. It repositioned the events and people involved as components of an exciting and thrilling spectacle. The excitement and passions aroused by the unfolding tragedy around the Kelly gang galvanised public attention towards a common interest in events taking place in their country, drawing out intercolonial rivalries, and allegiances and antipathies towards the police. While the print media was largely responsible for fostering public interest, the particular contribution of the lantern lay in its power to draw together large groups of spectators for communal consumption of images.

⁹⁵ Noye 'Photohistory SA' (source not provided).

⁹⁶ *Northern Argus* April 4, 1879, p.2.

⁹⁷ Cited in Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p. 179.

⁹⁸ See for example Davies & Stanbury *The mechanical eye* p. 76, 77; Newton *Shades of light* p. 44.

Writing on the centrality of visibility in Victorian literature, Susan R. Horton has commented that 'wherever one looks in Victorian writings, one sees ... an increasing reliance on reflections for a sense of self-identity. For us moderns, heirs to a century's worth of experiencing self not just a viewer but as *viewed*, it seems that increasingly the fully *experienced* experience must be the mediated one.'⁹⁹ The quest for a sense of self-identity, and the use of visibility and of reflexivity in its construction, was as important and recurrent for the Australasian colonies as for the individual Victorian. As a medium of mass visual communication the magic lantern offered a modern and spectacular mediated experience of communal self for colonists throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries.

The views which colonists constructed for themselves using the medium of the magic lantern projected an essentially Eurocentric vision for an international audience. Colonists could feel empowered and validated by seeing themselves defined as successful and prosperous in global terms, and these views were adopted and consumed by local audiences as signifiers of national identity. In that way colonial constructs mediated by the magic lantern conformed to the 'uniform view of the world' of mass visual culture proposed by Michael Chanan.¹⁰⁰

However the magic lantern also provided the means to interrupt this uniformity. As this chapter has shown, the accessibility and flexibility of the technology enabled locals to record, document and narrate colonial lives and conditions in their own terms. The 'craze photographique' yielded views which reflected the interests of affluent middle-class colonials. Commercial slide producers echoed the nationalist concerns of contemporary artists and the racist tones of contemporary humour. This reassuring aggregate of white middle-class values and concerns was in turn complicated by the Salvation Army's docu-dramas which revealed the existence of an urban underclass as counter to the idealised construct of egalitarianism and abundance for all. Though the 'received' views still prevailed, their dominance was challenged by a vernacular sense of place which was concurrently finding expression in contemporary literature and other visual media. The experiences mediated by the magic lantern – sublime landscapes, the children of the upper middle classes frolicking in the sun, the local sawmill, a dramatic reenactment of urban poverty, or a racist joke – thus reflected back to colonial viewers the possibility of a multi-dimensional sense of place and national identity for colonial Australians and New Zealanders.

⁹⁹ Susan R. Horton 'Were they having fun yet?' in Christ p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Chanan *The dream that kicks* pp. 12-13.

Conclusion

The significance of the present study is that it recovers a cultural practice that had remained largely invisible in histories of photography, cinema, and popular culture in nineteenth century Australasia. The sheer weight of empirical evidence assembled here, both material artefacts and textual references, attests to the existence of this under-recognised practice in the Australian and New Zealand colonies.

This thesis demonstrates that the potential of the magic lantern as a vehicle of communication was exploited in Australia and New Zealand within a range of contexts, from family amusements to serious instruction, religious evangelism, and political and commercial promotions. The repertoire of the magic lantern was practically without limits; images were as likely to be culled from the canon of western high art as from a medical textbook or popular sentimental ballads and moral tales. It lent itself to vulgar jokes, sensational special effects and spectacle as much as to sober demonstrations of the latest scientific advances or lectures on history and geography.

The magic lantern was a medium of sustained cultural value and significance that evolved alongside its audiences. Over time, the content of magic lantern slides expanded dramatically with advances in photography and associated slide-making processes. A loss in technical quality of the early hand-painted slides of the 1850s was compensated for by the quantity of visual information disseminated through the combined media of photography and projection from the 1860s. Although overshadowed by the cinema in the area of public entertainment in the early years of the twentieth century, magic lantern practice persisted in its other contexts for decades after. This research reveals that, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the magic lantern had established in Australasian visual technological culture many of the characteristics of commercial visual media associated with the twentieth century: multimedia shows, special effects, the genres of epic length features, travel and description, humour, contemporary melodrama, and historical reconstructions. At the same time the medium of static image projection did not disappear. Amongst the flood of projected images of twentieth century cinema and television, the slide projector remains a unique medium still in use.

The thesis maps the extraordinary penetration of magic lantern images and technology in the Australasian colonies, demographically, economically and geographically. By the end of the nineteenth century the magic lantern was an accepted and acceptable leisure activity for both the affluent and the working classes. The slides and apparatus were displayed and sold in the same retail

locations as luxury goods, the colonial versions of the urban shopping arcades which characterised European cities. At the same time, community magic lantern shows and those staged by social reform movements ensured that the medium was available across any class boundaries that might have existed in colonial society. A variety of practitioners disseminated the magic lantern throughout the colonies. Itinerant professional entertainers described in chapters one and two, such as G. H. Snazelle, staged large scale, 'world-class' events in colonial urban centres. Others, such as the Dooners, Check and Caire, took the magic lantern out to remote townships, performing an important service in the Australasian colonies where large distances between settlements were common. A character called 'Barney Whiterats' even travelled by foot with his magic lantern on his back through the southern provinces of the South Island of New Zealand in 1880s and 1890s.

Religious practitioners, described in chapters six and seven, were among the keenest disseminators of the magic lantern to remote regions, most notably the highly organised Limelight Department of the Salvation Army under Joseph Perry, but also individual evangelists and missionaries. To bring the magic lantern, and their ideological message, within reach of isolated communities these proselytisers successfully negotiated the regional extremes of weather and geography. Alexander Don penetrated the frozen-up winter conditions of Otago; the Limelighters tackled the rugged terrain of Tasmania, the 'broiling sun' of the northern colonies, mountains, mud, and 'miles of corduroy.'¹

The magic lantern was also increasingly adopted for institutional use, for instance in Sunday schools, day schools and government schools, and especially in tertiary education. Thus, in many contexts, the magic lantern became a permanent fixture in the colonial cultural landscape rather than a visiting novelty.

In chapter four, the thesis explores the magic lantern as a commodity and its visible incorporation into local consumer culture through the proliferation of suppliers, importers, producers, operators and networks supporting the practice. Dealers throughout the colonial centres supplied rural as well as urban areas, and both amateur and professional practitioners. Only a relatively few lantern suppliers and dealers promoted themselves primarily as such – probably a number of retailers in related merchandise such as stationery, photography or 'fancy goods,' also supplied lantern slides and apparatus. Thomas Crook of Christchurch, for example, who carried a large amount of stock and supplied clients in both islands of New Zealand, was ostensibly a bookseller. Businesses supporting the practice flourished as the century came to a close. Despite the depression in Melbourne in the 1890s when many businesses failed, lantern suppliers actually increased.

¹ *The War Cry* February 13 1892 p. 13; August 22 1892 p. 16.

Local lantern slide production, common at an amateur level, received a significant boost around the end of the century from the Salvation Army. Their Limelight Department had the corporate backing necessary to provide consistent delivery with the latest technology, combined with a feel for popular entertainment. This created a successful precedent which led to the rapid establishment of a local lantern slide and moving film industry by private, commercial and government practitioners. Increasingly, this local lantern slide production was used to promote the colonies overseas to attract tourism, immigration and investment.

The thesis argues that a transition occurred in audience reception with the integration of magic lantern technology and content into colonial culture. This transition was symptomatic of responses to modernity and innovation identified by Tom Gunning, Graeme Davison and others. This transition from initial astonishment to familiarity, a 'consistent scenario' as Gunning calls it, is apparent in changes in reception of the medium in Australia and New Zealand, identified in chapters two and three of the thesis.² For example, in 1877 the Auckland *New Zealand Times*' response to an advertised program of scenic vistas from the magic lantern was 'the expectation ... of a stale character.'³ In 1872, ten-year-old William Edward Lush stated his preference for a school-boy scuffle to 'views' and in 1876 Anna Spencer's sons fell asleep in the middle of a lantern evening. By 1906 a lantern slide lecture was no longer guaranteed to hold the 'irresistible attraction to the public' it had in the 1850s.⁴

Underlying this transition from magical to unremarkable is a perceptual transformation that, the thesis argues, took place at both an individual and a community level. The 'message of the medium' became second nature in mainstream colonial culture, a process linked with increasing literacy in the medium among non-specialists. This can be seen in the case of the Lush children, described in chapter three, who had been initiated into what Horton calls 'the double experience of *having* an experience and of *watching* that experience from the outside.'⁵ They and other colonial children after them learnt about the technology by a process of 'immersion.' They had the advantage of intimate contact with the technology and practice in their own home; they had witnessed, for example, their father's struggle to make the technology work. Many other colonial children would have had hands-on experience with cheap and widely available toy lanterns. Even if the technology was not in every home, it was accessible in the wider domestic environment, in local Sunday schools, a neighbour's home, or brought into town by itinerant entertainers. Colonial children's decreasing enthusiasm for lantern slide shows from 1870s coincided with signs in the public realm that

² Gunning 'Renewing old technologies.'

³ *New Zealand Times* July 2, 1877 [p. 3].

⁴ *Otago Daily Times* February 16 1906, p. 6.

⁵ Horton 'Were they having fun yet?' p. 8.

the magic lantern had become a commonplace technology in the Australasian colonies.

By virtue of this widespread dissemination and adoption the magic lantern was an early vehicle for what is now termed 'globalisation.' The main argument of the thesis is that through the magic lantern colonial culture became integrated into a globalised culture of modern visual technology. As heroines of magic lantern melodramas, 'Jane Conquest' and Nell of 'Billy's Rose,' were as ubiquitous in the homes and therefore the imaginations of audiences in Australia and New Zealand as they were in metropolitan England where they originated. Colonial audiences were as much avid consumers of the illusions projected from the magic lantern as their counterparts in Britain, Europe and the United States. The capacity of the medium for 'annihilating space and time' was particularly potent for viewers who were daily engaged in a struggle to transplant a Eurocentric culture across space and time to the furthest geographical margins of the British Empire.⁶ These consumers became accustomed to engaging with distant European culture via the big screen.

Colonial audiences were not, however, merely the passive recipients of a globalised imagery or culture. They were active contributors to it, constructing their own meanings in response to imported images. For example, in the colonial context the magic lantern show was used routinely as a means of celebrating and enacting allegiance to the British Empire, overtly demonstrated in the inclusion of royal portraits (a feature of extant domestic collections) in many public exhibitions and in themed lantern shows like E. W. Seager's well-received 'Life and Reign of Queen Victoria' presented to schoolchildren in Christchurch in 1901. To colonial audiences, the magic lantern also functioned as a way to 'bring the Empire home' to those citizens of the Empire who may never have visited its principal shrines of culture. Hence the press urged the juvenile population in Melbourne in the 1850s to see James Smith's *Cosmopoligraphicon*, a grand tour of Europe and the East in dissolving views. A half century later, Miss Marchant of Dunedin recommended her lecture on Venice to 'young colonials who had not had the opportunity of visiting old world cities.'⁷

The magic lantern not only maintained white colonial audiences' vital connection to what might be termed a British Imperial world vision, it also brought the colonised into an understanding of their position as subjects within the colonial/imperial universe. One use of the medium was, as Christchurch lanternist Thomas Crook did, 'to exhibit views of the world to the Natives who have not yet been brought into much contact with European civilisation, but are now under British rule and protection.'⁸ Imperialist, racist values were acted out for the edification of both young and old audiences in

⁶ *Lyttelton Times* April 1, 1889, p. 1.

⁷ *Otago Daily Times* August 2 1902, p. 3.

⁸ Thomas Crook papers, Canterbury Museum.

comical and juvenile slides such as those described in chapter three. This had additional relevance in the colonies where British subjects were to varying degrees in direct contact with the indigenous peoples the Empire needed to subjugate and colonise. The significance of this 'mandatory cultural imprint,' as Les Cleveland terms it,⁹ was most clearly articulated in relation to the deployment of the magic lantern in the education and cultural enlightenment of younger generations of colonials and the colonised indigenes, Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maori.

While the magic lantern functioned to affirm a sense of Imperial identity in both colonisers and the colonised the magic lantern was equally adapted to the creation of colonial, intercolonial and regional identities, the thesis argues. The magic lantern was employed locally in the expression of a specific sense of place, local interests and individualised concerns as an alternative to a dominant Eurocentric mass-mediated world view. From the middle of the nineteenth century it was evident that colonial practitioners were ready to turn the medium upon themselves, their locality and experiences. As the Australasian colonies established themselves and flourished, a concern with the representation of local specificity became apparent in the whole range of colonial visual media from high art to the mass popular print. Chapter eight has shown how the pervasive, powerful and populist medium of the magic lantern was deployed in the visualisation of colonial identity. Photographic technology accelerated this tendency, introducing topicality and locality into both commercially and privately produced images. Australasian colonists thus became accustomed to experiencing their own versions of reality on the big screen.

Also of significance in the colonial context is the commonality at various levels fostered by nineteenth-century magic lantern practice. More than other visual technologies popular in the nineteenth century – stereoscopes, zoetropes, postcards – the magic lantern drew people together physically and emotionally into a shared visual culture. The magic lantern enhanced pre-existing communal activities such as church services, so that all could read the words of hymns and songs without having to peer down at the small print of the standard hymn book. There developed around the public magic lantern exhibition practices and conventions which became ritually observed even in domestic exhibitions. Opening and closing slides, interval slides and other special announcements and advertisements are included in most surviving domestic collections (see for example figures 7.7 and 7.8). This congregational activity combined with local views had a powerful effect, as, for example, in the laying claim to the land celebrated in the showing of Hoyte's slides in Auckland in 1868.

In a broader dimension, the magic lantern had the capacity to gather colonists within a wider circle of a shared regional identity. Colonial views were

⁹ Les Cleveland 'The Tyrees,' p. 6.

circulated extensively through and between the colonies in Australia and New Zealand making their way into private collections, supplied by retail dealers or made from photographs taken by individual travellers, by way of organised exchanges through photographic societies, and or through public exhibition by itinerant lanternists. Similar to the effect of the telegraph in Australasia described by Graeme Davison, this interchange of visual information fostered an emotional commonality across the Australasian region, so that even colonists who had not seen events or locations first hand might feel an affinity or sense of belonging to wider regional identity.

Finally, in recovering magic lantern practice and discourse, and in reinstating its significance in colonial culture for the first time, this thesis presents a framework for the development of further studies of the magic lantern in Australasia¹⁰ and the ways in which nineteenth century cultural practices relate to those of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

¹⁰ To this end a number of topics for potential research into aspects of magic lantern practice in the Australasian colonies are outlined in Appendix V.

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Includes 'The Bottle'. Last Update: May 1, 2001

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The Randall-Salter Magic Lantern Collection: Nottingham, UK, schoolteacher Alfred Salter collected the slides on behalf of the local Band of Hope. Robert Randall, and later his son Harold Randall, would present the slides whilst Alfred Salter gave the readings.

<http://www.magiclantern14.btinternet.co.uk/contents.html>

A thrill in the dark: Victorian magic lantern show. Derek Greenacre.
A substantial quantity of information and images under these headings:
Optical systems in a magic lantern
Diagram of magic lantern components and basic lantern types
In the Lime Light (Magic Lantern lime burning illuminants)
Dissolving Views
Slide Identification
Bamforth Slide identification and trade marks of slide manufactures
Primus, Lancaster and J. Theobald catalogues
Lantern slide restoration
Slide Gallery
Magic Lantern shows - period prints of magic lantern shows
Lantern Lectures
Toy lanterns and slides
Gale Wollenberg-Lantern maker
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Digitized slides of Dickens' *Gabriel Grub*, the *Weekly Telegraph* cartoons, Egyptian travel and description, Canadian Pacific Railway, and the Paris Exhibition of 1900. Eric Foxley, Updated Mon 24-Feb-2003

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German magic lantern print (early 19th Century)

The itinerant 'Savoyard' lanternist

Dissolving views (mid 19th Century)

Portable magic lanterns

A Victorian family Christmas show

The Magic Lantern, Its Principle and How to Use It

Lantern lecturer's reading lamp

War Pictures: a lantern show

<http://www.heard.supanet.com/index.html>

Professor Heard's magic lantern shows. Brief history and small selection of illustrations by Mervyn Heard member of MLS

<http://www.precinemahistory.net/>

Researched compiled and written by Paul T. Burns; touches briefly on the magic lantern.

http://www.luikerwaal.com/welkom_uk.htm

Die Luikerwaal -Dutch magic lantern site. Includes articles on the history of the magic lantern; magic lanterns, classed under sort or manufacturer, illuminants and other accessories; catalogues and examples of lantern slides, mechanical and dissolving slides. Henc R.A. de Roo, Huizen, the Netherlands. Last update: April 06, 2003.

<http://www.magiclanternshows.com/>

Some thumbnail images. Essentially a promotional exercise for "America's only professional theater company re-creating Victorian magic-lantern shows." Last Update: 09/12/2002

<http://www.magiclanterns.org/>

Magic Lantern Castle Museum San Antonio, Texas, proprietor Jack Judson

<http://www.magiclanternsociety.org/>

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada.

<http://www.magiclantern.org.uk/index.htm>

The Magic Lantern Society (England)

<http://www.minicizotti.it/html/english/intro.html>

Laura Minici Zotti collection, Padova includes optical instruments and toys, rare iconographical and bibliographical materials, musical instruments and a great number of magic lanterns and magic lantern slides, a few of which are shown on the website.

<http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/bunka/museum/kikaku/exhibition02/english/index-e.html>

Draws attention to nineteenth-century Japanese magic lantern tradition.

<http://www.acrphotographica.com/magiclantern.htm>

Books for sale on lanterns, lantern slides, pre-cinema history, cinema history, and optical toys.

<http://www.theadamsresidence.co.uk/galanteeso/index.html>

'Galantee So' Dolly Whilems and Derek Adams Magic Lantern page.

Contains digitised images of:

Life Model Slides

Central Park Plaza at night

Goodnight slides

Dissolving views

Animated slipper slides

The Lanternist's Library

Some Photographic slides of Java

Tiger and Tub, a Victorian family Lantern show.

Lantern links

<http://www.jhenry.demon.co.uk/galantee.htm>

Digital examples of lantern slide types and subjects including the infamous 'man swallowing rats' humorous mechanical slide.

<http://www.harappa.com/whj1.html>

Promotes 'Through A Magic Lantern: Jackson's INDIA 1895' a CD-ROM about the visit of early American photographer, William Henry Jackson (1843-1942), to India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Appendices

Appendix I

Magic and the lantern

In order to understand the naming of the device, and the persistence of that name over the next two centuries, through an increasingly dominant rationalist, materialist, scientific world-view, a distinction between contemporary and historical understandings of the term *magic* or *magica* is necessary. From the Middle Ages a distinction was made between a

'magic' which made use of the invocation of evil or doubtful spirits [which] was always regarded as sinful [and] *natural magic*, i. e. that which did not involve recourse to the agency of personal spirits, [which] was in the Middle Ages usually recognized as a legitimate department of theory and practice, so long as it was not employed for malificent ends. ... The 'natural magic' of the Middle Ages included much that from the standpoint of modern science is 'natural', but not 'magical', the processes resorted to being really, according to the now known laws of physical causation, adapted to produce the intended effects. (*Oxford English Dictionary* 1989)

Despite the intellectual revolution of the Enlightenment, the beliefs of earlier centuries maintained a hold on seventeenth century thinking. The existence of spiritual beings and their power over the material world were taken seriously. It was of great concern whether occult forces were beneficent or malevolent and whether those who could control them had good intentions or evil. In his discussion of magic in the Age of the Enlightenment, Willem Frijhoff has pointed out that, throughout the European scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, '[a]t every step one encounters a mix of magical, religious, and learned world pictures.' (Willem Frijhoff, 'The emancipation of the Dutch elites from the magic universe' pp. 201-218 in Dale Hoak & Mordechai Feingold *The world of William and Mary: Anglo-Dutch perspectives on the Revolution of 1688-89* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press 1996 p. 203). The iconography of the early lanternists like Jesuit Kircher, and Protestant Huygens, played across the boundaries of natural magic, white magic. By invoking evil spirits, demons and visions of hell-fire, Kircher took his audience on an emotional roller coaster with his magic lantern, with clearly intended didactic message for his Catholic congregation. (The prevalence of this highly iconic imagery in Protestant contexts of the late seventeenth is discussed by Ernestine van de Wall in 'Antichrist stormed: the Glorious Revolution and the Dutch prophetic tradition' in Hoak & Feingold pp. 152-164.)

On the other hand, as Barbara Maria Stafford point out, in the emerging scientific world of the eighteenth century, 'the public and frequently heroic performances of experiments could appear embarrassingly like a magic show.' ('Introduction' *Artful science: enlightenment, entertainment and the enterprise of visual education* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press 1994, p. xxvi)

Side by side with the rationalist definition of the magical, runs a construction which leans towards spectacle for its own sake. The exhibition of lantern magic did not offer rational instruction so much as the education of a taste for spectacle, the uncanny, the macabre, as contemporary descriptions show. In 1662 the device was referred to as the 'lantern of fear'. (Thomas L. Hankins & Robert J. Silverman *Instruments and the imagination* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995, p.48; Franz Paul Liesegang *Dates and sources: a contribution to the history of the art of projection and to cinematography* London: The Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain, 1986 p. 11.) In *The new world of English words* (1696) Edward Phillips described the 'magic lanthorn' as 'a certain small Optical Macheen, that shews by gloomy Light upon a white Wall, Spectre and Monsters so hideous that he who knows not the Secret, believes it to be perform'd by Magic Art.' (Quoted in Richard D. Altick *The shows of London* Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1978 p. 117.) The *laterna magic*, the progeny of science, thus entered the realm of 'secular' magic. For a detailed discussion of 'secular' magic see Simon During *Modern enchantments: the cultural power of secular magic* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Appendix II

Professor Pepper and Spiritualism

It is beyond the parameters of this thesis to explore the way in which Professor Pepper's season in Melbourne in 1879 dramatised the relationship between the spiritual, the scientific and the spectacular in the colonial context. On the one hand Pepper's show was located on the podium of rational recreation and informed by current technological and scientific investigation. On the other hand the register was one of sensationalism and horror - more likely to encourage fear of and heighten sensitivity to the supernatural whether real or imagined, rational or irrational. Richard Altick (p. 505) has dismissed Pepper's ghosts as 'an illusionistic novelty that exactly suited popular taste in the years of cheap sensations.' The Professor quite consciously and even cynically played upon the fears and anxieties. It was a commercial venture after all. But it was also more complex than that. For many of the Victorian era the distinction between the scientific and the spectral was not so clear cut and precise. By constantly invoking the tropes and premises of nineteenth century Spiritualism, 'Pepper's Ghost' spoke directly to widespread public interest in and a raging contemporary tension between Spiritualism and science. There were spiritualists in London who asserted that Professor Pepper was a powerful medium, and produced his weird phantasms by some occult influence.' (Cited in Hecht *Pre-cinema history* p.230, no. 346.) In 1879 Spiritualism was flourishing in the colonies as elsewhere. Within a year of its formation in Melbourne in 1869 the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists claimed to have 300 members and an average of 1200 at its lectures (Bruce Williams *The power beyond* [Westleigh, N.S.W.]: B. Williams, 1996). A reviewer in the *Age* commented that: 'Of the metempsychosis it may be said that if the Professor did not beforehand state that the effects produced are those of natural causes, one might be tempted to believe that he possessed supernatural powers.' (*Age* July 21 1879, p. 3.) Marcus Clarke retorted:

amid the nonsense being talked and written on all sides concerning "Spiritualism" and miraculous intervention, it might be a good thing if the Government would suffer the children it educates to see some of the marvels which can be produced by human ingenuity. A course of Pepper would give a tone to the youthful stomach, and brace it to the withstanding of tales of dead children. (*Age* 24 July 1879 [p. 3])

Descriptions of the metempsychosis can be found in J. H Pepper *The true history of the ghost; and all about metempsychosis* London; New York: Cassell & Co. 1890; and Albert A. Hopkins (1869-1939), *Magic : stage illusions, special effects, and trick photography* New York : Dover Publications, 1976 (originally published 1898).

Appendix III

Melbourne manufacturers and suppliers of magic lantern slides and apparatus, c.1895 onwards.

Within the central business district:

132 Queen Street	William Burchall ('largest stock of slides in the colony')
163 Elizabeth Street	Mrs E. Morrell Limelight advertiser.
256 Bourke St	W. Horsley Melbourne Limelight Advertising Co
Royal Arcade 21-23	William Cooper fancy repository
223 Little Collins St	G. F. Yeates
242 Little Collins St	Alexander Gunn 1897-
263 Little Collins St	William T. Kett 1898-
268 Little Collins St	A. G. Moore Limelight artist and mechanist (1894)
270 Little Collins St	Jabez W. Small, manufacturers and importers of photographic and lantern material 1868-
272 Little Collins St	Religious Tract Society and S.S. Union of Victoria 1898-
276-278 Little Collins St	Cole's novelty and piano arcade 1898-
23 Union Lane	James Searle limelight artist and mechanist 1898 -
7 Block Arcade	Cooper & Co stationers and fancy goods
280 Collins Street	Baker & Rouse importers and manufacturers of photographic goods 1889-. Later at 260 Collins 1905
296 Collins Street	H. J. Trowbridge importers and manufacturers of photographic materials and optical lantern goods.
78 Swanston Street	Watson & Sons - H.H. & F.L. Baker

Outside Melbourne central business district:

110 Lygon Street Carlton	T. W. Cameron then 430 Bourke St from c.1915
252 Rathdowne St Carlton	James Searle 1894 then 274 then 759 Drummond St Carlton
52 Hanover St Prahran	William Burchall

Sources:

Alan Davies & Peter Stanbury *The mechanical eye in Australia: photography from 1841-1900* Melbourne: Oxford University Press 1985

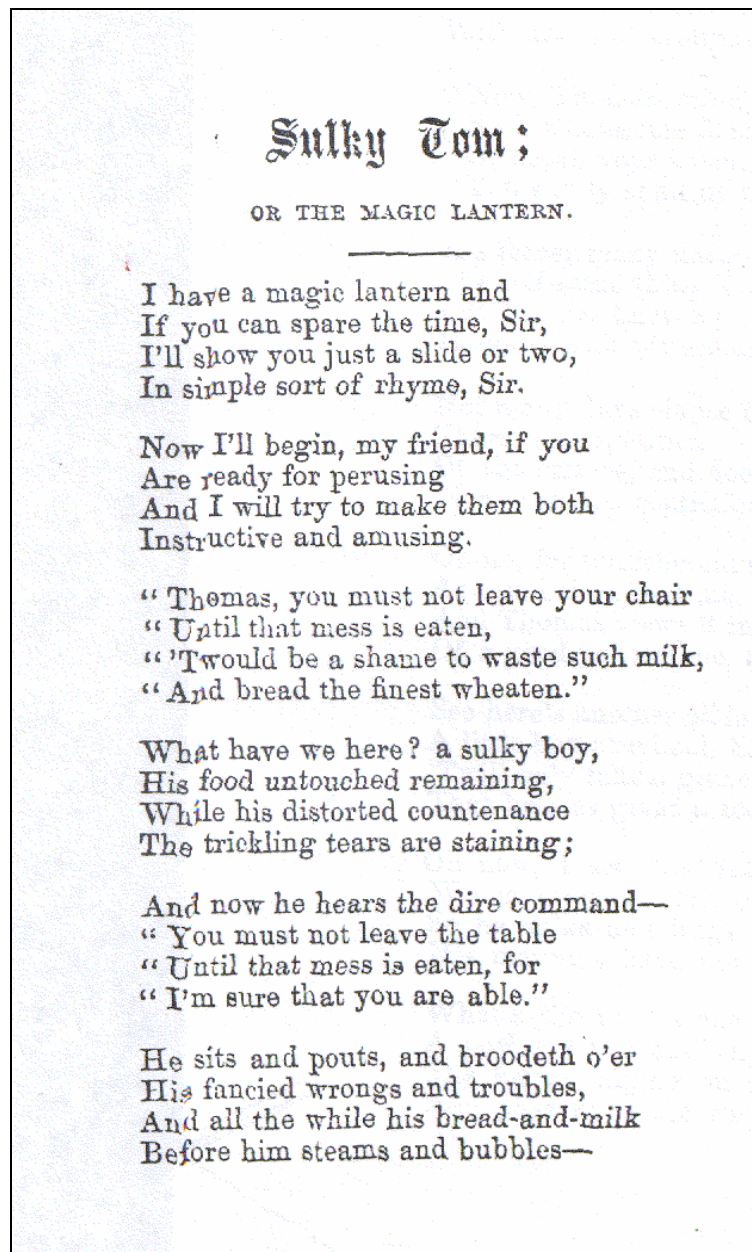
Sands & McDougall's commercial and general Melbourne directory
Melbourne: Sands & McDougall 1890-1910

Appendix IV

Juvenile literature

Two pieces of nineteenth-century juvenile literature demonstrate the extent to which the concept of the magic lantern informed popular discourse.

'Sulky Tom' was first published in Dunedin, New Zealand, around 1870. According to notes at the Hocken Library, Steward was still handing out copies to friends in the late 1890s. This moralising poem appropriates the narrative technique of sequential scenes from magic lantern performances. References are made to the combination of instruction and amusement, to the slides and the canvas.



Dashing the basin to the ground,
With savage exultation
He views the pieces, not unmixed
With dread of castigation ;

" Now, Thomas, mind, next time you leave
Such wholesome food uneaten,
Or break your basin, mark my words,
You surely shall be beaten."

His father many times before
The self-same thing had told him,
But Thomas knew as well as he
It ended with the scolding.

Not many days elapse before
There is a repetition
Of the offence, and does the lad
Now manifest contrition ?

Oh no, for punishment's put off
As usual till next time, Sir,
And Thomas views it in the light
Of a good pantomime, Sir.

See here's another slide ! what's this ?
A little boy at school, Sir,
'Twill only take a glance to show
That he's as great a fool, Sir,

Oh now, I see, 'tis *Sulky Tom*,
Whom some-one has offended,
So he sulks and hugs his temper close,
His manners have not mended.

What's the next scene the canvas shows ?
A parlor warm and snug, Sir,
The kettle singing on the hob
And puss upon the rug, Sir ;

SULKY TOM.

The bright red curtains closely drawn
Exclude the slightest draught, Sir,
The fragrant tea perfumes the room,
And waiteth to be quaffed, Sir ;

Two children stand before the fire,
A sister, and a brother,
Trying to make out figures there,
And thus amuse each other ;

The op'ning door admits a man,
Of handsome face and figure,
It is poor Sulky Tom again,
But grown a little bigger ;

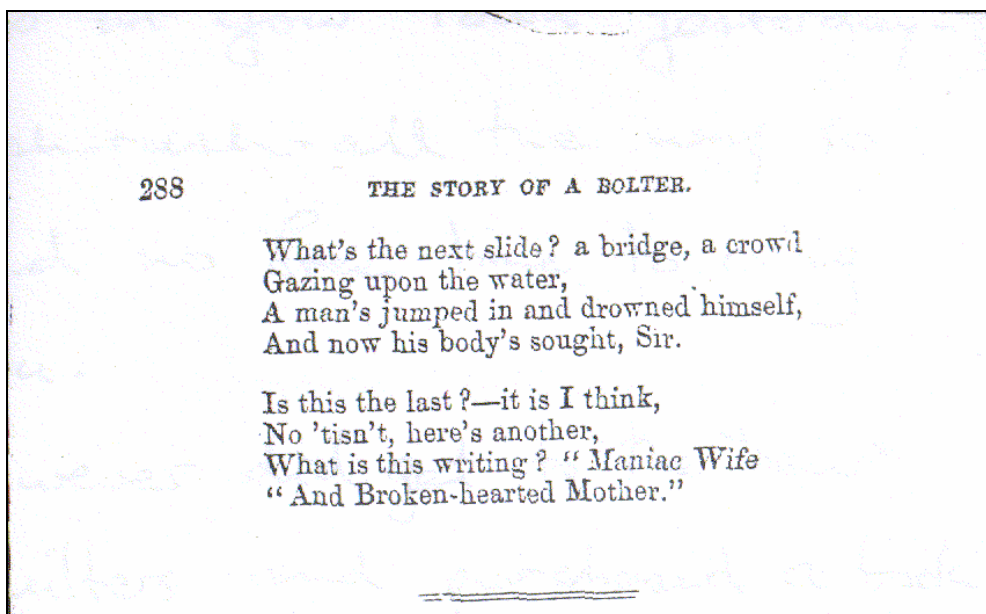
He sits him down without a word
With face as black as thunder,
The children tremble with affright,
And really 'tis no wonder.

Young Thomas leans towards the chair
Where sits his little sister,
And "father's in a temper" says,
In treasonable whisper ;

The timid wife a question puts—
She asks "if he feels poorly?"
Receives no answer, tho' indeed
He must have felt so surely ;

With savage rage he lifts his foot,
And kicks the table flying,
Breaks all the china, spills the tea,
And sets the children crying,

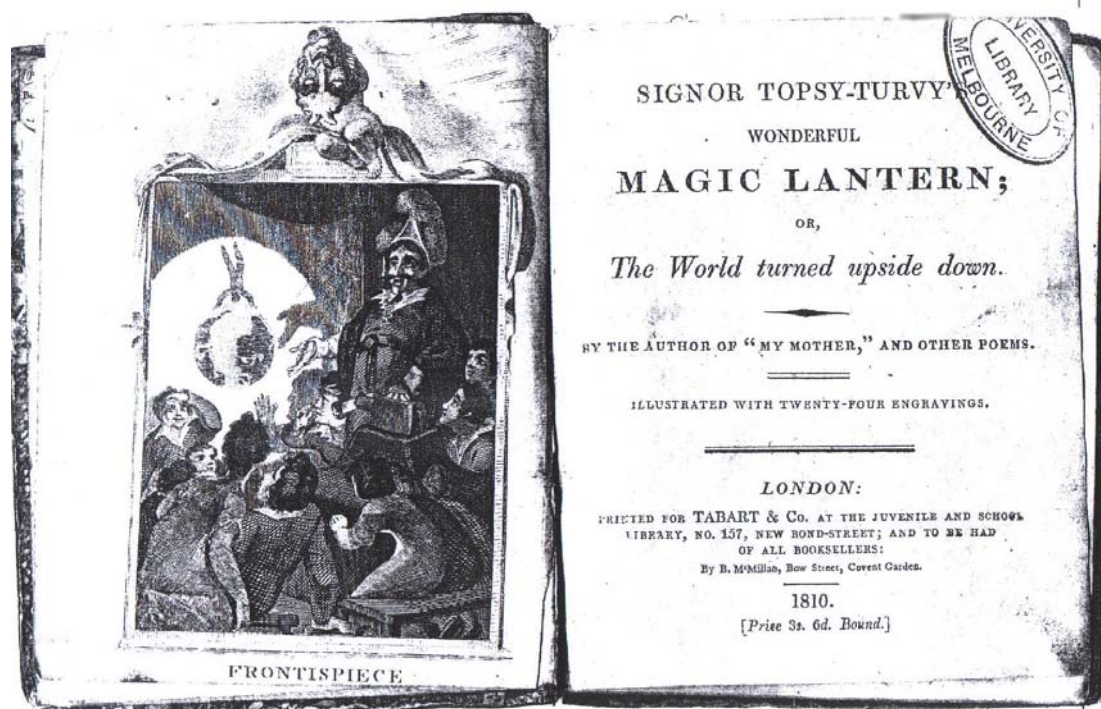
Then contemplates with savage joy
The ruin he's effected,
Strides from the house—to get, I hope,
A little more collected.



"Justin Aubrey" [Wm J. Steward] *Carmina varia* Dunedin: Ferguson & Mitchell [1867-1871]

My thanks to William Main for bringing this piece to my attention and to Ian Morrison, Curator, Australiana, Archives and Special Collections, University Library, University of Melbourne, for his advise in this dating. The University of Melbourne Special Collections holds a copy bearing the author's inscription. SpC/McL L/NZ-P Aubrey. The Hocken Library, Otago University, Dunedin, also holds a copy with an authorial inscription.

An earlier poem, published in 1810, uses the lantern's optical inversion as a metaphor.



I can't tell the story for truth, but 'tis said.
 That the first *Magic Lantern* that ever was made,
 Perplex'd the inventor extremely;
 For houses, and people, and all that he shew'd,
 In spite of his efforts, could only be view'd
Upside down, which was very unseemly!

At length, out of patience, and quite in despair,
 He thought the best way to pass off the affair,
 Was to bring it at once to a sequel;
 He therefore gave out he'd invented a shew,
 So wonderful, magical, comic, and new,
 As nothing in nature could equal.

The nobility, gentry, and public at large,
 With alacrity paid the philosopher's charge,
 And throng'd to his rare exhibition;
 And nought could exceed the huzzas and encores,
 As houses, and horses, and people, and doors,
 With their feet in the air, and their heads on the floor,
 Past by, - 'twas so droll a position!

They said it was such an original thought
 That people of rank and intelligence, ought

To give it their full approbation;
So ladies and lords to the scholar repair'd
And as the procession proceeded, declar'd,
It really surpass'd expectation!

At length a shrewd fellow from college that came,
Who envied, 'twas said, the philosopher's fame,
(As gross and conceited as could be),
Stole up to the sliders, and *turning them round*,
To the company's grief and dismay it was found,
That now, they were seen as they *should* be!

The tumult was dreadful, -- the gentlemen rose,
And said they *would* see *upside down* if they chose,
They came with no other intention;
And begg'd that, upon a philosopher's word,
He would not let anyone be so absurd
Again, as to spoil his invention.

Signor Topsy-Turvy's Wonderful Magic Lantern; or, The World Turned Upside Down by the author of 'My Mother,' and other poems: illustrated with twenty-four engravings. London: Printed for Tabart & Co. at the Juvenile and School Library, Bond St. 1810. Introduction. pp. 5-7.

Appendix V

Opportunities for further research

Some peripheral issues have presented themselves as areas of further research but are, of necessity, excluded as they over-extend the focus of the thesis. They nevertheless warrant further consideration as part of a continuing investigation of the magic lantern in the context of colonial culture and because they raise a wider range of theoretical issues.

Demanding close attention are a group of six hand-painted lantern slides held in the Rex Nan Kivell collection of the National Library of Australia which depict events from the A. G. Gregory expedition of 1855-7 to Northern Australia, prepared by British artist explorer Thomas Baines who accompanied Gregory. Rex Nan Kivell created his collection in London from purchases made there during the 1950s and 1960s. The collection was acquired some time later by the National Library of Australia. (See Marian Minson, *Encounter with Eden: New Zealand 1770-1870: paintings & drawings from the Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia* Wellington: National Library of New Zealand, 1990). Dr Jeanette Hoorn of the School of FASCA, University of Melbourne drew my attention to the existence of these slides. However, the discovery that these slides, a remnant of an illustrated lecture delivered by Baines in London in 1866, were made in England for English audiences and had not in fact been shown in the Australian or New Zealand colonies, placed them outside the parameters of this present study. They are significant artefacts nevertheless and a close reading of the images on the slides and an investigation into the conditions and processes of the production and exhibition reveal the way in which discourses central to the British imperial project were played out in mid-nineteenth century popular visual culture. I have presented my findings as a paper 'Thomas Baines: the glass lantern slides in the Rex Nan Kivell collection,' to the Department of Archaeology, Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, in November 1999, and intend to publish them in due course.

On the other hand a set of finely executed, hand painted slides in the collection of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, are far more likely to have been exhibited locally. Disappointingly, however, an initial investigation into these unprovenanced slides indicated that information about the conditions of their production and reception would not be uncovered within the time constraints on this project. They also deserve concentrated study.

Later examples of the use of magic lantern to disseminate visual information about the Australasian colonies can be found in the State Records of New South Wales (Series No. 14086). Dr Anita Callaway at the Centre for Cross Cultural Research at ANU kindly drew my attention to this archive of lantern slides from the Franco-British Exhibition of Science, Arts, and Industries held at Shepherd's Bush in London in 1908. The collection reveals the ways in which colonial conditions were promoted internationally and include: typical

country scenes and suburban homes in New South Wales; views of sawmills, dams and irrigation areas, forests and scenes of dairy farming, and activities associated with the timber industry such as timber felling and hauling; diagrams and graphs showing the value of production in various industries, population rates in New South Wales, and the amount of money deposited in the state's Savings Banks; and some of the New South Wales exhibits and a number of main buildings in which the Exhibition was held.

Of relevance to both art history and lantern slide practice in the colonies is the involvement in the 'big business' of lantern slide-making in the 1890s and early 1900s of Australian artists Norman Lindsay, Percy Lindsay and Will Dyson. Jack Cato, who was right about the magic lantern after all, has stated that they 'and their contemporaries sketched many religious pictures for this purpose, to help eke out their meagre income.' (Cato, *The story of the camera in Australia* p. 115). Although Cato omitted to indicate his sources and preliminary research has revealed nothing about these activities, there is enough untouched material in local archives to suggest that that further investigation would be worthwhile.

Also worthy of focussed study are the personal collections of photographic lantern slides such as the collections of Arthur Fox and Harold Godfrey Myers in the State Library of Victoria and the Charles A. Brown collection in the Auckland War Memorial Museum which would provide insight into the domestic lives of affluent middle-class urban families in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Erotica constituted a genre of European lantern practice and represents another rich area of colonial visual culture which needs detailed and specialised research. Evidence does not come readily to the surface because the practice was concealed. However, in the context of an identifiable practice in Europe (Robinson et al. *Encyclopaedia of the magic lantern* pp. 107-8) and a specific reference to the censorship of slides in Tasmania, it is likely that similar practices existed in the colonies.

War presents an equally rich but more readily accessible field. Not only were slides depicting the wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries produced in great numbers for the commercial market. The magic lantern was also deployed as an instrument of propaganda both for and against associated political issues such as conscription.

The potential for research into the magic lantern in Australasia is expanding even as this thesis is completed. Digital capturing of images in public collections increases daily and can be accessed online. For example, <http://www.pictureaustralia.org> has been enlarged within the last few weeks with records from University of Melbourne and the State Library of Queensland, and currently yields 156 lantern slide images. Online catalogues such as AMOL reveal entries thousands of slides and apparatus that cry out for further investigation. AMOL reveals, for example, from 1900 the magic

lantern was used for showing slides to entertain the Aboriginal boys at St Mary's orphanage by the monks of New Norcia mission in Western Australia.