

Dickensian ‘Dissolving Views’: The Magic Lantern, Visual Story-Telling, and the Victorian Technological Imagination

JOSS MARSH

In the palmy years of the magic lantern, in England, from the 1860s to the 1890s, when perhaps twelve hundred lantern lecturers criss-crossed the country by railway, and lantern companies splurged on studios, supplies, and slide catalogues the size of bricks, lanternists cherished two dreams.¹

The first (the focus of technical histories) was to make still images move – by all means possible: illusion and speed lines; panoramic ‘sliders’ that pushed across the beam of light; ‘slipping’ glasses; levers; ratchets and ‘eccentrics’; pulleys; sometimes all of them at once. The second dream (a history which has barely begun to be told) was to tell stories in pictures, combining projected images with dramatic readings – not only fairy tales, Ali Baba and the Arabian Nights, Bible stories, and *Robinson Crusoe*, but modern stories, and stories written specially for the lantern – an extraordinary development, and a ‘purely’ and ‘peculiarly’ English one.² It depended both on technical developments – above all, the widespread employment, from the 1860s, of powerful limelight – and on broader cultural contexts, such as the rise and *cachet* of narrative paintings, which required Victorian viewers (as Henry James put it in 1877) to ‘project [...] themselves into the story’,³ and the attraction of the lantern for temperance and missionary propaganda.⁴

This essay addresses that second dream, attempting to unravel, if possible, what knitted together the rise of lantern story-telling and what was perhaps the most significant development in the 250-year history of the magic lantern. The lantern, of course, was the world’s premier ‘screen experience’ and cinema’s closest ancestor, whose importance – courtesy of colour, music, and the spoken word (hand-painted slides, sing-songs,

lecture-performances)–endured through the 1920s, well into the cinematic era.

The development I have in mind was not the phantasmagoria—the magic-lantern spectre show that fed on and commercialized the terrors of Revolutionary Paris. The phantasmagoria itself persisted through spirit photographs, macabre cabaret, *grand guignol*, ghost shows, and the horror film to the present day.⁵ But its popularity peaked in Britain around 1805, and it died out as a headlining popular entertainment in the 1830s. Yet it has dominated critical discussion at the expense of another, later, less glamorous development.⁶

This development was the ‘dissolving view’, the ancestor of the cinematic dissolve, whereby (roughly speaking) light was slowly stopped down on one lens and one image and brought up on another, with perfect registration, so that the second image slowly—almost magically—replaced the first on the illuminated screen.

There is disagreement about when and where ‘dissolving views’ originated: the showman and pseudo-‘scientist’ ‘Philidor’ (later known as De Philipstahl) may have approximated the effect in a Dublin phantasmagoria of 1804; ‘Monsieur Henry’ featured what he variously called ‘imperceptibly changing’, ‘magic’, or ‘dissolvent’ ‘views’ of landscapes and buildings in February 1826.⁷ But we do know they were used shortly after by the painter and lanternist Henry Langdon Childe, who famously produced the landmark lantern stage effect of a ghost ship for the Adelphi Theatre’s production of *The Flying Dutchman* in December 1826.⁸ He became a creative mainstay of the Royal Polytechnic, the vibrant centre of Victorian multi-media culture (1838–1876), where he was best known for his ‘extravagant’ lantern work.⁹

Childe’s finale to a show of March 1827 included ‘the eruption of Vesuvius, storm with shipwreck, mill scene with the effect of a rainbow’ and ‘[Lord Byron’s] Newstead Abbey [...] with moving swans [...]!’¹⁰ (All the subjects, except the last, became classics of the Victorian dissolving view repertoire.) Childe probably had a single lantern, and nothing more than his hand and a wad of fabric to wave in front of the lens to effect the transition from image to image; the effect was nevertheless ‘truly astonishing’.¹¹ Dissolving views were an entertainment whose time had come: the audience that flocked to see the ‘transformation’ scenes of nineteenth-century pantomime and the transformative effects of Daguerre’s Diorama was multiplied by the lantern’s mechanical means.¹² And those means dramatically improved when, in the same year that the

Diorama opened in London, 1823, Carpenter and Westley patented and began mass production of outline images. For, if a second image of a cottage or a country church could replace a first on screen with perfect registration, it became possible to produce such illusions as the transition from day to night or from summer to winter (one of Childe's most famous effects). 'By the 1840s[,] dissolving views were considered the ultimate manifestation of the lanternist's art',¹³ and dissolves were worked with two lanterns, placed side by side, or one on top of the other, while comb-like fan shutters, soft caps, iris diaphragms, and tap dissolvers smoothed the transitions. Soon after, sophisticated 'bi-unial' and 'tri-unial' lanterns were invented.

The phantasmagoria had spawned works in which 'magic lanterns are used to deceive credulous would-be ghost-seers'.¹⁴ For Carlyle and Paine, it was the image of choice for historic chaos and mass deception.

Victorian dissolving views, in contrast, brought the wonders of nature, Empire and science to respectable family audiences. The critical difference was the method of projection: phantasmagoria lanternists worked from behind the screen, in total darkness, hidden from the audience, with 'pseudonecromantic' effect.¹⁵ Limelight, and the front projection it made possible, turned the lanternists who embraced the dissolving view into showmen-educators, expounding their marvels in full view of their much-enlarged audiences: Gibraltar by day and by night; Napoleon before and after Elba; the regions of the North Pole. Thus it was that the dissolving-view lantern-show became a Victorian metaphor for transformation, truth-telling and spiritual regeneration.

It may even be that the work that launched the Temperance movement into lantern propaganda, Cruikshank's *The Bottle* (1847), not only took 'primal inspiration' from the fear-inducing fantasy of the now-repudiated phantasmagoria, but specific instruction from the techniques of the uplifting dissolving view. For, in seven of Cruikshank's eight prints, the orientation of the drunkard's room (door on the left, hearth on the right, etc.) allows us more clearly to follow his metamorphosis from 'loving father to murderous maniac', as if we were dissolving from one image to the next.¹⁶ Dissolving views made possible, even helped shape, a still newer kind of story than that drunkard's 'progress', however—a story that allowed travel through time and space. And it was Cruikshank's ex-collaborator who invented it: Charles Dickens.

He fell in love with the lantern as a child. Mary Weller, the family's nursemaid, reported how 'little Charles' would come downstairs and say 'Now, Mary, [...] we are going to have such a game', and then '[Cousin]

George [...] would come in with his Magic Lantern'.¹⁷ His work is saturated in lantern reference: Miss Havisham's 'ghostly reflection', for example, 'thrown large by the fire upon the ceiling and the wall',¹⁸ or Genoa's 'extravagant reality' as phantasmagoria in the virtual-travel book *Pictures from Italy*.¹⁹ Dickens's journals *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* give extended space to all the 'optical discoveries' that had turned the modern mind into a 'wizard chamber of dissolving views'.²⁰ The lantern remained, throughout his career, a central image of transformation and multifariousness: 'I can't express how much I want [the London] streets', he confessed to John Forster, as he struggled with *Dombey and Son* in dull, idyllic Switzerland, in 1846: 'The toil and labour of writing, day after day, without that magic lantern [before me], is IMMENSE!'²¹

Dickens is the dominant literary source for later Victorian magic-lantern story-telling, uniquely important for lantern history, as he is for cinema. But while we have come to accept that cinema received its Dickensian inheritance in part from the nineteenth-century melodramatic stage, we have yet to learn that it is also by way of the magic lantern that cinema reveals itself as descended from Charles Dickens. Indeed, Dickens is 'cinematic' only and insofar as he responded to pre-cinematic technologies and popular entertainments.

What made him so attractive to lanternists? His works were in copyright—they could not be adapted with impunity. But adapted his stories were—sometimes legitimately, sometimes reworded, excruciatingly badly.

Part of the answer is critical commonplace: Dickens's imagination was profoundly visual; his works were illustrated; he had an unparalleled popular audience, created by serial publication. And, in giving public readings of his works, from 1853, Dickens himself had established a model for lantern performance of his stories.

Part is more complex. The lantern had inspired two of Dickens's most-loved stories. One was *A Christmas Carol*, 1843; its illustrations, all light effects and ghostly superimpositions, were an open invitation to lanternists, and (when they began to tell stories) it quickly became a favourite. It was topped only by *Gabriel Grub*, one of the tales woven into *The Pickwick Papers*, 1836, the story of a surly sexton, the prototype for Scrooge. The tale was granted a bravura production at the Royal Polytechnic in 1875, combining 'views and effects' with staged scenes, dramatic reading, and intermittent carol-singing: it became a lodestar for later-century lantern story-telling.²²

The *Carol* and *Gabriel Grub* became lanternist favourites not only for commercial, but for profoundly imaginative reasons. For Gabriel's and Scrooge's Christmas-tide changes of heart are directly inspired and made possible by the experience of the lantern show: the two misanthropes are 'show[n] [...] pictures' by supernatural showmen—the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet-To-Come in the *Carol*, a troupe of goblins in *Gabriel Grub*; both are transported through time and space by the visual magic of dissolving views.

Gabriel Grub openly displays its lantern inspiration. When Gabriel spends Christmas Eve digging a grave, he is seized upon by the King of the Goblins, who summons his minions, 'la[ys] hand upon [Gabriel's] collar, and s[inks] with him through the earth'—a grand effect at the Polytechnic, courtesy of a vertical panorama—to 'what appeared to be a large cavern' (for clarity, in what follows all lantern-related terms are italicized):

'And now', said the King, [...] 'show the man of misery and gloom a few of *the pictures from our own great storehouse!*

At which, like a theatrical curtain:

[A] *thick cloud*, which obscured the remoter end of the cavern, *rolled gradually away, and disclosed*, [...] a small and scantily-furnished [...] apartment.

There follows an edifying visual story of family contentment in the face of adversity, presented in precise, almost technical lantern terms: the lantern inheritance of Dickens's work lives in techniques and metaphor, not in storyline or explicit reference. (Missing this, Fred Guida blankly concludes: 'There is no evidence to suggest that [Dickens] was in any way directly influenced by the magic lantern.')

A knock was heard at the door; [...] their father entered. [...] But *a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly.*

Shifting slides takes time; the lanternist must focus.

The scene was altered to a small bed-room, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying [...]

Again the light cloud passed across the picture ...

It is as if a lanternist were fluttering his fingers before the lens, in the approved impromptu style of the dissolving view, or using his serrated fan shutter:

and again the subject changed.

Shortly, of course, the parents die, too – but not before the spectator’s conversion is achieved: it depends, unquestionably, on the transformative experience of the dissolving view.

‘*You, a miserable man!*’ said the goblin [...] ‘*Show him some more!*’

At these words, the cloud was dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was *disclosed to view* [...]

Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub...²⁴

A Christmas Carol is a far subtler tale – but it is no less lantern-derived. R. W. Paul found inspiration for a splendid dissolve in his inventive film version of 1901, not only in lantern versions, but in the first chapter of Dickens’s text:²⁵

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door [of Scrooge’s house], except that it was very large. [...] [So] let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker [...] not a knocker, but Marley’s face.

Marley’s face. [...]

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.²⁶

And in the first Spirit we meet a figure in the style of the phantasmagoria, in which figures grew larger or smaller as the lantern ‘tracked’ towards or away from the screen: Christmas Past is ‘like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child’s proportions’. The ‘medium’ of the lantern produces no less ‘supernatural’ an effect: ‘the figure [...] *fluctuate[s]* in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs [...]: of which *dissolving parts*, no *outline* would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they *melted away*’ (68). ‘I am the Ghost of Christmas Past’, says the spirit; ‘Rise! and walk with me!’ (69). They ‘passed through the wall’, into a country lane, and thence (dissolving again) to a schoolroom. ‘Good Heaven!’ Scrooge cries; ‘I was a boy here!’ (69–70). It is the first moment his heart is touched – and it is touched by the lantern-like effect of sudden movement through time and space.

The reality-effect, however, is just that – an effect. ‘These are but shadows of the things that have been’, the Spirit warns Scrooge; ‘[t]hey have no consciousness of us’ (71).²⁷ But the disappointment finds lantern

compensation. Old Scrooge watches his solitary child self 'intent upon his reading'. We jump forward to Christmas, and:

Suddenly a man, in foreign garments: wonderfully real and distinct to look at: stood outside the window . . .

'Why, it's Ali Baba!' Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. 'It's dear old honest Ali Baba!' (72)

The supernatural slides move from one early-nineteenth-century lantern-slide favourite to another (moments that became high-spots of lantern-slide *Carol* renditions), and old Scrooge cries again:

'There's the Parrot! [. . .] Poor Robin [sic] Crusoe', he called him [. . .] 'Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?'

Then, with '*a rapidity of transition*' (a most self-consciously technical lantern term) that is 'very foreign to his usual character', Scrooge mutters, 'Poor boy!' and cries again. The Ghost '*waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"*' (72–73). The gesture suggests not only the lanternist's fluttering fingers, but assistants, behind the supernatural screen (79). He takes Scrooge to London, and to his young manhood: the ball at old Fezziwig's, where he was apprenticed, which now happens (as it were) all over again, in joyous present tense; the parlour of his fiancée's house, where she releases him from his engagement, and the pain of loss happens again, now, as if for the first time. Scrooge softens. The greatest '*effect*', however (the word was common lanternists' parlance), is produced by the Spirit of Christmas Yet-To-Come: the sight of his own neglected grave, where Scrooge reads upon the stone 'his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE' (124). And he makes his promise: 'I will honour Christmas in my heart . . . I will live in the past, present and future' (126). The promise honours the lesson of the magic lantern – and the dissolving views that have moved him magically through space and time.

In *A Christmas Carol* and *Gabriel Grub*, then, a nickel-and-dime entertainment, whose serious history is yet to be fully written, creatively enables the production of a new secular scripture; visual transformation produces spiritual conversion. A machine re-configures the human imagination – makes possible stories in which time can be stopped in its onward linear flow, rewound, and the past revisited with the freshness and conviction of cinematic flashbacks, seventy years before flashbacks came to be.

Dickens had wanted to 'strike a blow' at iniquitous social conditions in the *Carol*. In a scarcely-known ninety-page agnostic novella of 1847,

by James Anthony Froude, the future historian and biographer of Carlyle, the blow told. 'The Lieutenant's Daughter' is driven (indeed lacerated) by Froude's recent loss of religious belief, by fury at the comforting faith in Divine Providence that underpinned Dickens's Christmas story – and by the imaginative experience of the magic lantern show that the 'Inimitable' had corralled into its service. Almost unknown to criticism, except for a passing reference to its 'audacious' 'obliquities of narrative method' by Kathleen Tillotson, 'The Lieutenant's Daughter' is overshadowed by a later novel (*The Nemesis of Faith*) which was publicly burnt at Oriel College. The novella represents doubt, as Froude had experienced it, in writing (at Newman's request) a *Life of St Neot of Ireland*: as the volatile product of history's clash with myth; as textual instability. The tale is shot through by the kind of scientific and technological speculation which the lantern was so often used to illuminate for public edification.²⁸

The story is simple melodrama: a fifteen-year-old governess, orphan Catherine Gray, is seduced by her employers' nephew and heir, an Oxford man hot for ideas like free love and universal philanthropy. When the affair comes to light, her employers throw her on the streets; Henry Carpenter, the nephew, takes her in, but quickly gets bored and absconds to London, strengthened in his desire to do the indecent thing by his uncle's threat of disinheritance. Catherine follows, and on the train to Paddington is befriended by an elderly woman, Miss Arthur, posing as Carpenter's 'friend' – a ruse to entrap her into a brothel. Miss Arthur blackmails Carpenter (one of her regulars) into writing a brush-off letter that will stun the girl into acquiescence in her own sexual degradation. The tale reaches a peak of capitalist brutality when the bawd discusses with her sister what to do with their new piece of meat: 'Lord William offers two hundred pounds [. . .] if it's quite fresh'.²⁹ Catherine is handed from man to man, 'till at last her haggard painted face was seen nightly in the theatre or the saloon' (250). When her 'cup of bitterness' is full, she crawls home to take poison on her parents' grave.

Pertinently, Catherine's story is preceded by a fourteen-page frame tale, in which our narrator voyages to Ireland, succumbs to fever, and, in a 'half delirium', is visited by a troupe of obliging genie-like demons. He asks to see their 'superior', and:

A great curtain was stretched across the room, and on the surface of it, like a figure in a phantasmagoria, was hung the image I had summoned. What it was I cannot tell [. . .] It was a meagre anatomy [. . .] I begged for more light, [. . .] but [. . .] the more I had the light multiplied the feebler became the shadow. (200–201)³⁰

This is the first level of magic-lantern reference in 'The Lieutenant's Daughter'. Lantern illumination here stands in for the 'lights' of science and Biblical criticism, which—an ironic agnostic reversal of lantern reality—make the Devil more and more indistinct and unreal. The 'delirium' recasts, in up-to-date nineteenth-century terms, the 'deception' that Paine declared the Bible and the Christian priesthood had perpetuated on mankind, in his scandalous *Age of Reason* (1794), and the 'hallucination hypothesis' by which the most famous of the German 'higher critics', David Friedrich Strauss, accounted for belief in Christ's miracles, transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension. (Froude corresponded with George Eliot, whose translation of Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* was published in 1846.)

Both Paine and Strauss presented their cases in striking lantern terms. In Paine's account, the recent 'astonishing' 'exhibitions of ghosts or specters' in Paris—the 'mechanical and optical deceptions' of Robertson and his phantasmagore rivals—laid the foundation for a general argument against miracles.³¹ In Strauss (amongst other pithy references), the presence or absence of the angel at the tomb becomes a 'phantasmagoric appearance, disappearance, and reappearance'.³² If, for Dickens, as for lantern-toting missionaries like Dr Livingstone, the magic lantern was a Christian agent of hoped-for conversion and Damascene transformation,³³ for Paine and Strauss (as, later, for Thomas Hardy) the lantern experience actively encouraged scepticism by exposing the mechanics and potential for fakery in supernatural visions.³⁴ In Froude's 'Lieutenant's Daughter', the *Christmas Carol* met *Das Leben Jesu* in the metaphorical projections of an illuminating machine.

For there is a second level of lantern reference in Froude's story of Catherine: it is presented to the narrator as the main event of a lantern show that also includes glimpses of 'dead heroes', 'stately cities' (201), friends, relatives, and a 'second' and 'other' 'me' going about daily business (202). '[O]ne of the genii arranged [her story] for me' (205); and one quick scene—in which fallen Catherine clings to her seducer's knees in a flaming saloon, 'pause[s]' before the narrator's eyes 'for a moment in *the shifting of the slides*' (251). The lantern thus provides the tale with a method of narration.

But the tale also provides the lantern with a description of its operation and psychological effect that not only tests (and proves) Castle's theory of the 'bizarre externaliz[ation]' of thought involved in the lantern metaphor,³⁵ but uncannily anticipates modern theoretical understandings of cinematic spectatorship: Catherine's story

is simultaneously ‘external, and independent of my power of willing’ (199), a series of ‘brilliant images’, over which ‘I had no power at all’ (198), and ‘a thing which befell me [...] internally’, a ‘phenomenon of mind’ (196). These ‘speculations [...] presented [...] in the form of a picture’ (196) are a pre-cinematic lantern dream.

A third level of lantern reference in ‘The Lieutenant’s Daughter’ is rooted in the narrator’s sense of being ‘haunt[ed] by Hooker’s definition of time, as “the measure of the motion of the heavens”’ (193), a material – and manipulable – phenomenon; indeed, the tale begins with a modernist fantasy of making time run backwards by launching a railway train ‘in the same direction [as] the earth’s motion and with double the velocity’ (194–195). Like *A Christmas Carol* – one reason for that story’s attraction to cinema – it is steeped in the imaginative implications and anxieties of the ‘railway mania’ that altered space, time, and vision in the 1840s: ‘Back rolled the great wheels of time; whizzing by me so fast, the objects all melted into haze. [...] till I found myself on the platform of the Railway Station at Paddington’ (221–222).

But the railway train is not the tale’s only ‘time machine’. The genii who show the narrator Catherine’s story are lantern showmen who specialize in dissolving views – which, as we have seen, are temporal as well as optical effects. They produce their *pièce de résistance* when the narrator commands them: ‘Go, reverse the order of the universe, and make time flow backwards’ (202). The immediate effect is comic, as if we are watching mechanical slides worked backwards – a common lanternist trick, anticipating early cinema *trucs*, like the reverse projection of the Lumières’ *Demolition of a Wall*: ‘You saw the tea coiling up like a water-spout, [...] into the mouth of the pot’ (203). But the ultimate effect is devastating. For the most startling innovation of this extraordinary little story is that *it is written backwards*.³⁶ Thus we dissolve from Catherine’s suicide to her arrival at Paddington station, and from her degradation to Carpenter’s ‘exstatic’ declarations of undying love and Catherine’s innocent, mundane early history. The reversal of order, the ‘shifting’ backwards through the ‘slides’ of her life, whereby ‘effects and causes [...] changed places’ (203), is the agnostic imagination’s deliberately destabilized, lantern-lit blow at the linear narrative and fantasy of free will represented by the Bible. ‘Think it over now’, says one of the genii; ‘and see if you can tell when sin came in, and she began to deserve what fell upon her’ (281).

That blow is enabled – visualized – by the magic lantern no less than the redemptive temporal fantasy of Dickens’s *Christmas Carol*. And it

is, finally, to that work, its author, and its lantern uplift, that Froude addresses himself.

The tale has had Dickens in its sights from the start: the local newspaper superintendent is 'hanging doubtfully between the last Pickwick and the least threadbare of his devotional sentiments', when a young clerk volunteers Catherine's suicide to fill a blank on the front page (216); the showmen-genii are parodies of the *Carol's* spirits. But the temporal reversal of Froude's tale destroys Dickens's comfortable morality and genial message; its lantern-inspired structural irony makes us ironic readers. And it dissolves not only time but closure, and certainty.

For at its end, the text has one last surprise. We read to the last page, discovering all (or so we think) about Catherine's early life: the death of her mother in childbirth, and – especially – the death of her father, which triggers the orphan child's downfall. Then the chief genie adds: 'I have another scene for you before we part'. And we are taken aback: Catherine, her husband (a naval officer), her two-year-old son and a clergyman file with a happy crowd from the church where her newborn baby has just been christened. The genie has offered us an alternative outcome of Catherine's life that depends on a different beginning. Only one tiny circumstance has changed. Like the Spirit of Christmas Yet To Come, the genie points the narrator towards a gravestone for the final revelation. It is Catherine's father's; the narrator read it earlier:

'The inscription, [the genie says] [...] read it'.

I did so; it was the same, word and word the same, but with this one difference. The old man had outlived the date I had first read five summers; [...] and that was all; five links hung on upon the chain. . . (286)

The double ending is the final touch. Nor are we to know which ending is true. When the narrator asks, the genie responds: 'Come with me to the light, and I will show you'. The narrator crawls to his bedroom window, and finds himself awake. In what he sees, in the very last lines of the story, there is one last lantern reference, of a sort to blank out all pretension of 'meaning': 'my eyes were on the *white sheet* of the Atlantic, and the peaks of Achill were purpling in the rising sun' (287).

We have here, I think, something important: a Victorian taste of modern things to come, of fiction unchained from linear time, from the re-edited temporality of Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* to the undifferentiated eternal-present-tense of Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy*.

We have, too, perhaps, a direct source for the suspended endings and back-to-front organization of texts like John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Harold Pinter's *Betrayal*.³⁷ But we also have, as in the *Carol* and *Gabriel Grub*, so extraordinary a level of response to the visual and temporal transformations of the magic lantern and its dissolving views, that we begin to understand how and why early and 'primitive' film called forth so sophisticated and 'modern' a response from its first audiences: it had been conditioned, previewed; imaginatively, as well as technologically, the lantern had gone before.

NOTES

This essay is indebted to audiences at the Academy of Motion Pictures, the Dickens Universe, the Cinemateca Portuguesa, and MOMA, and to my lantern research and performance partner, David Francis, O.B.E.

- 1 This is David Francis's estimate of lecturer numbers. There were at least 28 lantern and slide firms in London alone in the 1880s and 1890s. See Olive Cook, *Movement in Two Dimensions* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 93.
- 2 Both references to Englishness, one from an 1855 French review of the Paris Exposition Universelle, the other by artist-illustrator Luke Fildes, also from the 1860s, are quoted in Julia Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), pp. 110, 63.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- 4 J. W. Kirton's famous temperance tale *Buy Your Own Cherries* (1862), for example, is known in at least four lantern versions, as well as a 1904 film by R. W. Paul (see below).
- 5 As Terry Castle puts it, in all of them 'spectral technology' produces the ghosts we 'know' 'd[o] not exist'; see 'Phantasmagoria', *Critical Inquiry* 15: 1 (Autumn, 1988), 26–61, p. 30. See also: Mervyn Heard, *Phantasmagoria: The Secret Life of the Magic Lantern* (Hastings: The Projection Box, 2006), especially pp. 247–275, on the phenomenon's inter-media inheritances; Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 146–156; Erkki Huhtamo, 'Ghost Notes: Reading Mervyn Heard's *Phantasmagoria*', *Magic Lantern Gazette* 18 (2006), 10–17. Confusingly, the word 'phantasmagoria' was applied to shows and lanterns of all types later in the nineteenth century.
- 6 Cook spends only one page on the subject (pp. 95–96), Laurent Mannoni two paragraphs in *The Great Art of Light and Shadow*, translated and edited by Richard Crangle (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995, 2000), p. 157.
- 7 On M. Henry, see Heard, *Phantasmagoria*, pp. 198–203, and Edwin Dawes and Mervyn Heard, 'M. Henry's Dissolving Views', in *Realms of Light*, edited by Richard Crangle, Mervyn Heard, and Ine van Dooren (London: Magic Lantern Society, 2005), pp. 159–162.
- 8 According to the *DNB* (1887) and *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1891), Childe may have produced prototype dissolving views sometime between 1807 and 1818.

- 9 Lester Smith, 'Entertainment and Amusement, Education and Instruction', in *Realms of Light*, pp. 138–145, see especially pp. 143, 141. Childe's 'dissolving views' were first given in 1841. Other attractions included persistence-of-vision machines and a giant projecting phenakistoscope.
- 10 Dawes and Heard, 'M. Henry's Dissolving Views', in *Realms of Light*, p. 162.
- 11 Playbill, Brighton Theatre Royal, 1833, quoted in David Robinson, 'New Magic Lantern Sensations of 1827', *New Magic Lantern Journal* 8:4 (December 1999), 14–15, this quote p. 15.
- 12 On pantomime transformation effects, see R. J. Broadbent, *A History of Pantomime* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1901), pp. 172–186; on the Diorama, see Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, *L. J. M. Daguerre* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 13–45.
- 13 Heard, 'Now You See It, Now You Don't: The Magician and the Magic Lantern', in *Realms of Light*, pp. 13–24, this quote p. 19.
- 14 Castle, 'Phantasmagoria', p. 39n.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 16 Heard and Crangle, 'The Temperance Phantasmagoria', in *Realms of Light*, pp. 46–55, see especially pp. 52, 49.
- 17 Fred Guida, *A Christmas Carol and Its Adaptations* (Jefferson, NJ: McFarlane, 2000), p. 50.
- 18 *Great Expectations*, edited by Angus Calder (London: Penguin, 1985) p. 321. For further examples of Dickensian lantern references, see Stephen Bottomore, 'A Word Paints a Thousand Pictures', in *Realms of Light*, pp. 56–61.
- 19 *Pictures from Italy* (New York: Bigelow, Brown and Co., 1868), p. 378.
- 20 Henry Morley and W. H. Wills, 'The Stereoscope', *Household Words*, 10 September 1853, p. 42.
- 21 Fred Kaplan, *Dickens: A Biography* (New York: William Morrow, 1988), this quote p. 208.
- 22 See 'Optical and Mechanical Effects of the Lantern' by the famous dissolving-view artist Edmund H. Wilkie, Part Four, *Optical and Magic Lantern Journal*, December 1898, p. 89. Commercial slides were standardized at $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3\frac{1}{4}''$, the Polytechnic's *Grub* slides were $12'' \times 10''$, allowing an unsurpassed level of detail.
- 23 Guida, *A Christmas Carol and Its Adaptations*, p. 50.
- 24 *Pickwick Papers*, edited by Robert L. Patten (London: Penguin, 1972, 1986), pp. 487–489. Interestingly, the lantern reading *Gabriel Grub; Or, The Story of the Sexton Who was Stolen by the Goblins* in fact edits and supplements the text to fit it for image-by-image presentation and to underline its lantern derivation.
- 25 Other lantern effects in Paul's *Scrooge* include superimpositions, double exposures, and a black screen-within-the-screen (Scrooge's bedroom curtains) on which to present images of the past. The knocker dissolve features in York's 24-slide 'Life Model' *Carol*, 1884 (David Francis collection).
- 26 *A Christmas Carol*, edited by Michael Slater (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 54–55. Subsequent page references in text.
- 27 See Giambattista della Porta's *Magia naturalis*, or *Natural Magick*, 1589, on the foundational reality-effect of the *camera obscura*, 1658 edition (reprinted New York: Basic Books, 1957), p. 365.
- 28 Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954, 1961), p. 62.

- 29 James Anthony Froude ('Zeta'), 'The Lieutenant's Daughter', *Shadows Of the Clouds* (London: John Olliver, 1847), p. 229; subsequent page references in text.
- 30 The master-phantasmagore Étienne Gaspard Robertson made similar attempts to raise the devil in his youth, sacrificing a cock in his bedroom and commanding Lucifer to appear. 'Ici j'arrête le récit', records his biographer, Françoise Lévie; '[j]e reviens légèrement en arrière. Comme pour un film dont on veut revoir le dernier raccord de montage. L'image défile à nouveau. Je vous vois tout éclaboussé de sang [...] Vous est extrêmement pale. [...] Puisque le diable refuse de collaborer avec vous, [...] vous aller l'inventer. Sous votre baguette, le cortège infernal prend forme, se met en roule vers la lumière.' Lévie, *Étienne Gaspard Robertson: la vie d'un fantasmagore* (Brussels: Les Éditions de Préambule, 1990), pp. 30–31. See also Étienne Gaspard Robertson, *Mémoires récréatifs, scientifiques et anecdotiques d'un physicien-aéronaute*, vol. 1: *La Fantasmagorie* (Langres: Café Clima Editeur, 1985 [1831]) pp. 95–110 ('Premières idées de la fantasmagorie'). The audiences of Philidor's lantern séances also reputedly begged him to raise the devil (Heard, *Phantasmagoria*, p. 67), as did those of the proto-phantasmagore Johann Schröpfer, who responded, tongue in cheek, with the image of a red demon with claws and tail, in the gown of a priest (Heard, p. 82).
- 31 Paine, *The Age of Reason*, edited by Philip S. Foner (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1974), p. 94.
- 32 David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus*, fourth edition, translated by George Eliot (London: Chapman, Bros., 1846), vol. 3, p. 317.
- 33 See David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1857), pp. 259–260. See also Robert Louis Stevenson's *In the South Seas* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1918), which recounts this reaction to the lantern: 'Why then, . . . the Bible is true!', Stevenson is told by 'heathens' he has regaled with his lantern, 'we have seen the pictures' (p. 258). On the missionary lantern, see Paul Landau, 'The Illumination of Christ in the Kalahari Desert', *Representations* 45 (1994), 26–40.
- 34 See Jon Roberts's inaccurate but suggestive, brief discussion in 'Mortal Projections: Thomas Hardy's Dissolving Views of God', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 31 (2003), 43–66.
- 35 Castle, 'Phantasmagoria', p. 58.
- 36 Individual scenes are 'inverted' by the genii (Froude, p. 206).
- 37 Both 'The Lieutenant's Daughter' and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* are set in Exeter; both focus on female sexual degradation/emancipation. Pinter scripted Fowles's 1969 novel in 1981; Pinter's stage play *Betrayal* was staged in 1978 and filmed in 1983.

Copyright of *Comparative Critical Studies* is the property of Edinburgh University Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.