

**Provincial Modernity:
Manchester and Lille in Transnational
Perspective, 1860 – 1914**

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of PhD.

I, Harry Andrew Higgs Stopes, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

In this thesis I explore the ways middle classes in two provincial cities imagined the relationship between the city and the rest of the world. How did they make sense of local identity in the light of economic, geopolitical and cultural globalisation? I examine the political cultures and social structures that sustained their ways of thinking, showing how their responses were shaped by the economic connections of the two textile cities, and were articulated in municipal cultural policy around art galleries and the opera.

I follow other historians in arguing that although the nineteenth century is typically portrayed as the age of nationalism, the cultures of 'second cities' make a powerful contribution to the development of European modernity. Where I depart from other work on second cities is in my desire to work comparatively and with a transnational frame. I show that ideas about local character informed the ways provincial elites responded to globalisation around the turn of the century.

In the first research chapter I discuss the composition of the middle classes in the two cities, and the institutions and practices which bound them together.

In the second research chapter I discuss opera in Lille. Nineteenth century opera is traditionally seen as an important way for its patrons to promote particular ideas about national identity. In this chapter I show how it was also used to make statements about local identity, and to connect the city to the latest European trends.

The third research chapter concerns the Manchester municipal art gallery. I show how municipal management was used to express ideas about local prestige and sophistication. I also show that municipal councillors looked to cities in Germany for examples of how to manage the gallery, and make it respond to local needs, which they identified with industry.

In the final chapter I examine the various ways in which local elites used industry and commerce to imagine in concrete terms the relationship between the city and the globe. I show how they produced, collected and disseminated knowledge about the world through local institutions, principally the Chambers of Commerce.

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When I wrote the first draft of my UCAS personal statement at the age of 17, I began with a quotation from a popular history of Manchester, declaring that I wanted to study 'Chartists and chart hits'. I was persuaded by my History teacher that this would not strike the right tone, and I changed it. I now know how wrong he was. I am proud to finally be writing about the history of the city I grew up in, helping it, I hope, to escape from some dead ends of historiography and popular condescension. I am thrilled to have found, in Lille, another city that I love almost as much. To Aurelien, Julien, Nicolas, Max, Julien O, Aline, *Boxing Club des Flandres* and the bar staff at *Le Poste*, je vous en dois une.

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List of Abbreviations

Archives

ADN	Archives Du Nord
AML	Archives Municipales de Lille
BML	Bibliothèque Municipale de Lille
CMAG	City of Manchester Art Gallery Archives
CHET	Chetham's Library, Manchester
MCL	Manchester Central Library
NYPL	New York Public Library
TNA	The National Archives
UOS	University of Salford, Special Collections

Collections

AGC	Art Gallery Committee, Manchester Council, Minute books
CCL	Chambre de Commerce de Lille
CML	Conseil Municipal de Lille, Minutes
MCC	Manchester Chamber of Commerce
MSC	Manchester Ship Canal Company
JEP	John Ernest Phythian Papers
RMI	Royal Manchester Institution
SPLE	St Paul's Literary and Educational Society

Publications

EN	Écho du Nord
LSM	La Semaine Musicale de Lille
LA	Lille Artiste
MCN	Manchester City News
MC	Manchester Courier
MG	Manchester Guardian
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
PN	Progrès du Nord
SCG	Ship Canal Gazette
SCN	Ship Canal News

'Our city may be dull to ordinary observers, as they come and go, but we are proud of the fact that there is a world behind the dullness which responds to the appeal of genius, and gives back inspiration in return.'

Manchester Faces and Places, January 1900

Introduction: Where and when in the world?

0.1 Alderman Jabez Foodbotham, Chairman, Bradford City Tramways and Fine Arts Committee

These magnificent grey eyes had never been clouded by the slightest doubt. Nor had Pacôme ever made a mistake. He had always done his duty, all his duty, his duty as a son, a husband, a father, a leader. He had also unhesitatingly demanded his rights: as a child, the right to be well brought up, in a united family, the right to inherit a spotless name, a prosperous business; as a husband, the right to be cared for, surrounded with tender affection; as a father, the right to be venerated; as a leader, the right to be obeyed without demur...He had never gone any further in examining himself: he was a leader.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea (La Nausée)*, 1938¹

I would rather be an Alderman of Bradford than Emperor of Byzantium, and would sooner don my long black worsted overcoat than the purple of Imperial Rome.

'Alderman Jabez Foodbotham' turning down a peerage, 1924.²

Alderman Jabez Foodbotham was a fictional character created by the *Daily Telegraph* journalist Michael Wharton. Writing under the pseudonym Peter Simple, Wharton began the long-running 'Way of the World' sketch series in 1957. With characters like Len Drearclough, an "expletive-inserter" in the West Riding Proletarian Novel Factory, and the wealthy Hampstead socialist Mrs Dutt-Pauker, Wharton took aim at every cliché of twentieth century English life he could think of. Foodbotham, who died in 1928 but was sleeping in a granite tomb on Cleckheaton Moor until he should return like Charlemagne to save Bradford, was one of Wharton's most popular characters.³

The success of the Foodbotham character depended upon its capacity to tap in to stereotypes that readers already held about the culture and values of the northern English middle class, particular municipal politicians, around the turn of the twentieth century. Men of this class embodied a severe austerity, rooted in their loyalty to dissenting forms of religion, suggested by Foodbotham's Christian name. His surname combined the suffix -botham, common in

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1965), 124–25.

² Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 270.

³ Simon Hoggart, 'All Change at Porterhouse', *The Guardian*, 29th October 2005.

Yorkshire, with a hint at his corpulent body.⁴ His first name recalled Jabez Clegg, the hero of Isabella Banks' novel *The Manchester Man*, in which Clegg is an orphan pulled from the River Irwell who grows up to be a wealthy manufacturer.⁵

Foodbotham, like his peers, was utterly indifferent to art, aesthetics, or indeed anything that was not practical – hence his chairmanship of the absurdly-named 'Tramways and Fine Arts Committee.' He was, as the epigraph indicates, so full of local pride that he was narrow-minded, insular and shallow. Like Jean Pacôme, whose portrait had pride of place on the wall of the art gallery in 'Bouville', Jean-Paul Sartre's thinly-disguised Le Havre, Foodbotham was utterly assured of his honour, his right to lead, his prosperity and his status, which were rooted, like his political authority, in the locality.⁶

In this thesis I turn this image of the provincial middle classes upon its head. Instead of Jean Pacôme and Jabez Foodbotham, I present Alfred Agache, Edmond Faucheur, Paul Le Blan, Léon Lefebvre, Géry Legrand, Émile Ratez and Hippolyte Verly from Lille; Gustav Behrens, Walter Butterworth, Elijah Helm, Alfred Hopkinson, John Ernest Phythian and John Rylands from Manchester; and many others. These men shared some of the characteristics of Pacôme and Foodbotham, particularly their belief in the naturalness of the existing social order and the rightness of their place in it. Though many were supporters of reform and used their positions of power in local government to try to achieve it, they did not seek revolutionary social change: they had little in common with men like Gustave Delory or John Clynes, socialist politicians who emerged from the textile working class of Lille and Manchester.⁷

Where they departed radically from the Foodbotham stereotype was in their sense of the relationship between the city and the rest of the world. As the social, political and economic elite of two pioneering industrial cities of the

⁴ Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, and Peter McClure, *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 290.

⁵ Isabella Banks, *The Manchester Man* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1876).

⁶ Sartre, *Nausea*, 124–25.

⁷ Gustave Delory (1857-1925) was mayor of Lille 1896-1904 and 1919-1925, first with the Parti Ouvrier Français and later the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière. John Clynes (1869-1949) was one of three Labour Party candidates elected as MPs in Manchester in 1906. Both Clynes and Delory had begun working in the textile industry by the age of 11.

nineteenth century they were acutely aware of the way that transnational connections and transfers had shaped their modern development. As this thesis shows, they went to great lengths to understand the impact of economic globalisation on the city, and its implications for local identity. What's more, in their management of institutions of high culture like the opera and art gallery, they consciously tried to connect the city to cosmopolitan practices from across Europe. In short, the novel contribution of this thesis is to demonstrate that the middle classes of Lille and Manchester saw their cities as having a place not just in the region or the nation, but the whole world. For many of them, their place in the world counted just as much, and sometimes more, than their place in the nation. This thesis tells that story.

0.2 Thesis methods and questions

Under the direction and by the initiative of M. Dubuisson, there developed a teaching that was more vibrant, more modern. It was timid, no doubt, if one compares to the methods that had just been adopted by the Minister of Public Education, but it was singularly new and interesting if one compares to the old state of things.

Emile Gavelle, Director, École des Beaux-Arts de Lille, 1909⁸

This thesis is written at the intersection of social, cultural and political history. I explore the ways middle classes in two provincial cities imagined the relationship between the city and the rest of the world. How did they make sense of industrial capitalist modernity, which had such dramatic impacts on these two textile cities? How did they make sense of their local identity in the light of economic, geopolitical and cultural globalisation? As technologies of communications and transport brought the rest of the world closer in to view, how did they understand their place in it?

Within this transnational and global setting, I examine the political cultures and social structures that sustained provincial middle class identities and shaped their ways of thinking. I show how their understandings of modernity were shaped by the economic character of the two cities, and were articulated in municipal cultural policy around art galleries and the opera.

I follow other historians in arguing that although the nineteenth century is typically portrayed as the age of nationalism, the cultures of 'second cities' made a powerful contribution to the development of European modernity.⁹ Where I depart from other work on second cities is in my desire to work comparatively and with a transnational frame, setting both cities in the context of an increasingly 'global' moment at the turn of the century. I show that ideas about local character informed the ways provincial elites responded to globalisation. As such, my thesis places less emphasis on the nation or nationalism as an explanatory paradigm than is conventional for late nineteenth

⁸ Émile Gavelle, *Ecole Des Beaux-Arts de Lille. Mission À Munich et Au Iie Congrès de l'Union Provinciale Des Arts Décoratifs. (Août 1908). Rapports À M. Le Maire de Lille* (Lille: Danel, 1909).

⁹ For example Maiken Umbach, 'A Tale of Second Cities: Autonomy, Culture, and the Law in Hamburg and Barcelona in the Late Nineteenth Century,' *The American Historical Review* 110, no. 3 (June 1, 2005): 659–92; Leif Jerram, *Germany's Other Modernity. Munich and the Making of Metropolis, 1895-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

century history, doing so by connecting local and transnational histories together, a methodological innovation which distinguishes this thesis from the field.

0.3 'Millions! millions! châteaux! liste civile!': An introduction to Lille and Manchester in the nineteenth century

From this foul drain the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilize the whole world. From this filthy sewer gold flows. Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish, here civilization works its miracles and civilized man is turned almost into a savage.

Alexis De Tocqueville, 'Exterior Appearance of Manchester', *Journey to England*, 1835¹⁰

*Millions! Millions! Castles! The civil list!
One day I descended into the cellars of Lille,
I saw this gloomy underworld.
There are ghosts underground in those rooms,
Pale, bent, bowed; the spine twists their limbs
In his iron wrist.*

Victor Hugo, *Les Châtiments – Joyeuse Vie – II*, 1853¹¹

Only sixty years ago nobody would have dared to foresee the miraculous destiny of the rue Tournebride, which the inhabitants of Bouville today call the Little Prado. I have seen a map dated 1847 on which the street didn't even figure. At that time it must have been a dark, stinking alley, with a gutter along which fishes' heads and entrails floated between the paving stones.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, 1938¹²

Histories of both Manchester and Lille have identified the transformation of their economies by industrialisation as the defining feature of their long nineteenth centuries.¹³ Changes of every kind flowed from this development. Both cities grew rapidly in population, their built environment transformed and their economies made suddenly significant at a global scale. These changes in turn catalysed a century-long transformation of every level of society and every aspect of social, cultural and political life. That the cities were *industrial* came to be central features of the way they were perceived both locally and by outsiders.

These changes, apparently 'revolutionary in tempo', were traditionally understood through the paradigm of the 'industrial revolution,' with the period between 1750 and 1850 marking a moment of sharp discontinuity in British

¹⁰ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland* (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), 107–8.

¹¹ Victor Hugo, *Les Chatiments* (Paris: Bordas, 1967), 75–76.

¹² Sartre, *Nausea*.

¹³ Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille: Du XIXe Siècle Au Seuil Du XXIe Siècle*, vol. 4 (Paris: Perrin, 1999), 33; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 88–138.

history.¹⁴ This model is stadial, characterising industrialisation as a linear process in which Britain (and especially the regions of Lancashire, West Yorkshire and the West Midlands) took the lead over other parts of the world.¹⁵

This model was labelled 'old hat' over two decades ago and has now been largely abandoned.¹⁶ The chronology of industrialisation in Britain has been elongated, contingency reintroduced, the notion of diffusion from a central point of origin rejected, the importance of mercantile modes of capitalism rediscovered, and the relative wealth and importance of industrialists in Britain critically re-examined.¹⁷ At the same time continental economies, including that of France, have been reappraised and their supposed "backwardness" disputed.¹⁸ The picture that emerges is of an industrial revolution 'demystified... denationalised and cut... down to size,' with British productivity growth slower than previously imagined, and European economies marked by heterogeneity at both regional and national levels.¹⁹ Historians are increasingly turning away from studying industrialisation within national frameworks, and are instead considering the role of industrial regions such as South East Lancashire, the Nord, and Wallonia.²⁰

¹⁴ Patrick Karl O'Brien, 'The Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration of the British Industrial Revolution as a Conjuncture in Global History,' *Itinerario* 24, no. 3–4 (2000): 123; Among a large literature see, Thomas Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); David Landes, *Prometheus Unbound: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); Phyllis Deane, *The First Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁵ William Henderson, *The Industrial Revolution on the Continent. Germany, France, Russia 1800-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1961).

¹⁶ Patrick O'Brien, 'Introduction: Modern Conceptions of the Industrial Revolution,' in *The Industrial Revolution and British Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7; Nicholas Crafts, *British Economic Growth During the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Charles Harley, 'Reassessing the Industrial Revolution: A Macro View,' in *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), 171–226.

¹⁷ W.D. Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain 1750-1990* (London: Routledge, 1993), 24.

¹⁸ Patrick Karl O'Brien, 'Path Dependency, or Why Britain Became an Industrialized and Urbanized Economy Long before France,' *The Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (May 1996): 213–49; Michael Smith, *The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006).

¹⁹ O'Brien, 'The Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration of the British Industrial Revolution as a Conjuncture in Global History,' 123.

²⁰ Steve King and Geoff Timmins, *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution. English Economy and Society, 1700–1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Dieter Ziegler and Juliane Czierpka, 'Les Régions Motrices Dans L'histoire de L'industrialisation. Réflexions Théoriques et Méthodologiques Pour Une Histoire Économique Moderne de l'Europe,' *Revue Du Nord* 92, no. 387 (December 2010): 726–45; René Leboutte, 'Les Régions-Pilotes Dans Le Développement Économique de l'Europe Du Nord-Ouest,' *Revue Du Nord* 92, no. 387 (December 2010): 747–66.

Such a regional approach can only reinforce the importance of industrialisation to the two cities, but in truth the way that historians model industrialisation as a whole is much less important to this thesis than the general fact that the period saw dramatic transformations of the economies, societies and built environment of both cities. These changes indelibly marked their development thereafter and were characterised by local journalists, politicians and businesspeople as defining the cities for the rest of the period.

Manchester was 'the shock city of the industrial revolution', and the 'symbol of a new age'.²¹ Its population exploded from 70,000 in 1801, to 300,000 in 1851 and 645,000 in 1901.²² The new city drew large numbers of visitors, both from elsewhere in Britain and overseas, who marvelled at the enormous wealth its new industries created, while recoiling from the dirt and the squalor in which its poorest lived. 'British urbanisation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was undertaken 'on the cheap,' leaving Manchester workers living in terrible conditions that were described at length by Friedrich Engels, a factory owner and long time resident of Manchester.²³ 'From this filthy sewer,' wrote Alexis De Tocqueville, another visitor, 'gold flows.'²⁴

Though industrialisation occurred later and more gradually in France, Lille, along with the rest of the Nord, occupied a similar position in that country as Manchester did in relation to Britain.²⁵ By 1850 the Nord was the most densely populated provincial department, more urbanised than the French average, and continuing to urbanise at a higher rate than the rest of the country.²⁶

²¹ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 88, 116.

²² J. K. Walton, 'The North-West,' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, ed. F.M.L. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 358, 361; David Marsh, *The Changing Social Structure of England and Wales* (London: Routledge, 1958), 73.

²³ Martin Daunton, 'Introduction,' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. Martin Daunton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3; 'The houses, or rather cottages, are in bad order, never repaired, filthy, with damp, unclean, cellar dwellings; the lanes are neither paved nor supplied with sewers, but harbour numerous colonies of swine penned in small sties or yards, or wandering unrestrained through the neighbourhood.' Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1845, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/ch04.htm>.

²⁴ De Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland*, 107–8..

²⁵ Denis Woronoff, *Histoire de L'industrie En France Du XVI Siecle a Nos Jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 182; Marcel Gillet, 'Au XIXe Siecle: Industrialisation Linéaire Ou Industrialisation Par Bonds?,' in *Histoire Sociale Du Nord et de l'Europe Du Nord-Ouest* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1984), 25.

²⁶ Marie Pascale Buriez-Duez, 'Le Mouvement de La Population Dans Le Département Du Nord Au XIXe Siècle,' in *L'homme, La Vie et La Mort Dans Le Nord Au XIXe Siècle* (Lille: Université de Lille

Mechanisation of the city's long-standing textile industry began to take hold at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By 1808 there were twenty-six establishments employing more than twenty workers, all of them in textiles.²⁷ Some already employed large numbers: 140 at the factory Alexandre and Modeste Fauchille opened in the industrial suburb of Esquermes in 1803.



The Towers, Didsbury, home of Daniel Adamson (1820-1890), Engineer and first Chairman of the Manchester Ship Canal Company

Source: MCL Local Image Collection, m59211

The population of the Nord doubled between 1831 and 1911, during which time Lille quadrupled to 317,000, making it the fourth largest French city.²⁸ If combined with the neighbouring Roubaix-Tourcoing conurbation, the regional metropolis would have been larger than every French city except Paris.

Lille came to represent an archetypal industrial city in the French cultural imagination. When the character of Étienne Lantier in Émile Zola's *L'Assommoir* (1877) was sent away from Paris to look for work, he went to Lille.²⁹ Lantier reappeared in Zola's *Germinal* (1885), working as a coal miner in

III, 1972), 29; Marcel Roncayolo, 'Logiques Urbaines,' in *La Ville de L'âge Industrielle: Le Cycle Hausmannien* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 28.

²⁷ Louis Trénard, 'Notables de La Région Lilloise Au Seuil Du XIXeme Siecle,' *Revue Du Nord* 63, no. 248 (March 1981): 185.

²⁸ Maurice Garden, 'Le Resserrement Géographique D'une Population,' in *Histoire Des Francais, XIXe-XXe Siecles: Tome 1: Un Peuple et Son Pays* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1984), 412-13; Roncayolo, 'Logiques Urbaines,' 54.

²⁹ Émile Zola, *L'Assommoir*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

the Nord.³⁰ While researching *Germinal* Zola had visited the town of Anzin during a strike which saw around ten thousand miners of the Compagnie des mines d'Anzin down tools for 56 days in protest at a cut to their pay; a number of wealthy Lille industrialists, including the Danel dynasty, were prominent investors in the Compagnie d'Anzin.³¹ The year after *L'Assommoir* was published, there were more steam engines in the Nord than in any other French department.³²

Just as in Manchester, changes in the urban environment engendered by industrialisation were dramatic, while the new economy created great wealth for a few and extreme privation for others.³³ Social inequality was increasingly mapped onto the landscape during the last quarter of the century, as an increasingly segregated city emerged.³⁴ In his long critical poem of Second Empire France, *Les Chatiments* ('The Chastisements'), Victor Hugo described the 'caves de Lille', cellar dwellings in the poorest parts of the city, where 'one dies beneath the stone ceilings.'³⁵ According to the historian of the Nord Bonnie Smith, 'only Manchester provides an appropriate comparison for the transformation at work in the Nord during the nineteenth century.'³⁶

The economies of both cities were dominated by textiles. Cotton and linen spinning and weaving were the most important industries in Lille, while the neighbouring cities of Roubaix and Tourcoing were the French centres of the wool industry.³⁷ Textile manufacturing had a long preindustrial past and represented an important tradition in the whole region, transcending the borders of the modern nation states to include parts of Belgian Flanders and Brabant. Manchester, together with its surrounding region, made up the world's largest centre of cotton spinning, weaving, bleaching, dyeing and printing.³⁸ The period

³⁰ Émile Zola, *Germinal*, trans. Peter Collier (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³¹ Bonnie G Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1981), 21.

³² Roger Price, *A Concise History of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 175.

³³ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 4:43; Félix-Paul Codaccioni, *De L'inégalité Sociale Dans Une Grande Ville Industrielle: Le Drame de Lille de 1850 a 1914* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1976).

³⁴ Aline Lesaege-Dugied, 'La Mortalité Infantile Dans Le Département Du Nord de 1815 À 1914,' in *L'homme, La Vie et La Mort Dans Le Nord Au XIXe Siècle* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1972), 101.

³⁵ Hugo, *Les Chatiments*, 75–76.

³⁶ Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, 19.

³⁷ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 4:33–38.

³⁸ Arthur Redford, *Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade. Vol. II. 1850-1939*, vol. 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), xx–xxi.

covered by this thesis saw a relative decline in the size of the French and British cotton industries, but in absolute terms both nations increased the size of their industries in the decades before the First World War.³⁹

Despite their global reach, textile industries were highly spatially concentrated, both at a global scale and within individual countries: as Silicon Valley is to the tech industry today, one historian has written, Manchester was to cotton in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ Around 1860, about five sixths of those employed in British cotton manufacturing were based in Manchester or surrounding areas, a concentration which only increased by the end of the century.⁴¹ French cotton production was more diffuse, with clusters in Rouen and Mulhouse, but by the middle of the 1870s the Nord had more cotton spindles than any other French department.⁴² Around the same time, 6 out of 7 linen spindles in France were in the Lille arrondissement, which virtually monopolised national production by the 1890s.⁴³ During the final decades of the long nineteenth century the French textile industry saw increasing mechanisation and rising productivity.⁴⁴ This picture should be complicated, however, by an acknowledgement that the two cities themselves were more important as regional centres of manufacturing which increasingly occurred in smaller towns surrounding them. Thus neither city was mono-industrial, but also important centres of engineering, professional services and commerce.⁴⁵

After 1860 a period of relative social fluidity associated with early industrialisation gave way to a more stable, but also more complicated and

³⁹ Relative decline and absolute growth are indicated by the figures for raw cotton consumption, 1,000 metric tons. In 1870 (1869 for France); Britain 489; USA 181; Germany 112; France 94. In 1913: USA 1,312; Britain 988; Germany 478; Russia 424; France 271. Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain 1750-1990*, 8.

⁴⁰ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton, A New History of Global Capitalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 57.

⁴¹ Arthur Silver, *Manchester Men and Indian Cotton, 1847-1872* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 4.

⁴² Smith, *The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930*, 135. (In this sense the French loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany after the Franco-Prussian war was probably beneficial to the Nord.)

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 128; Frédéric Kuhlmann, 'Considérations Présentées a Son Excellence Monsieur Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, Du Commerce et Des Travaux Publics...' (Lille, 1867), ADN CCL 76J b8 d16; Michael S. Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900: The Politics of Economic Interest*, First Edition edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 225.

⁴⁴ Francois Caron, 'La Croissance Industrielle. Secteurs et Branches,' in *Histoire Économique et Sociale de La France. Tome IV: L'ère Industrielle et La Société D'aujourd'hui (Siccle 1880-1980)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1979), 290.

⁴⁵ Walton, 'The North-West,' 387.

stratified urban society.⁴⁶ The middle-class population increased in both cities, as it did nationally.⁴⁷ Social change was connected to urban change with the Manchester middle classes, like their peers elsewhere in Britain, increasingly moving out of central Manchester.⁴⁸ The same pattern was not present in Lille, however, where the southward and westward extension of the fortifications in 1858 enlarged the city from 210 to 720 hectares.⁴⁹ The sudden availability of large amounts of land allowed for development of 'the future city' along the lines then being pursued in Paris by Baron Haussmann.⁵⁰ The middle classes therefore tended to remain in the city, living in large townhouses in newly-built neighbourhoods. At the same time both cities developed strong links with their hinterlands, on the basis of inward migration patterns, which were sizeably regional, and economic and familiar relations on the parts of middle and upper classes.⁵¹

Both cities saw the development of increasingly sophisticated local political cultures as the public sphere grew and more areas of life were absorbed into the capacity of the municipality, and the category of the political.⁵² Though these were contested, they were predominantly led by members of the middle classes: a rather heterogeneous social category, reflecting different levels of wealth, social and cultural capital. Functions which in Britain were previously performed by voluntary associations, such as the provision of social welfare,

⁴⁶ F. M. L. Thompson, 'Town and City,' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 33; R. J. Morris, 'Clubs, Societies and Associations,' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 395.

⁴⁷ Robert Tombs, *France 1814-1914* (London: Longman, 1996), 280; Richard Trainor, 'The Middle Class,' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 673–714.

⁴⁸ Simon Gunn, 'The Middle Class, Modernity and the Provincial City: Manchester, c.1840-80,' in *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 114; Francis Thompson, 'Introduction: The Rise of Suburbia,' in *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 6.

⁴⁹ Henri Masquelez, *Note Concernant l'Historique de l'Agrandissement de Lille* (Lille: Danel, 1874), 3. See map in the section of this thesis called 'Provincial Modernity'.

⁵⁰ Ange Descamps, *Lille: Un Coup D'œil Sur Son Agrandissement, Ses Institutions, Ses Industries* (Lille: Danel, 1878), 25; Marcel Roncayolo, 'La Production de La Ville,' in *La Ville de L'âge Industriel: Le Cycle Haussmannien* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 77.

⁵¹ Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 237; Elien Declercq and Saartje Vanden Borre, 'Cultural Integration of Belgian Migrants in Northern France (1870-1914): A Study of Popular Songs,' *French History* 27, no. 1 (March 2013): 91–108; Arthur Redford, *Labour Migration in England 1800-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964).

⁵² O Macdonagh, 'The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal,' *Historical Journal* 1, no. 1 (1958): 52–67.

were increasingly taken over by municipal governments, as indeed is discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.⁵³

In France after the first, more conservative decade of the Third Republic, laws around associations, public entertainments and municipal democracy were relaxed, though accompanied by new forms of control.⁵⁴ The municipal law passed in 1882 granted all communes in France the right to elect mayors, a change which saw an upsurge in municipal republicanism and meant that the republican mayor of Lille Géry Legrand (1881-1896), previously editor of a newspaper which had been banned under the Second Empire, came to power in a favourable political context.⁵⁵

Distinctions should be drawn between the politics of the two cities. In Manchester a politics of contention that pitted middle classes against aristocracy and working classes, gave way to the pursuit of incremental change by progressive alliances working in organised blocs: a politics which was liberal in both content and form.⁵⁶ This form of liberal politics, built on cross-class alliances, was strikingly visible in the campaign to build the Manchester Ship Canal, discussed in the final section of Chapter 4. Having said that, liberalism itself – in the form of the Liberal Party – underwent significant changes around the turn of the century, with both Conservative and Independent Labour parties fracturing the Liberal vote.⁵⁷ In the general election of 1906 three Labour candidates were elected as Manchester MPs. Until this turn of the century moment, however, middle-class Manchester political culture tended to be organised around the idea of shared local interests.

⁵³ R.J. Morris, 'Structure, Culture and Society in British Towns,' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Vol 3. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 410–12; Trainor, 'The Middle Class,' 699–702.

⁵⁴ Maurice Agulhon, 'Chapter One - Ten Founding Years,' in *The French Republic, 1879-1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 11–47.

⁵⁵ Marcel Roncayolo, 'Les Citadins et La Politique,' in *La Ville de L'age Industriel: Le Cycle Haussmannien* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 601; Jean-Paul Visse, 'L'Union, Premier Journal Populaire Du Nord et Du Pas-de-Calais,' *Revue Du Nord* 92, no. 384 (March 2010): 107–25.

⁵⁶ Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), 22; Martin Hewitt, *The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City, Manchester 1832-67* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 298; John Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 223.

⁵⁷ Peter Clarke, *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); James Robert Moore, 'Progressive Pioneers: Manchester Liberalism, the Independent Labour Party, and Local Politics in the 1890s,' *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 4 (2001): 989–1013.

In the Nord in contrast, the political landscape was more divided and at times fraught. Republicans, monarchists and socialists all enjoyed support from powerful blocs across the department, while divisions between legitimist and republican middle classes allowed Gustave Delory of the Parti Ouvrier Français to be elected as Mayor of Lille as early as 1896.⁵⁸ Three years earlier his comrades Jules Guesde and Émile Basly (the latter supposedly the inspiration for Émile Zola's 'Étienne Lantier') were elected as Deputies in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais respectively, but the polarisation of the region is indicated by the victory in the same election of the priest Jules Lemire, a major figure in social Catholicism. Controversy over attempts to 'republicanise' the army after the Dreyfus affair led to a minor local scandal when a captain of the Lille garrison slapped the Radical municipal councillor and Professor of Anatomy Charles Debierre in the face, accusing him of having authored an anonymous dossier on the politics of local officers.⁵⁹

Developments in local politics must be contextualised in the broader development of the state, an important theme in nineteenth century European (and global) history.⁶⁰ State development occurred at multiple levels: national, local and in between. The French civil service quadrupled in size between 1845 and 1900, a marked contrast with Britain where the bureaucracy was much less centralised.⁶¹ Nevertheless it would be simplistic to characterise the two countries as centralist France and decentralist Britain. Regional blocs like northern industrialists had considerable power in France, while 'local' political issues in Britain such as the importance of free trade required engagement with national politics. Although 'devotion to local autonomy against central state intervention' was an important principle of municipal politics in Britain, in

⁵⁸ For France see Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 257, 260–61, 264; Douglas Johnson, *France and the Dreyfus Affair* (London: Blandford Press, 1966); David Drake, *French Intellectuals and Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to the Occupation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). For the Nord see special issue of *Revue du Nord*, 'Les droites septentrionales de la Belle Époque à la deuxième guerre mondiale: implantation locale et liaisons nationales', *Revue du Nord*, no. 370 (February 2007), especially Jean Vavasseur-Desperriers and Marc Guislin, 'Avant-Propos,' 231–34.

⁵⁹ Xavier Boniface, 'L'affaire Des Fiches Dans Le Nord,' *Revue du Nord*, no. 384 (January 2010): 169–93.

⁶⁰ Miles Ogborn, 'Local Power and State Regulation in Nineteenth Century Britain,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 17, no. 2 (1992): 215–26.

⁶¹ Tombs, *France 1814-1914*, 101; Dieter Langewiesche, 'Liberalism and the Middle Classes in Europe,' in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 43.

practice the local and national states developed alongside one another.⁶² Local improvisation combined with national legislation, such as the Public Health Act of 1875, to produce a dynamic politics in which local and national scales of political action were intertwined.⁶³ Turn of the century 'New Liberalism,' a political model orientated to social welfare, was 'an all-European phenomenon'.⁶⁴

The crucial conclusion to draw here for the purposes of this thesis, is that by their nature politics and state development in the late nineteenth century necessitated the development of new political geographies. Spatiality was crucial to the modern nation-state's conception of power, but in practice the development of local and national states did not operate in a simple oppositional binary defined by a process of centralisation and resistance.⁶⁵ The idea of the local, and the importance of transnational connections – both of which will be discussed later in this introduction – made crucial contributions to politics in the two cities.

⁶² Pat Thane, 'Government and Society in England and Wales, 1750-1914,' in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 33; Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London; New York: Verso, 2003); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1–2.

⁶³ Thane, 'Government and Society in England and Wales, 1750-1914,' 16–17; Daunton, 'Introduction,' 7; Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 203.

⁶⁴ Langewiesche, 'Liberalism and the Middle Classes in Europe,' 64.

⁶⁵ Michael Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,' *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 25, no. 2 (November 1984): 185–213; Ogborn, 'Local Power and State Regulation in Nineteenth Century Britain'; Ronan Paddison, *The Fragmented State. The Political Geography of Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

0.4 The Meaning of the Local

In the late [eighteen] eighties the State had left us high and dry in our own conceits, so that the State had indeed become no more to us than such a romantic trouble of the sea as is always retained by the shell – the thunder mainly of distant eloquence, and the murmurs of an element in which leviathans disported themselves at play... And, knowing so little of the central State, we had built little States of our own, thinking to abide in them for ever.

William Haslam Mills, 1924⁶⁶

Nationalism has commonly been regarded as the most powerful theory of political legitimacy in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷ This widespread view is, *prima facie*, correct: the ultimate development of Western European states and political structures in the long nineteenth century demonstrates the success of the nation-state model. An extensive historiography has traced this development beginning in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁸ It has shown that the concept of 'the nation' developed symbiotically with the modern state, such that from the early nineteenth century onwards, the nation-state became the normative model of state formation and social transformation. Therefore 'nationalism as politics arose with the modern state, and assumes the modern state's existence.'⁶⁹ The state in turn developed a range of civic rituals and practices designed to shape and strengthen national consciousness, and ensure political legitimacy.⁷⁰ The rise of the nation-state was associated with the processes of political modernity described in the following section of this introduction.

The origins of the historical discipline are linked to these developments, and they continue to shape the way that it is practiced. Models of modernisation associate modernity with the overcoming of local identities and structures.⁷¹ This

⁶⁶ William Haslam Mills, *Grey Pastures [1924]* (York: The Chapels Society, 2003), 53–54.

⁶⁷ Timothy Baycroft, *Culture, Identity and Nationalism: French Flanders in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 2.

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition*, Revised edition (London ; New York: Verso, 2006); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ Charles Tilly, 'The State of Nationalism,' *Critical Review* 10, no. 2 (1996): 302.

⁷⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), especially chapter 7.

⁷¹ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Michael G. Muller, and Stuart Woolf, 'Introduction,' in *Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998),

association has encouraged a presumption within the discipline that historical phenomena not taking shape within a national framework are somehow ephemeral, trivial or contingent.⁷² Social and cultural history continues to be written mainly with reference to national developments, assuming that the processes investigated are best understood in the context of national societies, cultures and states.⁷³ For many years French history was dominated by a historiography that assumed the dominant trend in politics, society and culture since the revolution was a centralisation of politics culture and society, driven from the centre.⁷⁴ No directly analogous historiographical tradition exists in Britain, but it is certainly true that question of how the British nation and state came to exist has received enormous attention in comparison to studies of local or transnational imaginings of how social and political life might be organised.⁷⁵

Since 1990 a number of historians, particularly those working on Germany and France, have questioned the teleology of national histories and the presumption that nation-states were formed through a process driven by social elites in national capitals. On the basis of her study of the negotiated nature of French identity in Brittany, Caroline Ford argued that 'the creation of national identity is a process continually in the making, rather than the imposition of a fixed set of values and beliefs.'⁷⁶ Deborah Reed-Danahay, James Lehning and Peter Sahlins have similarly shown that the construction of national identity was a dialogical process informed by local ideas, in which small town middle classes and peasants were also agents.⁷⁷ This approach is consistent with a body of work on the role of the 'Heimat', or regional homeland, in the shaping of

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⁷² Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'La Ville Comme Antidote? Ou la Rencontre de Troisième Type (D'identité Régionale),' in *Regional and National Identities in Europe in the XIXth and XXth Centuries* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998), 126.

⁷³ Axel Körner, 'Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States,' in *Internationale Geschichte in Theorie Und Praxis/International History in Theory and Practice* (Vienna: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2017), 275.

⁷⁴ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford University Press, 1976).

⁷⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History, 1740-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*.

⁷⁶ Caroline Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 5.

⁷⁷ Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); James Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989).

German national identity, an approach which has also been taken up by the French historian Stéphane Gerson.⁷⁸ Developing this approach, Celia Applegate, theorised the possible development of a historical field of a 'Europe of regions', a historiographical agenda that would replace the assumption that the nineteenth century was simply the 'age of nationalism' by showing how social and political identities were constructed at multiple scales.⁷⁹

These debates have not had the same purchase in Britain, a much smaller country which has been politically unified (though without being centralised at the level of the state and bureaucracy) for a much longer period of time. Regional identities do not operate in the same way in Britain as they do in Germany or France. Nevertheless local studies are a vital means of understanding British politics and society in the nineteenth century: the decentralisation of the British state, even in a context of rapid social and economic transformation such as the nineteenth century, makes them particularly important.⁸⁰ As I discuss in the following chapter, middle-class identities were formed in large measure at the local scale, in a social, political and cultural sphere whose limits were defined by the municipality.

Far from undermining local identities, processes of modernisation reinforced them. Industrialisation in north-western Europe was highly regionalised, as discussed in the previous section, and their continuing development and refinement only reinforced their concentration. Contemporary observers recognised this at the time, the French writer Léon Faucher describing Manchester in 1844 as 'a diligent spider...placed in the centre of the

⁷⁸ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 1997); Celia Applegate, 'Heimat and the Varieties of Regional History,' *Central European History* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2000): 109–15; Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (University of California Press, 1990); Rolf Petrie, 'Die 'Kleinen Raeume' Der Nation,' *Quellen Und Forschungen Aus Italienischen Archiven Und Bibliotheken* 83 (2003): 288–307; Rolf Petrie, 'The Resurgence of the Region in the Context of European Integration: Recent Developments and Historical Perspective,' in *Gesellschaft in Der Europäischen Integration Seit Den 1950er Jahren*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), 159–71; Stéphane Gerson, *The Pride of Place. Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

⁷⁹ Celia Applegate, 'A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,' *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October 1, 1999): 1157–82.

⁸⁰ Kidd, A. J., 'Introduction: The Middle Class in Nineteenth Century Manchester,' in *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 5. Important work of this nature by Gunn, Morris, Koditschek and others is discussed in Chapter 1.

web...send[ing] forth roads and railways towards its auxiliaries, formerly villages but now towns, which serve as outposts to the grand centre of industry.¹⁸¹ As each region cultivated and perfected its industrial specialisms, 'the process of industrialisation both intensified... and heightened people's consciousness of [regional differences].¹⁸² Particular regions became associated with particular issues of national political reform – the Corn Law in Manchester, factory reform in West Yorkshire, currency reform in Birmingham. These regional differences entered popular consciousness, as 'the Manchester School' for example: 'the very name Manchester became synonymous with the new liberalism, even with a particular cultural style.'¹⁸³ Conscious of, and even playing up, the extent to which they represented a challenge to landed wealth in the South East of England, the Manchester-led Anti-Corn Law League evoked the cities of the Hanseatic League, Ancient Greece and Medieval Italy as models for the modern liberal politics that they believed themselves to represent.⁸⁴

In Lille and the Nord, as they transformed themselves into industrialists and absorbed new members into their ranks, the old elite reinforced local ties of social solidarity by the use of marriage alliances to create business partnerships across the region. Ideas about the historical 'French-Flemish' identity were repurposed and evoked in order to link the region's mercantile history with its modern day industrialisation, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. As such 'the local' was a discursive terrain on which national identity could be refined, re-used or reinterpreted, and projects of national politics championed or opposed.

Building upon the historiographies of local identity in Europe described above, this thesis shows that local identity is no more a given fact of nature than national, nor is it any less sophisticated, requiring less work of construction or deserving less scholarly analysis. The region, like the nation, is a constructed, imagined community.⁸⁵ For middle classes in Manchester and Lille the

⁸¹ John Langton, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 9, no. 2 (1984): 156.

⁸² Ibid.147.

⁸³ John Seed, 'Unitarianism, Political Economy and the Antinomies of Liberal Culture in Manchester, 1830-50,' *Social History* 7, no. 1 (January 1982): 2.

⁸⁴ Saunier, 'La Ville Comme Antidote?,' 148–49.

⁸⁵ Maurice Agulhon, 'Conscience Nationale et Conscience Régionale En France de 1815 À Nos Jours,' in *Federalism: History and Current Significance of a Form of Government* (The Hague: Springer, 1980), 256.

discursive construct of 'the local', identified with the city, was the terrain on which ideas about modernity and politics took shape. Where this thesis departs from the existing historiography of local identities is in the emphasis placed on the local not only for its relationship with the national theme, but also for its capacity to speak to the city's global connections. "The local" had several functions. It was a theme upon which identities were anchored; a scale which defined the normal boundaries of activities; and a horizon of mental geographies. Rooting themselves in this constructed identity, the provincial middle classes were then able to make connections beyond the local, in a trialectical relationship between local, national and global. As such, this thesis represents a novel merging of the local approach with that of the global historians, described in section 0.6.

0.5 Provincial modernity

We will bring life and movement to every part of the new city. Not everything in life is work; some like moments of leisure, others of rest, to find places of promenades, animated and loud, like the boulevards; calm and half-solitary, like squares⁸⁶ and planted places... The Porte de Paris [will be] the link between the two cities... It is on this terrain of luxury and relaxation that the old and new Lillois will shake hands, happy to meet those who they would not know, without the extension of the city.

Lille Municipal Council, Report on Extending the City boundaries, 1859⁸⁷

Middle classes in both cities were preoccupied with the nature of modern existence and what it meant for their lives. In this section I engage with the historiographical theme of 'modernity' in order to draw out some of these significances, especially their implications for thinking about space. The concept has been employed as 'a form of historical shorthand' to encompass a broad spectrum of phenomena, generally observed to begin in the late eighteenth century, about which an enormous bibliography has been amassed in recent decades.⁸⁸

Rapid changes in the material realities of life, such as those which beset Manchester and Lille in the nineteenth century, gave people the sensation that previous experience was no longer a reliable guide to future expectations. The feeling that there was a 'steadily increas[ing]' gap between the two gave rise to a sensation of 'historical acceleration,' which the conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck identifies as the defining characteristic of modernity.⁸⁹ These changes precipitated the 'invention of historical time' in the eighteenth century, as intellectuals began to reflect upon the differences between the past and the

⁸⁶ The word 'squares' was italicised in the original French text, implying that the writer was consciously echoing an English urban model.

⁸⁷ Ville de Lille, *Rapport de La Commission Chargée D'examiner Le Projet de Plan de Percement et D'alignement de La Ville Agrandie* (Lille: Guermonprez, 1859), 7–12.

⁸⁸ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3; Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity, An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); Marshall Berman, *All That's Solid Melts Into Air The Experience of Modernity*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988); Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1994); David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity. Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985); Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977); Stuart Hall, David Held, and Tony McGrew, eds., *Modernity and Its Futures (Understanding Modern Societies)* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992).

⁸⁹ Reinhart Koselleck, 'Concepts of Historical Time and Social History,' in *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002), 128; Reinhart Koselleck, 'Time and History,' in *The Practice of Conceptual History*, op cit. 113.

present, developing the neologisms 'modern times', 'temps modernes' and 'Neuzeit,' as a conceptual language that allowed them to name their sense of qualitative transformation.⁹⁰ As Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel wrote, 'our time is a birth and transition to a new period.'⁹¹

In the light of this sensation European intellectuals began to pursue what Jürgen Habermas has called 'the project of modernity', an effort to direct science, morality, law and art towards the development of a programme of human emancipation.⁹² 'The scientific domination of nature [and] the development of rational forms of social organisation' would, it was hoped, allow humanity to overcome the disorientating effect of historical acceleration by giving them the means to manage change through the concept of 'progress.'⁹³ This project was pursued through a set of related processes of state formation, economic modernisation and social recomposition linked to the development of new forms of secular rationality, and new ideologies such as nationalism.⁹⁴ This constellation of phenomena itself became emblematic of modernity.⁹⁵ Modern disciplines of social science and history emerged from this context, as the turn of the century saw the publication of the first reflections upon modernity written in a retrospective register.⁹⁶

Members of the middle class in provincial industrial cities, particularly municipal administrators and intellectuals, identified strongly with this project. In the words of Patrick Joyce, Manchester played 'a quite crucial role in creating the modernity that emerged in the nineteenth century, as Marx, Engels, de

⁹⁰ Koselleck, 'Concepts of Historical Time and Social History,' 119; Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Twelve Lectures*, 5; Reinhart Koselleck, 'The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity,' in *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002), 155; Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Revised (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 208–9.

⁹¹ G.W.F. Hegel, 'The Preface to the Phenomenology,' in *Hegel: Texts and Commentary* (New York: New York University Press, 1966), 20.

⁹² Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity: An Unfinished Project,' in *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 45.

⁹³ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 12–13.

⁹⁴ Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity*, 5; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930), 25.

⁹⁵ Bjorn Wittrock, 'Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition,' *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 47.

⁹⁶ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 26; Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*; Georg Simmel, David Frisby, and Mike Featherstone, *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (SAGE, 1997); Georg Simmel, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (University of Chicago Press, 1972); Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Tocqueville and so many others saw.⁹⁷ As the symbolic representatives of industrial production, an identity they embraced enthusiastically, Mancunians were particularly conscious of the novelty of their city and the rapid pace at which it had changed.⁹⁸ While Lille was less noteworthy as a European industrial pioneer, its inhabitants too embraced an industrial identity. According a local newspaper article on the local exhibition of 1902, the city was

the heart of the region where the ore sparkles, where the coal is torn from the bowels of the earth, where trembling arms brandish heavy hammers, where the anvil rings, where thousands of active workers, like ants, prepare the latest modern marvels, where finally great industry affirms its supreme omnipotence.⁹⁹

The accelerated process of historical change had given rise to a new kind of economic and social condition 'rooted in industrial capitalism and urbanization,' and prompting a new style of urban life.¹⁰⁰

Both cities were marked by dramatic transformations of their built environment. This was particularly true for Lille where, compared to Manchester, more public funding for the city's infrastructural development was available. In 1858 the municipal council received permission from the military authorities to dismantle the city fortifications and remount them at a much larger circumference, absorbing neighbouring suburbs and roughly tripling the size of the city at a stroke. This began 'an exceptional work of urban remodelling' that lasted decades, and was characterised by the construction of wide radial boulevards, planted areas, squares, and street furniture in the manner of Baron Haussmann's Paris.¹⁰¹ This 'terrain of luxury' would also be one of '*flânerie*' ('idleness'), the word evoking the archetypal modern figure of the '*flâneur*'.¹⁰² Paradoxically, at the same time that they hoped to encourage such *flânerie*, municipal councillors highlighted the importance of mobility to this 'new', more 'open' city, explaining that arterial roads would 'bring life and movement to every

⁹⁷ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 9.

⁹⁸ Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City 1840-1914*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 13–14.

⁹⁹ 'L'Éxposition de Lille', *Dépêche du Nord*, 21st March 1902.

¹⁰⁰ James Vernon, *Distant Strangers. How Britain Became Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 2–3.

¹⁰¹ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 17, 19.

¹⁰² Ville de Lille, *Rapport de La Commission*, op. cit, 1859; Walter Benjamin, 'The Flâneur,' in *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1999), 416–55.

part.¹⁰³



Alfred Mongy, Plan de la ville de Lille agrandie, 1874.
Source: BNF, Département Cartes et plans, GE C-9326

As such, even as it stood to encourage new forms of leisure, the management of space through urban technology also became a way to assert new forms of social control, promoting harmonious relations in the modern city – as indicated in the epigraph of this chapter – but also subjecting citizens to increasing surveillance and greater regulation of their public and private lives.¹⁰⁴ Local writers adopted some of the same rhetoric, for example employing the trope of the 'birds-eye-view' to point out the layout of the city and its streets.¹⁰⁵

It is in its capacity to speak to the spatial dynamics of the industrial city that

¹⁰³ Ville de Lille, *Rapport de La Commission*, op. cit, 1859, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*.

¹⁰⁵ François Chon, *Promenades Lilloises* (Lille: Danel, 1888), 129; Descamps, *Lille: Un Coup D'œil*; F Mention, *Un Coup D'œil Sur Lille* (Lille: Vitez-Gérard, 1877).

'modernity' is important to this thesis. Influential approaches to the problem have in the past come under attack for their tendency to homogenise across time and space, yet the concept of modernity also contains within it the seeds of a critical re-examination of space.¹⁰⁶ There are two projects, with divergent intellectual genealogies, which I wish to draw upon here.

The postcolonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty argued that embedded within the idea of modernity is an innate historicism, such that the global development of capitalist modernity is narrated in terms that equate both temporal and physical distance. In other words, capitalist modernity came to be 'first in the West, and then elsewhere.' As such modernity only became global *over time*, even though the historical processes which accompanied its development in the west – nascent capitalism, global exploration, state formation, demographic growth – were inseparable from the first encounters between Europeans and other world peoples.¹⁰⁷ This argument is significant for provincial European cities, too, because it encourages historians to question their own presumptions about the spatiality of modernity.

Criticisms in this vein led around the turn of the millenium towards a broadening and fragmenting of the literature towards the idea that there are 'multiple modernities.'¹⁰⁸ This scholarship has emphasised both the contested and diverse nature of modernities in Europe, and the presence of a modern "other" in Latin America.¹⁰⁹ 'There was never one single homogenous conception of modernity,' one historian has concluded.¹¹⁰ If they are to be useful therefore, explorations of modernity must recognise and respond to the multiplicity of modernities and the observable fact that "projects" of modernity have been pursued with specific spatial referents.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Perry Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution,' *New Left Review*, no. 144 (April 1984): 96–113.

¹⁰⁷ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 7.

¹⁰⁸ Shmuel Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities,' *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 1–29; Peter Taylor, *Modernities: A Geohistorical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999); Luis Roniger and Carlos Waisman, eds., *Globality and Multiple Modernities; Comparative North American and Latin American Perspectives* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2002).

¹⁰⁹ Eisenstadt, 'Multiple Modernities,' 8–9; Nicola Miller and Hart, eds., *When Was Latin America Modern?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹¹⁰ Wittrock, 'Modernity: One, None, or Many? European Origins and Modernity as a Global Condition,' 58.

¹¹¹ Nicola Miller, *Reinventing Modernity in Latin America: Intellectuals Imagine the Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

In this vein, and most usefully for this thesis, historians have dismantled the modernity paradigm in Europe itself. In the face of classical accounts of modernity which 'characterised [its] nature... as *cosmopolitan* [its] style... as *international*, and [its] archetypal site... as the *city*,' European historians have begun to examine how modernity helps us to understand the distinct history of particular places.¹¹² Typical among these works is Jennifer Jenkins' *Provincial Modernity*, an important inspiration for this thesis, which argues that municipal officials in Hamburg developed a conscious programme of what she calls 'provincial modernity'. This represented an attempt to engage with the 'project' of modernity, without imitating other German cities and, as they saw it, thereby losing their distinct identity. Similar patterns are visible in Manchester and Lille. However, where Jenkins focuses upon the tension between local and national ideas, this thesis goes further by exploring the ways in which Mancunians and Lillois used their ideas of modernity to make sense not only of national identity but also of their transnational connections.

In sum this body of recent scholarship demonstrates that modernity adds to, rather than detracts from, attempts to understand global developments since the eighteenth century away from a totalising frame of reference. It also shows that the regional or local is not opposed to modernity, as modernisation theorists have sometimes suggested. As the recent global turn has underlined, although it may appear to shrink space, economic modernisation creates new spatial relationships, often leading to new forms of diversity.¹¹³ While modernity is not the central concern of this thesis, it provides an important conceptual underpinning as it gives insight into the importance Lillois and Mancunians attached to understanding the spatial dynamics of the world around them and their implications for the city.

¹¹² Maiken Umbach, *German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism, 1890-1924*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16. Emphasis as original; Umbach, 'A Tale of Second Cities'; Axel Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Jennifer Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity: Local Culture and Liberal Politics in Fin-de-Siècle Hamburg* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*; Gunn, 'The Middle Class, Modernity and the Provincial City: Manchester, c.1840-80'; Eric Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism. Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain 1890-1939*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Jerram, *Germany's Other Modernity. Munich and the Making of Metropolis, 1895-1930*.

¹¹³ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 295; Emily Rosenberg, *A World Connecting, 1870 - 1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 593.

0.6 The City and the World

My impression is that the China market is secured for Bombay just because special attention is paid to it. I don't think there is a plant in Lancashire laid out as it ought to be, to compete with Bombay in the spinning of 20s for China. I believe if half the skill, energy and determination that is shown in Oldham in spinning 32s and 54s weft, or in 60s twist in Bolton, was put into the spinning of 20s – plant being set out for it – that we should easily turn Bombay out of the China market.

James Cocker, Cotton Mill Manager, Bombay and Oldham, 1887¹¹⁴

Industrial capitalist modernity connected the cities of Lille and Manchester to the world. The very development of textile industries depended upon global connections.¹¹⁵ This was especially true of cotton, a raw material grown in India, the southern United States and Egypt, brought to north western Europe to be spun and woven, then sent off once more. Contemporary observers were highly conscious of the scale and significance of this industrial dominance: according to one Mancunian writer in 1860 'the present colossal fabric... strikes the imagination with awe, for its magnitude is unequalled.'¹¹⁶ Manchester 'stood at the center of a world-spanning empire', that connected its manufacturers by invisible threads to land, credit, merchants and flows of capital across the globe.¹¹⁷

The spatiality of modernity was a recurring theme of local writing and political discourse, which connected the shrinking of global space with technological and material progress. When the city of Lille annexed neighbouring communes in 1858 municipal councillors were frustrated to be told by the state and army that new fortifications would have to be erected around the extended city. Councillors had voted to found what one of their number referred to as an 'open city', with the fortifications torn down and limitless space available for expansion.¹¹⁸ One popular pamphlet on the extension purported to be advice from the smaller northern city of Douai, presenting itself as having fallen behind by failing to modernise and urging Lille to look beyond its walls to the world outside. 'That which our neighbours from the same country, and our neighbours

¹¹⁴ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, *Bombay and Lancashire Cotton Spinning Inquiry: Minutes of Evidence and Reports* (Manchester: J.E. Cornish, 1888), 85.

¹¹⁵ O'Brien, 'The Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration of the British Industrial Revolution as a Conjuncture in Global History,' 130.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Silver, *Manchester Men and Indian Cotton, 1847-1872*, 4.

¹¹⁷ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, x.

¹¹⁸ Louis Debuire Du Buc, 'L'agrandissement de La Ville de Lille : Chanson et Musique' (Song, Lille, 1857), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Musique, VM28-654.

from countries further afield, do well, or do better, should inspire and guide [us]: that's true progress and true civilisation... Consider, neighbour, that you are just 4 hours from Paris and London, 3 hours from Brussels, 14 hours from Geneva, 20 hours from Berlin, 36 hours from Vienna and 72 hours from Saint Petersburg.¹¹⁹ Modern technology gave rise to a sensation that just as time was accelerating, space was also shrinking.¹²⁰

One historiographical response to this visible shift in the scale of (some) human experience has been the development of the genre of global history, in which important peer-reviewed journals were founded around the end of the previous century.¹²¹ Two broad approaches can be identified. One is characterised by a focus on connections and networks, aiming to follow these networks through the sources and so build up a global picture of, say, Lebanese diaspora merchants in the nineteenth century.¹²² The other employs many of the same approaches as comparative history but operates with a much enlarged geographical catchment area and so aims to be global in the breadth of its vision rather than through any function of its research methodology.¹²³

Global histories have been criticised for a supposed progressist, homogenising tendency, that employs positivist approaches to the exclusion of more complicated or psychologically rich understandings of the content and feel of global encounters.¹²⁴ Allegations of eurocentrism in global history have prompted urgings to 'provincialise', 'decentralise' or 'fragment' the field, and generally to be sceptical of meta-narratives.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Anon, *Correspondance Entre Deux Voisines. La Ville de Douai et La Ville de Lille, A L'occasion de L'agrandissement de Cette Derniere Ville, Décrété Le 2 Juillet 1858* (Douai: Ceret-Carpentier, 1862), 27.

¹²⁰ David Harvey, 'Chapter 15 - Time and Space of the Enlightenment Project,' in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, op cit., 240–59.

¹²¹ *Journal of World History*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990-); *Journal of Global History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006-).

¹²² William McNeill, 'The Rise of the West' after Twenty-Five Years,' *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 1–21; William McNeill and John McNeill, *The Human Web. A Bird's-Eye View of World History* (New York: Norton, 2004).

¹²³ Patrick O'Brien, 'Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History,' *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 5.

¹²⁴ Philip Pomper, 'World History and Its Critics,' *History and Theory* 34, no. 2 (1995): 1–7; Arif Dirlik, 'Confounding Metaphors, Inventions of the World: What Is World History For?,' in *Writing World History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 132.

¹²⁵ Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs, 'Introduction, Problems of Writing World History: Western and Non-Western Experiences, 1800-2000,' in *Writing World History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford

Recent research in global history has responded to criticisms of this kind by seeking to absorb the lessons of its methodology and apply them to local examples. There are many possible ways that this can be done. Michael Goebel's recent book on ex-patriates in Paris in the 1920s and 30s tells a story with global implications through a focus on one particular city at a particular time.¹²⁶ Goebel used French archives, especially printed matter and police reports from Paris, French Colonial Archives at Aix-en-Provence, and archives from cities across the global south and east. By using digitising technology that renders photographed documents into computer-scannable text, he was able to make cross-references in a large body of sources, reconstructing the global networks of a disparate set of people who were united by the time they spent in Paris.¹²⁷ What emerges is a history that is both global and local, speaking to the histories of many regions of the world, but not claiming to any universality or comprehensiveness. While the research methodology and approach are particular to this work, the book provides an instructive example of the possibilities of global urban histories.¹²⁸ In Berlin the Global Urban History group of researchers, of which Goebel is a member, 'ground [their] interest in historical connectedness in analyses of concrete local processes.'¹²⁹ In doing so they perform the necessary work of responding to the historical phenomenon of globalisation, while also 'illuminat[ing its] inherently uneven outgrowths.' This research agenda also responds to a return towards urban history in recognition that cities are critical nodes of production, exchange and communication, not 'mere containers for more important explanatory variables.'¹³⁰

University Press, 2003), 1–44; Philip Pomper, 'Introduction: The Theory and Practice of World History,' in *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 1–17; Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*; Vinay Lal, 'Provincializing the West: World History from the Perspective of Indian History,' in *Writing World History, 1800-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 271–91.

¹²⁶ Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16–18.

¹²⁸ Other recent works include: Bruce E. Baker and Barbara Hahn, *The Cotton Kings: Capitalism and Corruption in Turn-of-the-Century New York and New Orleans*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015); Vivian Bickford-Smith, *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis. Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

¹²⁹ Berlin Global Urban History, <https://globalurbanhistory.com/about-us/> [Accessed 24th March 2017]

¹³⁰ Daunt, 'Introduction,' 56.

I share the sense that locally-based studies offer the best prospects for future global histories. As scholars beginning with Doreen Massey have observed, personal and social identities are bound up with both local places and global connections.¹³¹ The nineteenth century did not simply see the compression of space or its rendering irrelevant. Rather industrialisation, migration, urbanisation, improved transport and changing consumption habits *changed* the way that space functioned in European societies.¹³² Because these changes were *directly linked* to material phenomena and technologies that were unevenly distributed across the European space, globalisation was also experienced as an uneven phenomenon. As the geographer Saskia Sassen wrote in a different context, 'the global materializes by necessity in specific places.'¹³³

Part of my object in this thesis is to examine the means by which 'the globe' was or became a meaningful concept to members of the middle classes in the two cities. As I will explain in Chapter 4, I root my answers to this question in the material economic connections that existed between the cities and other parts of the world. These connections were significant not only for their material consequences, but also for the way they shaped mentalities and informed ways of theorising and discussing the city's place in the world. As such this thesis builds upon recent criticisms of the field of global history, contributing to attempts to overcome them by showing how the research interests of global historians are also served by studies such as this which bring the local and the global into the same field of view.

¹³¹ Doreen Massey, 'Part II, Place and Identity,' in *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), 115–74.

¹³² Jerome Hodos, *Second Cities: Globalization and Local Politics in Manchester and Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 3.

¹³³ Saskia Sassen, 'The Global City: Introducing a Concept,' *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (Winter-Spring 2005): 32.

0.7 Comparative and transnational histories

For a long time an unjust accusation of materialism and of intellectual debasement has been directed at our dear city of Lille. The outsider, struck by the considerable development of our industry and commerce, suspects that our horizon only goes this far. In the extension which is going to triple the circumference of Lille, he sees only a new satisfaction given to material interests, regarding us as the Manchester or Liverpool of the continent.¹³⁴

Henri Lefebvre, *L'Aggrandissement de Lille Au Point de Vue Des Arts*, 1859

In order to escape the 'methodological nationalism' that has traditionally been endemic to the discipline of history, this thesis draws upon approaches of comparative and transnational history.¹³⁵ Using a comparison between two cities, both of which are viewed with a transnational lens, I aim to trouble the assumptions of national history. On the one hand, by means of a direct comparison developed in a number of thematic chapters, I demonstrate that late-nineteenth century middle classes in Lille and Manchester faced similar challenges brought about by the new spatial dynamics of modernity, and that they responded to these in similar ways. At the same time I view both cities in transnational perspective in order to show that these similarities were not the product of endogenous forces developing independently in the two cities, but rather of the multiple transnational transfers, connections and exchanges of people, material and ideas that characterised the late nineteenth century. The 'provincial modernity' which this thesis delineates was created in and through such exchanges: the transnational approach confirms this, while the comparison demonstrates its applicability beyond one city.

Engaging in comparison, where it reveals points of similarity between the compared objects, can help the historian to identify the ways in which those objects are not unique and should perhaps be understood within a wider frame of reference. On the other hand, comparison can also 'de-familiarize the familiar', forcing the historian to look with fresh eyes at the contingency or rarity of a particular phenomenon in their field, that they had previously taken as given.¹³⁶ Through the study of 'similarities *and* differences' between two

¹³⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *L'Aggrandissement de Lille Au Point de Vue Des Arts* (Lille: Destigny, 1859).

¹³⁵ Philipp Ther, 'Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks: Toward a Transnational History of Europe,' in *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 204.

¹³⁶ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Kocka, Jürgen, 'Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History,' in *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European*

historical objects, comparative history contributes to 'their better description, explanation or interpretation.'¹³⁷

In this thesis the compared 'objects' are the two cities of Manchester and Lille, or more precisely the middle classes of those two cities, and the social, cultural and intellectual structures they created. Comparison need not be based upon an a priori assumption of similarity, given that by its very nature it involves an act of selection and abstraction in drawing away from the (by definition unique) realities of each case, to a level of generality sufficient to allow for meaningful comparison.¹³⁸ Nevertheless the pairing of Lille and Manchester belongs in a long tradition of comparative urban history, in which Manchester continues to feature.¹³⁹ A number of studies, like this thesis, compare cities or regions on the basis of a shared economic identity.¹⁴⁰ While Manchester's nineteenth century international reputation for containing the worst aspects of industrialisation, evoked in the remarks from De Tocqueville and Engels quoted earlier, made contemporary Lillois afraid of the comparison, from a distance we can recognise its validity, as outlined in an earlier section of this introduction.

In engaging in comparative history the historian risks taking one object in the comparison as normative. This risk may be particularly acute when the historian's subjectivity, especially with reference to language and national origin, may lead them to regard that which is more familiar as normative. As a native speaker of English, a British citizen, and (by origin) a Mancunian, such

Approaches and New Perspectives (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 4; Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, 'Introduction. Comparative History, Cross-National History, Transnational History - Definitions,' in *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 16.

¹³⁷ Haupt and Kocka, Jürgen, 'Comparison and Beyond,' 2. Emphasis added.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹³⁹ Patrick O'Brien, *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Donald Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Thomas Bender and Carl Schorske, eds., *Budapest & New York: Studies in Metropolitan Transformation, 1870-1930* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1994); Umbach, 'A Tale of Second Cities'; Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*; Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe*; Charlotte Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Benjamin Anderson, 'The Moral High Ground: Cities, Citizens and Landscape in England and Germany, 1890-1914.' (PhD, University of Manchester, 2011); Maarten Walraven, 'Soundscapes from the City: Music, Streetperformance and Urban Space in Manchester and the Ruhrgebiet, 1850-1914' (PhD, University of Manchester, 2014).

¹⁴⁰ Alice Mah, *Port Cities and Global Legacies: Urban Identity, Waterfront Work, and Radicalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Stefan Berger, Andy Croll, and Norman LaPorte, *Towards a Comparative History of Coalfield Societies* (London: Routledge, 2005).

prejudice might be risked in this case. To attempt to mitigate this risk, I first of all conducted much research in Lille, in the language and place with which I am unfamiliar, rather than the other way round.

A more acute risk for comparative historians lies in the possibility that the abstraction necessary for comparison causes the historian, artificially, to isolate the compared objects, to freeze them in time, and focus upon the analysis of structure over the identification of agency. This was a common feature of criticisms of the comparative approach that developed alongside the elaboration of transnational history.¹⁴¹ It is important to remember that Lille, Manchester and their middle classes were not stable entities, but multi-faceted and constantly changing throughout the period studied. Both cities grew enormously, in the process forming new 'tentacular' relationships with their hinterlands, Manchester spreading as far as the Lake District to collect water for its citizens and build holiday homes for its wealthy.¹⁴² As the research in this thesis amply demonstrates, the processes of economic development, local state formation, social recomposition and cultural change which characterised provincial modernity were not solely internal to the two cities. Understanding the connections upon which they depended requires a transnational approach.

An extraordinarily broad body of work has been published in the field of transnational history; usage of the term is unsurprisingly somewhat vague.¹⁴³ Generally though transnational historians agree that they are interested in flows and connections. This could mean the flow of people through travel or migration, the flow of capital, or the flow of information.¹⁴⁴ In its focus upon these moments of *movement* and *exchange* across the political borders imposed by nation-states, transnational history is 'relational'.¹⁴⁵ Transnational exchanges discussed in this thesis include the development of a trans-frontier opera culture between Lille and Belgium (Chapter 2), visits to Munich, Hamburg

¹⁴¹ Ther, 'Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks,' 205; Further discussion in Michel Espagne, *Les Transferts Culturels Franco-Allemands* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999).

¹⁴² D.A. Farnie, *The Manchester Ship Canal and the Rise of the Port of Manchester 1894-1975* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 2.

¹⁴³ Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism,' *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 433; For a comprehensive overview see, Körner, 'Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States.'

¹⁴⁴ Stanley Tambiah, 'Transnational Movements, Diaspora, and Multiple Modernities,' *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 163.

¹⁴⁵ Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2–3.

and other German cities by Mancunian councillors researching art galleries (Chapter 3), and networks of information exchange created by both cities' Chambers of Commerce (Chapter 4). Even when they were not themselves crossing borders or engaging in unmediated transnational exchange, middle classes in both cities were implicated in hundreds of such flows and exchanges every day. To read a daily newspaper in Lille was to imagine oneself at the centre of a web of information that connected cotton market prices in Liverpool, political news from Paris, opera news from Brussels and tales of exploration from Senegal.

By employing a transnational approach, this thesis fills an important gap in the transnational historiography, which has tended to neglect the culture of industrial cities and their quotidian transnational connections. However, the approach is not warranted simply to fill a gap, but also because such connections were fundamental to the development of cities such as Manchester and Lille. In other words, the 'flows' or 'relations' in which transnational historians are interested need not only concern a small minority of historical populations like sailors or international diplomats. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the experience of transnational connection was endemic to middle-class life in both cities and a constant theme of political and journalistic debate and discussion. The social and institutional structures of middle-class life were reshaped partly in reference to this transnational sensibility, as I explain in the first research chapter.

While 'transnational' refers in part to the historical content being studied, it is also a way to characterise the historiography and the questions with which it is preoccupied.¹⁴⁶ The approach I take is not to identify transnational history as a distinct historical sub-discipline or methodology. Rather the term identifies to me 'a particular way of thinking historically... of asking questions and developing innovative frameworks of research.'¹⁴⁷ The deployment of comparative and transnational approaches once again underlines the distinctive contribution that this thesis makes by linking together two distinct approaches that have

¹⁴⁶ Nancy L. Green, 'French History and the Transnational Turn,' *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 4 (2014): 553.

¹⁴⁷ Körner, 'Transnational History: Identities, Structures, States,' 267.

undermined the centrality of the nation-state in European histories: the local and the transnational.

0.8 Thesis structure and sources

In the structure of the work, by the constant employment of leitmotifs and the pictures drawn by the orchestra, the development of themes is absolutely modern, but at the same time there reigns a masterful quality: clarity. [M. Ratez] has the ability and the science of a serious musician.

Review of the music of the opera 'Lydéric', *Lille Artiste*, 1894.¹⁴⁸

Artists. French more liberal than English. Stillman, I. 145.
Anarchists. Executn of, in Chicago, Nat. 10, '87, 366.
Hypocrisy, English, Nat. Nov. 20, '90. 391
Manchester, people in 1838, Le Corresp., ('66), I. 69.335.

Subject index and page references in Thomas Windsor's library¹⁴⁹

Following this introduction, the thesis consists of four chapters of original primary research, followed by a conclusion. The four chapters are thematic and comparative, each discussing both cities. However, the two central chapters each focus primarily on one of the cities: in Chapter 2, I discuss opera in Lille, with some reference to Manchester, and in Chapter 3, I discuss the art gallery in Manchester, with some reference to Lille. The conclusions of each of these chapters return to the comparison, explaining similarities and differences between the two cities with reference to both art forms.

In Chapter 1, I focus on the middle classes of the two cities, discussing the different ways that this social formation might be defined. I explain that recent work has underlined the importance of associational life to the self-identity of urban middle classes in the nineteenth century. I show that middle-class associational networks were rooted in the local, but also orientated towards transnational exchanges with other European countries.

In Chapter 2, I turn to the example of the opera in Lille. While nineteenth century opera is traditionally seen as an important way for its patrons to

¹⁴⁸ 'Lydéric', *Lille Artiste*, 4, 298, (30th December 1894).

¹⁴⁹ Thomas Windsor (1831-1910) was a doctor from Manchester. He was Honorary Librarian of the Manchester Medical Society from 1858-1888, and its President in 1866. He meticulously catalogued his large personal library in two volumes, in which there are over 12,000 entries in three languages, on subjects including political economy, literature, medicine, social questions, arts, structures of government and administration in Britain and abroad, domestic and foreign politics. Thomas Windsor Papers, NYPL MSS 3357.

promote particular ideas about national identity, I show how it was also used to make statements about local identity. Because of the highly transnational nature of the art and the mobility of many of its performers, opera was also a way for provincial cities to show that they were connected to the latest European trends.

Chapter 3 performs a similar function to Chapter 2, but explores the art gallery and focuses on Manchester. I show how 'municipalisation' of a previously privately run gallery in 1882 was used to express ideas about local prestige and sophistication. I also show that municipal councillors looked to cities in Germany for examples of how to manage the gallery. This demonstrates their tendency to think about the European continent as a network of cities rather than nations and also shows their willingness to make transnational connections without reference to the idea of the nation.

In Chapter 4, I examine the various ways in which local elites used their identity as industrial and commercial cities as a meta-narrative tool to understand their relationship with the rest of the world. International commerce, connected to their industries, was the primary vector of material connection between the city and the rest of the world, and took on powerful symbolic meanings in local imaginations.

The research for this thesis was conducted primarily in Manchester and Lille. Most time was spent at the Manchester Central Library, City of Manchester Art Gallery, Archives Municipales de Lille, Archives du Nord and Bibliothèque Municipale de Lille. I also used unpublished primary material relating to the Manchester Ship Canal at Chetham's Library in Manchester, and material from the Butterworth family papers at the University of Salford Special Collections. Correspondance from the Kyllman family of Manchester is held at the New York Public Library, as were documents relating to the personal library of Thomas Windsor, a Manchester doctor. I used the Bibliothèque Nationale's website Gallica to access digitised versions of printed primary sources, mainly relating to the opera.

There is some overlap, in terms of the source base used, between the four

chapters of original research. However, broadly speaking each chapter draws upon a distinct base of sources. Besides an extensive secondary literature, the first chapter is based on the personal writing (both published and unpublished) of middle-class men in the two cities. I also use published biographical dictionaries, both from the nineteenth century and today.

Chapter 2 is mainly based on the minutes of the Lille municipal council, which I accessed at the Archives Municipales de Lille, with the aid of a subject index. References are given with councillor(s) name and the date. The sub-section on Manchester was mainly based on local newspapers and magazines.

Chapter 3 is based on the records of the Royal Manchester Institution and (after 1882), the Manchester city council Art Gallery Committee. Correspondence and meeting minutes were most useful. I also consulted exhibition catalogues, newspaper clipping books, and pamphlets at the City of Manchester Art Gallery archives. Discussion on Lille is mainly based on printed pamphlets and guidebooks from the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lille.

The final chapter is based on three bodies of sources. The first, and most substantial, are the records of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Chambre de Commerce de Lille. In Manchester I especially relied upon annual proceedings and meeting minutes, using a subject index. The archives of the Lille Chamber of Commerce are catalogued by subject. One should note that not everything in the Chambers' archives was produced by the Chambers themselves, which usefully broadened the perspective. The second body of sources was published reports and tracts on commercial and industrial subjects. The third set of sources used in this chapter was records relating to the Manchester Ship Canal, both those produced by the Canal company, and tracts and periodicals on the subject.

Chapter One: From *Citadin* to *Citoyen*? Provincial middle classes in the nineteenth century

1.1 Introduction: industrial middle classes, cosmopolitan provincials

The 'Manchester School' of dramatists, active at the beginning of the twentieth century, were a group of playwrights associated with Annie Horniman's theatre in Manchester. They wrote realist plays about local life, inspired by Henrik Ibsen, whose works had been performed regularly in Manchester since the mid-1890s.¹⁵⁰ *Hindle Wakes*, along with *Hobson's Choice*, is one of few plays produced by the School which still enjoys some fame today.¹⁵¹ It was a sensation when it was first performed in 1912, quickly transferring to London after a short run in Manchester. Later the same year it received its international première in New York.¹⁵²

One of the principal characters of the play is Alan Jeffcote, the son of a wealthy cotton manufacturer in Hindle, a fictional Lancashire town on the outskirts of Manchester. He is described in the stage notes as follows:

He is dressed by a good Manchester tailor, and everything he has is of the best. He does not stint his father's money. He has been to the Manchester Grammar School and Manchester University, but he has not lost the characteristic Hindle burr in his accent, though he speaks correctly as a rule... He has no feeling that he is provincial, or that the provinces are not the principal asset of England. London he looks upon as a place where rich Lancashire men go for a spree, if they have not time to go to Monte Carlo or Paris. Manchester he looks upon as the centre or headquarters for Lancashire manufacturers, and therefore more important than London... The feeling gives him sufficient assurance to stroll into the most fashionable hotels and restaurants, conscious that he can afford to pay for whatever he fancies, that he can behave himself, that he can treat the waiters with the confidence of an aristocrat born — and yet be patently a

¹⁵⁰ 'A large and attentive audience' came to the first Manchester performance of *A Doll's House*, on the 12th April 1897. Reviewers praised the actors for their realist style. 'Music and the Drama- A Doll's House', *MCN*, 17th April 1897.

¹⁵¹ 'Houghton, Stanley' and 'Brighouse, Harold', in Dennis Kennedy, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Both *Hindle Wakes* (Houghton) and *Hobson's Choice* (Brighouse) were revived in the West End in the summer of their centenary years, the latter of which was 2016.

¹⁵² 'Only one new play will demand the attention of theatregoers this week... 'Hindle Wakes,' imported with its acting company from London.' 'This Week's Offerings,' *New York Times*, 8 December 1912.

Lancashire man. He would never dream of trying to conceal the fact, nor indeed could he understand why anybody should wish to try and conceal such a thing.¹⁵³

Though this is a fictionalised description, the author Stanley Houghton (1881-1913) was drawing on his own experience. Houghton, the son of a cotton merchant, was born in Ashton-under-Lyne, near Manchester, in 1881. Like his creation, he was educated at Manchester Grammar School then went to work in his father's business. Young men like Jeffcote were a feature of his every day experience: taking the train to work in the warehouse on Whitworth Street, reading the paper in the Reform Club, drinking in the bar of the Midland Hotel. In Houghton's description, Jeffcote's central characteristic is a sense of certainty in his social status that was rooted in his economic position and his identity as a Mancunian and a Lancastrian. He was sufficiently confident in himself to feel that he belonged in a global elite but, paradoxically, the security of this sense depended upon his deep roots in a local identity. In a broad sense the contours of this world view were common to Jeffcote's peers across the city. The relationship between this sense of social identity and the place the city occupied in the world is the subject of this chapter, and an important underpinning of those to follow.

Around the time that Houghton was beginning his studies at the University of Manchester, Charles Droulers (1872-1945) was completing his legal studies in Paris. Charles' father Charles Droulers (1838-1899) ran Droulers Frères, a sugar refinery and distillery at Ascq, five miles from Lille, and the family lived in Roubaix, where Charles (senior) was President of the Tribunal of Commerce.¹⁵⁴ Charles (junior) would continue to work in the family business, but he also pursued his interests in issues of social welfare, beginning with his doctoral thesis on the Jules Siegfried law of 1894, that provided for the construction of the first subsidised social housing in France.¹⁵⁵ He was also an amateur poet,

¹⁵³ Stanley Houghton, *Hindle Wakes* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1988), 27–28.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.thierryprouvost.com/Droulers%20Prouvost.html> [Accessed 29th March 2017]; Frédéric Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire : Une Approche Prosopographique* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1989), 207–10.

¹⁵⁵ Charles Droulers, 'La Loi Du 30 Novembre 1894 Relative Aux Habitations À Bon Marché, Son Application Dans Une Grande Ville Industrielle,' PhD, Université de Paris, 1898, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, FRBNF30356063; Charles Droulers, *Chemin Faisant Avec L'abbé Lemire* (Paris: Marcel Riviere, 1929); Charles Droulers, *Socialisme et Colonisation. Une Colonie Socialiste Au Paraguay : la 'Nouvelle Australie'* (Paris: Tremaux, 1895).

and the co-founder with Léon Bocquet (1876-1954) and other recent graduates of the Lille faculty of literature, of *Le Beffroi*, a journal of Northern poetry and literature.¹⁵⁶ In this journal, which published work by many young bourgeois men of the region including his cousin Amédée Prouvost, Droulers and the other editors attempted to create a poetry that was 'at once modern and rooted in [the] region.'¹⁵⁷

In this land of factories and workshops, poets will make heard – among the clear sound of the hammers and the panting of the machines – the divine song of love and the hymn to the native earth. They will elevate the spirits and the hearts of the great anonymous crowd of Flamands, above immediate realities... so they will desire... a whole life, from which work, dreams and love are not banished.¹⁵⁸

Like Houghton and his fictional creation Jeffcote, Droulers and his peers were the well-educated sons of the local elite . Though many of the people described in this thesis could be similarly labelled by virtue of their wealth, social distinction or political status, I am interested in the ways in which ideas about transnational connections and local identity were communicated across a broader section of society. I therefore discuss the practices, such as attending the theatre or serving on the municipal council, through which local elites came into contact and co-operated with a broader middle class. Members of this class came from a range of family backgrounds, occupations, religious confessions and levels of wealth, but tended to share a core perspective, illustrated in the passages cited above. This was the conviction that modernity was best navigated at the scale of the local, using social structures and cultural ideas that took their form at the local scale. This was true of the need to find a balance between art, industry and human society, as well as for the challenges and opportunities of a shrinking world brought on by technological and economic globalisation. As they reacted to and made sense of this world, the middle classes of Manchester and Lille rooted their responses in ideas of the local.

¹⁵⁶ Anne-Marie Thiesse, *Écrire La France. Le Mouvement Littéraire Régionaliste de Langue Française Entre La Belle Époque et La Libération* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1991), 33.; *Le Beffroi, Arts et Littérature Modernes*, Paris, 1900-1913; Droulers' poetry includes: *Choix de Poésies* (Lille: Tallandier, 1920); *Le Désert, Poème* (Tours: Deslis freres, 1899); Droulers and Léon Bocquet, *Les Poètes de La Flandre Française et l'Espagne* (Paris: Crés, 1917).

¹⁵⁷ Thiesse, *Écrire La France*, 35.

¹⁵⁸ Achille Segard, 'Les Poetes Du Nord,' *Le Beffroi*, 1, no. 1 (January 1900): 5.

The nineteenth century has been described as 'the bourgeois century', but interpretations of this concept differ across schools of history and national contexts.¹⁵⁹ Any discussion of the middle classes in nineteenth-century Europe suffers from semantic uncertainty rooted in long running debates about the nature and extent of social (and political and economic) transformation during the century.¹⁶⁰ Just as intractable are controversies about the meaning of class itself, that occupy the minds not only of historians but sociologists, political scientists and others.¹⁶¹ Rather than adding to, or much less resolving these debates, my intention in this chapter is to sketch their principle lines, before focusing on those approaches that help us to understand the intellectual and cultural world of the middle classes, connecting these to the social structures of their lives. As such I am especially interested in Richard Morris' explanation of the role of local associational life in defining and shaping middle-class cultural identity.¹⁶²

The middle classes are the primary subjects of this thesis. They were the principal actors in municipal councils, the business people who drove the cities' principal industries, the professionals who provided services and formed the backbone of a local intellectual elite, the men and women who served in voluntary organisations and charities, and the journalists who wrote about the activities of all of these, shaping and defining the local public sphere. Local elites did not live lives that were wholly separate from more modest members of the middle classes, including retailers, wealthier tradesmen (such as master builders), innkeepers, and a growing white collar clerical workforce.¹⁶³ However,

¹⁵⁹ Roger Magraw, *France 1815-1914. The Bourgeois Century* (Oxford: Fontana, 1983); Kocka, Jürgen, 'The Middle Classes in Europe,' *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 4 (December 1995): 783–806; Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 761.

¹⁶⁰ Pamela Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe. 1789-1914. France, German, Italy and Russia* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 1–2; Geoffrey Crossick, 'La Bourgeoisie Britannique Au 19e Siècle: Recherches, Approches, Problématiques,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 53, no. 6 (November 1, 1998): 1089.

¹⁶¹ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 2.*; Savage, Mike et al., 'A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment,' *Sociology* 47, no. 2 (2013): 219–50; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984); Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Williams, *Keywords*, 60–69.

¹⁶² R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

¹⁶³ Jürgen Kocka, 'The Middle Classes in Europe,' 784; Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe, 1780-1914. Enterprise, Family and Independence* (London: Routledge, 1995).

as Richard Morris argues, and as I explore further on Page 67, social class is defined in part by the possession of power. Though the most active *protagonists* described in this thesis are members of the local elite, my contention is that its arguments and conclusions should be brought to bear upon a more widely defined middle class, a group which therefore is the focus of the thesis. Underpinning this approach is my contention that elite sections of the local middle classes dominated its political, cultural and social institutions and as such shaped the imaginations of the city and the world that the class as a whole articulated. Examples of how this worked in practice abound throughout this chapter and the thesis more broadly, but include the promotion of cultural cosmopolitanism as a normative social aspiration (Page 77), and the deployment of local identity as a basis for intra- and cross-class solidarity.

After the first half of the nineteenth century had seen the rapid creation of enormous fortunes and the dramatic reshaping of the urban space, the late nineteenth-century industrial city in Britain and France came to experience a degree of stability, and its wealthy citizens a sense of security and privilege that they felt was well-earned. The more fluid social order of the earlier years of industrialisation gave way to a greater degree of stability as family wealth was consolidated. While during the 1850s the number of cotton spinning firms in Lille increased by two thirds (from 27 to 43), by 1900 local production was controlled by 20 firms, each run by a second or third generation spinner.¹⁶⁴ This stability is evoked in memoirs of upper-middle-class life in the period. Katharine Chorley (1898-1986), the daughter of a senior engineer at the Manchester firm Mather and Platt, described her father as coming from 'a rising Manchester family, proud of its achievements, proud of its education,' while her Anglo-Irish mother had 'the tradition of a long-secured and easy family position, industrial now, but with memories which went back to the ownership of land and carried into the present a feudal and personal sense of responsibility.'¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Jean Lambert-Dansette, *Quelques familles du patronat textile de Lille-Armentières, 1789-1914* (Lille, E. Raoust et Cie (Fontenay-le-Comte, impr. de P. et O. Lussaud frères), 1954), 186; David Landes, 'Religion and Enterprise: The Case of the French Textile Industry,' in *Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 41–86..

¹⁶⁵ Katharine Chorley, *Manchester Made Them* (London: Faber and Faber, 1950), 46–47; By a quirk of coincidence, the family of Chorley's mother Minnie Campbell owned the Mossley linen firm in Belfast, which years later opened a factory in Hellemes, Lille. This closed in 2001, despite a nine month occupation by the workers. See, Rafael Cos, 'Filature Mossley: Lutte Des Classes... Dans La

I will discuss the socio-economic composition of the middle class in general terms in the following section of this chapter, but it will be useful to outline some important differences and similarities between the two cities here. Manchester has long been associated with the supposedly archetypal member of the nineteenth-century middle class, the manufacturing capitalist, in a tradition dating back to the 1840s. Local firms such as the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers Association, Rylands' (textiles), Platt Brothers and Mather and Platt (engineering) were among the largest in the country by both employee numbers and capitalisation.¹⁶⁶ The second half of the century saw an increasing concentration of employment and capital in a smaller number of enterprises.¹⁶⁷ Yet while the city was 'Cottonopolis', the centre of the British and even the global cotton industry, its most wealthy citizens were not all manufacturers. Among those Mancunians dying between 1809 and 1914 identified as 'wealthholders' in a study by W.D. Rubinstein, six were manufacturers, seven cotton merchants, three bankers, a number of brewers, and a newspaper proprietor.¹⁶⁸ The city's economy was diverse, particularly in the last third of the century when manufacturing became increasingly concentrated in nearby towns like Oldham, leaving Manchester as a city of commerce and services.¹⁶⁹ Indeed the seventh biggest British employer (by workforce) in 1907 was the Manchester-based Co-operative Wholesale Society.¹⁷⁰ Manchester's economy supported a large and diverse middle class that included shopkeepers, hoteliers, lawyers, bankers, engineers, doctors, warehouse owners, landlords, academics, teachers, journalists and many others.

Like Manchester, Lille had a significant upper middle class, ('grand bourgeoisie' or 'patronat' in the French historiography) whose wealth was derived from

Ville,' *La Brique*, no. 32 (June 2012), <http://labrique.net/index.php/thematiques/histoires-du-bocal/196-filature-mossley-lutte-des-classes-dans-la-ville-1-2>. [Accessed 1st April 2017.]

¹⁶⁶ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 12; Youssef Cassis, 'Businessmen and the Bourgeoisie in Western Europe,' in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 106.

¹⁶⁷ Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. Volume I, The Process of Production of Capital*, ed. Friedrich Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887), 290–92, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf>. [Accessed 31st March 2017]

¹⁶⁸ 'A number' is Rubinstein's phrase. Infuriatingly, he does not give the exact number. W.D. Rubinstein, 'The Victorian Middle Classes: Wealth, Occupation and Geography,' *The Economic History Review* 30, no. 4 (November 1977): 612.

¹⁶⁹ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 12.

¹⁷⁰ Cassis, 'Businessmen and the Bourgeoisie in Western Europe,' 106.

industry or commerce. The largest local sectors were textiles and engineering.¹⁷¹ Twelve of the sixteen largest French private textile firms in 1913 were based in the Nord, and the largest manufacturer of locomotives was the Compagnie de Fives, based in the industrial suburb of the same name.¹⁷² However, it is important to note that French manufacturing firms were generally smaller than their British, German and American counterparts, and the fortunes of industrialists correspondingly smaller.¹⁷³ By way of comparison the largest textile syndicate Comptoir de l'Industrie Linière, was valued at 31.8 million francs; the 50th biggest company in France was Pathé Brothers, at 71 million.¹⁷⁴

Members of this class of industrialists or merchants tended to have long-standing roots in the local mercantile or agricultural middle class.¹⁷⁵ French Flanders was 'a region of commercial agriculture' and had been for some time before industrialisation.¹⁷⁶ The geographical diversity of environments in the region supported a diversity of activities; this in turn produced a heterogeneous micro economy which allowed for complementary businesses to develop and hence supported proto-industrialisation.¹⁷⁷ The Béghin family for instance, came from Thumeries, about 12 miles from Lille. Ferdinand Béghin married Henriette Coget in 1834, and as a result inherited a small sugar refinery from his father-in-law, a former Mayor of Thumeries. Joseph Coget had been processing sugar beet grown on his farm since 1821: his descendants eventually founded the present-day sugar refiners Béghin-Say.¹⁷⁸ As well as industrialising the production of food and drink, agricultural wealth could be used as seed capital for a mercantile enterprise, as it was for Donat Agache, who in 1823 used an inheritance of 31,000 francs to set himself up as a linen merchant then later a

¹⁷¹ Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire*, 16–17; Christophe Charle, *Les Élités de La République 1880-1900* (Paris: Fayard, 1987); Louis Bergeron, 'Livre II: Permanences et Renouveau Du Patronat,' in *Histoire Des Français XIXe-XXe Siècles. Tome 2: La Société* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1983), 153–292.

¹⁷² Michael S. Smith, 'Putting France in the Chandlerian Framework: France's 100 Largest Industrial Firms in 1913,' *The Business History Review* 72, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 56, 67.

¹⁷³ Only two French firms would rank among the 200 largest American firms in 1913. *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁷⁵ Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire*, 39–42.

¹⁷⁶ Paul Descamps, 'La Flandre Française, Les Populations Rurales,' *Bulletin de La Société Internationale de Science Sociale* 26, no. 79 (March 1911): 5.

¹⁷⁷ Jules Scrive-Loyer, 'Les Variétés Du Lieu Flamand, et Les Types Sociaux Qui En Dérivent,' *Bulletin de La Société Internationale de Science Sociale* 26, no. 81 (May 1911): 3–84; F Mendels, 'Les Temps de L'industrie et Les Temps de L'agriculture, Logique D'une Analyse Régionale de La Proto-Industrialisation,' *Revue Du Nord* 63, no. 248 (1981): 21–57.

¹⁷⁸ Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire*, 86–87.

linen spinner. When he died in 1857 he was worth more than two and a half million.¹⁷⁹

Long-established agricultural wealth supported the early development of urban centres in the Nord, with which wealth and power were strongly associated: at the turn of the nineteenth century, of 978 'notables' in the Nord identified by Louis Trénard *all* lived in one of five cities.¹⁸⁰ This traditional, mainly mercantile elite transformed itself during the decades around the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹ Despite shifts in the economic basis of their wealth, this 'grande-bourgeoisie' preserved their patriarchal family structures and links to the wider region, by the practice of keeping a home in the city, and a large country house with which to keep the family rooted to the pays and to the extended family unit.¹⁸² A certain interpenetration of the city and the region was also facilitated by marriage alliances that created dynasties such as the Mahieu, identified with both Lille and Armentières, or the Motte with both Roubaix and Tourcoing. Social techniques that had long been used to enhance social status, such as intermarriage between bourgeois families, were used to consolidate capital and to facilitate sideways moves into new industries.¹⁸³

Nevertheless, the security, stability and power of the middle classes in the industrial city were not absolute. Financially, fortunes could be lost as well as made. Politically, municipal institutions might have been dominated by the middle classes, but they were contested between various factions of both middle and working classes; particularly towards the end of the period when the socialist Parti Ouvrier Français took advantage of the Dreyfus Affair and the appeal to some bourgeois voters of the Boulangist right, to forge an alliance with Radicals and win the municipality between 1896 and 1904.¹⁸⁴ In Manchester, the coherence of the Liberal coalition began to break down around

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁸⁰ Trénard, 'Notables de La Région Lilloise Au Seuil Du XIXeme Siecle,' 175.

¹⁸¹ Jean-Marie Wiscart, 'Chapter One – Une Lente Ascension Sociale En Terre de Flandre', 29–40,' in *Au Temps Des Grand Liniers: Les Mahieu d'Armentieres 1832-1938. Une Bourgeoisie Textile Du Nord* (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 2010), 29–40; Jean-Pierre Hirsch, 'La Région Lilloise: Foyer Industriel Ou Place de Négoce?,' *Le Mouvement Social*, no. 132 (September 1985): 27–41.

¹⁸² Barbier, *Le Patronat du Nord Sous le Second Empire*, 34.

¹⁸³ Wiscart, *Au temps des grands liniers*, 41; Ibid., 20-27.

¹⁸⁴ Bernard Simler, 'Gustave Delory et Les Débuts Du Mouvement Socialiste À Lille et Dans La Région Du Nord Sous La Troisième République,' *De Franse Nederlanden / Les Pays-Bas Français*, 1982, 111–30.

the turn of the century.¹⁸⁵ The middle classes were never socially homogeneous in any case, being divided by differences of wealth, profession, cultural values and religious confession. Not all members had a direct professional or financial position in industry, despite the (sometimes exaggerated) association between the two cities and manufacturing. Arguments about the middle classes in the industrial city must take all of these divisions and tensions into account.

Despite these tensions, the middle classes mostly preserved a broadly consensual politics throughout the period, and a more or less coherent sense of class identity. In part this was achieved through the nationalisation of culture, and the increasing spread of ideas of national identity and loyalty to the crown, Empire or Republic. These processes were different in Britain and France, leading to a greater development of regionalism as a political movement in the latter, but they followed roughly similar patterns in that the century saw the development of a symbiotic relationship between nation and locality, based both on the promotion of national identity from the centre, and its enthusiastic adoption in the provinces.¹⁸⁶ My aim in this chapter, and in this thesis, is not to claim that members of the middle class in Lille and Manchester did not think of themselves as French or British.

Nevertheless, until the First World War middle-class power and status in the provincial industry city continued to be asserted first and foremost in the city itself. Crucial to the maintenance of middle-class political and social hegemony was the identification of this class with 'the local', a discursive construction underpinned by a wide range of social relationships, non-governmental associations, and intellectual formations. In this chapter I will discuss how these worked to anchor middle-class identity in the city.

Despite its local centre of gravity, the imaginative horizons of the middle class in Manchester and Lille were not coterminous with the borders of the city, but

¹⁸⁵ Moore, 'Progressive Pioneers: Manchester Liberalism, the Independent Labour Party, and Local Politics in the 1890s.'

¹⁸⁶ Applegate, 'A Europe of Regions'; Gerson, *The Pride of Place. Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France*; Christopher Harvie, 'English Regionalism: The Dog That Never Barked,' in *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom*, in *National Identities: The Constitution of the United Kingdom* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 105–18; David Hey, 'Reflections on the Local and Regional History of the North,' *Northern History* 50, no. 2 (2013): 155–69.

expanded far beyond, not just to the national capitals but across the whole world. In this respect they were linked to the same networks of exchange and circulation that characterised the European middle classes more generally in this period.¹⁸⁷ Many Lillois and Mancunians travelled abroad for pleasure, intellectual curiosity, cultural enrichment, or business opportunities. Some had personal connections with counterparts overseas maintained by correspondence. They were familiar with foreign cities and cultures, and had access to news and information from overseas via the local press, specialist periodicals, and imported foreign media accessed through local institutions such as Chambers of Commerce libraries. Political debates on a wide range of subjects, inside and outside of the institutions of municipal government, often referenced developments elsewhere in Europe as models for emulation.¹⁸⁸ Transnational connections of this kind were already well developed by the 1860s, and their consequences became more profoundly felt by the end of the long nineteenth century. The local therefore existed in dialogue both with the national *and* the transnational, through the medium of the structures of local middle-class life. For this reason, the thesis lies on a bedrock of social and political history, because it looks at this mediating social class, and the institutions, including political institutions, through which it acted.

I aim in this chapter to address four issues pertaining to the middle classes of the two cities. In the next section ('Who were the provincial middle classes? Social and professional backgrounds') I discuss their social composition. By use of a number of examples I respond to major themes in the historiography and set out the social terrain on which the rest of the chapter, and the thesis, takes

¹⁸⁷ Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 775–76; Youssef Cassis, *Capitals of Capital: The Rise and Fall of International Financial, 1780-2009*, trans. Jacqueline Collier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Robert Anderson, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Christophe Charle, Jurgen Schriewer, and Peter Wagner, eds., *Transnational Intellectual Networks. Forms of Academic Knowledge and the Search for Cultural Identities* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2004); Nick Prior, *Museums and Modernity. Art Galleries and the Making of Modern Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

¹⁸⁸ For example, in Lille: on an art gallery, CML 18th October 1865; on savings banks in schools to encourage students to save, 6th February 1875; on methods by which municipalities could raise money, 5th January 1877; on universities, 15th May 1878; on the management of the municipal opera, 22nd March 1889; on the regulation of prostitution, 20th November 1901. In Manchester: on housing, Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, *The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People: The Example of Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1904); on an art gallery, Anon, *The Possibilities of an Art Gallery in Manchester By a Manchester Man* (Manchester: Cornish, 1889), 5.

place. I explain that a turn in the historiography towards explanations that emphasise the discursive construction of categories of 'class', rather than underlying economic structures, underlines the centrality of the local to middle-class identity.

In the following section ('A place in the world': The horizons of the provincial middle classes') I discuss what I have called above 'the imaginative horizons' of the middle classes of the two cities. I demonstrate both the importance of the local frame of reference to middle-class life, and the transforming effect of modernisation in the nineteenth century, which extended these horizons and reshaped imagined geographies such that Manchester and Lille became not only cities in Lancashire and Flanders, but cities *in the world*.

The penultimate section of the chapter, ('The flexibility of the local: a biographical approach') mainly consists of short biographies of two important individuals, designed to capture some of the lived experience and values of members of the local middle classes. I also use this section to argue that local identity was useful to the middle class because it evoked a form of social solidarity that could transcend divisions of social class, while performing functions that national identity (which also transcended class) could not.

In the final section of the chapter ('Conclusions: the middle classes, the city and the world') I argue that while the circulation of ideas, people and information on a *national* circuit was a very important determinant of social, political and cultural life, 'the local' continued to play an important role in middle-class life and identity right up to the First World War. What is more, middle-class Mancunians and Lillois saw the local not as automatically retrograde but potentially as modern, and a source of dynamism.

1.2 Who were the provincial middle classes? Social and professional backgrounds

The literature on the nineteenth century middle classes is vast, despite the comparative decline of social history since the 1990s.¹⁸⁹ My aim in this section is not to make a new contribution to this literature, but to use a discussion of its most important lines of argument in order to situate the men who populate this thesis into a historiographical context. I share the view of other historians that the nineteenth-century middle class was a political and discursive construction, rather than a product of economic structures.¹⁹⁰ From this observation I conclude – as have others – that local studies are a necessary component of the social history of the middle class. This claim is important to my thesis as a whole because of the role that *local* institutions and social lives played as fora for the development and diffusion of ideas and knowledge. I therefore argue that transnational historians, or others who wish to understand the way that nineteenth-century people came to understand their relationship to an increasingly connected world, must also be local historians. Before elaborating further on this argument I first briefly discuss historiographies of the middle class that foreground economics.

The term 'middle class' is sometimes interchanged with 'bourgeois', ostensibly a word with the same meaning, but in the English language having encoded

¹⁸⁹ Crossick, 'La Bourgeoisie Britannique Au 19e Siècle'; Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*; Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class. The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes. (Revised Edition)* (London: Routledge, 2002); Jürgen Kocka and Allan Mitchell, eds., *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1993); Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe. 1789-1914. France, German, Italy and Russia*; Crossick and Haupt, *The Petite Bourgeoisie in Europe, 1780-1914. Enterprise, Family and Independence*; Régine Pernoud, *Histoire de La Bourgeoisie En France. Tome 2: Les Temps Modernes* (Paris: Seuil, 1962); Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*; Jean Lambert-Dansette, *Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France, Tome II: Le temps des pionniers, 1830-1880 Naissance du patronat*, Chemins de la mémoire (Paris Montréal (Québec) Budapest [etc.]: l'Harmattan, 2001); Jean Lambert-Dansette, *Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France, Tome V: L'entreprise entre deux siècles, 1880-1914. Les rayons et les ombres*, Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2009); Bergeron, 'Livre II: Permanences et Renouvellement Du Patronat'; Christophe Charle, *Social History of France in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford: Berg, 1994). especially 188–201.

¹⁹⁰ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*; Alan Kidd and David Nicholls, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*; Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*; Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People. Industrial England and the Question of Class 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

within it a meta-historical narrative about the relationship between political economy and social structure, derived from Marxist thought.¹⁹¹ Associated with this tradition is the work of Eric Hobsbawm, for whom the century saw a 'dual revolution' involving both the re-founding of European economies on an industrial base, and the advent of far-reaching political changes towards liberal democracy.¹⁹² Both elements of this two-track transformation featured the middle class as the primary actor: industrialisation brought this class to a position of economic dominance, while a series of revolutions in France, and Reform Acts in Britain, secured its political power. In the words of Marx and Engels, 'each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class.'¹⁹³ Though this model presents a somewhat static account of the pre-industrial aristocracy, the bourgeoisie are characterised as dynamic agents of change. An important theme in this image is the experience of social mobility, which allowed some early industrial families to emerge from relatively modest circumstances to great wealth via hard work, innovation and good fortune.¹⁹⁴

A powerful example of this trajectory is the Scrive family of Lille. Alexandre Scrive (1719-1787) was a master cobbler, while the generation of his great-great grandson Jules-Émile Scrive (1837-1898) were fabulously wealthy industrialists, part of a large dynasty joined by marriage to several of the richest and most prominent families in the Nord, who cultivated elite tastes, and participated vigorously in public life.¹⁹⁵ Textile spinning was this family's route to fortune, and though later generations diversified their investments, their own business activities remained in the sector.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Williams, *Keywords*, 46.

¹⁹² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962).

¹⁹³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'Bourgeois and Proletarians (1845),' in *Marx and Modernity, Key Readings and Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 90.

¹⁹⁴ This subject is still attracting the interest of researchers, for example 'Rags to Riches: Experiences of Social Mobility since 1800' a project at The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities. One member of the group, Christina De Bellaigue, is working on a comparison between industrialists in Roubaix and Bolton, two towns in the Lille Métropole and Greater Manchester.

¹⁹⁵ Lambert-Dansette, *Quelques familles du patronat textile de Lille-Armentières, 1789-1914*, 328; Yves Devaux, 'La Bibliothèque de René Descamps-Scrive,' *Art & Métiers Du Livre* 267 (August 2008): 79–80; Didier Terrier, 'La Participation D'un Patron Lillois Aux Travaux de La Chambre de Commerce (1881-1891),' *Revue Du Nord* 93, no. 390 (June 2011): 495–506.

¹⁹⁶ Muriel Petit-Konczyk, 'Gérer Son Portefeuille a La Fin Du XIXe Siecle,' *Revue Du Nord* 93, no. 390 (June 2011): 367–80.

The industry was especially suited to family mobility of this kind because of the relatively low costs of entry in the early decades of its mechanisation. In 1795 Alexandre's son Joseph-Desiré (1757-1803) used some of the capital he had assembled as a clothing dealer to open a carding workshop - a facility that prepared raw cotton for use by spinners.¹⁹⁷ As the first mills using English-designed spinning machines began to open in Lille at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Joseph-Désiré and his sons Désiré and Antoine (1783-1826, 1789-1864) were well positioned to supply them. The brothers introduced mechanised carding in 1821, following Antoine's visit to England where he committed an act of what would today be called 'industrial espionage'.¹⁹⁸ After Désiré's death Antoine diversified the family business into linen spinning, as well as personally providing one tenth of the initial capital for the Compagnie des Mines de Lens, a large coal mine he co-founded with nine other northern industrialists in 1852.¹⁹⁹ Antoine's grandson Jules-Émile continued to run the firm of Scrive Frères, while cultivating intellectual and philanthropic interests and writing on various subjects.²⁰⁰

The experiences of John Rylands (1801-1888) were similar, though remarkably he condensed most of the trajectory of the Scrive dynasty into one lifetime. Rylands' built a vast fortune in spinning, weaving and ready-made clothing, and at his death was 'the recognized and undisputed head and leader of the cotton trade.'²⁰¹ He left an estate which was, adjusted for inflation, at least forty five times larger than that of his father, a moderately prosperous hand loom

¹⁹⁷ Carding is the process by which a fibrous raw material (wool, flax or cotton) is prepared for spinning. The raw material is systematically combed to ensure that all the fibers are aligned. The carded material is then drawn out (but not spun) into a 'sliver' (*ruban de cardes*), a long strip that looks a bit like a rope half an inch in diameter, made up of aligned fibres. This can then be spun, either by hand or machine. (I am grateful to the staff at Quarry Bank Mill, c1990-1995, for demonstrating this process to me during family and school visits.)

¹⁹⁸ Hippolyte Verly, *Essai de Biographie Lilloise Contemporaine, 1800-1869* (Lille: Leleu, 1869), 206–8.

¹⁹⁹ Émile Vuillemin, *Le Bassin Houiller Du Pas-de-Calais : Histoire de La Recherche, de La Découverte et de L'exploitation de La Houille Dans Ce Nouveau Bassin*, vol. 1 (Lille: Danel, 1880), 76; *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Scrive's writings in the BML include work on colonialism, the linen industry, weaving, political economy and social issues. For more on Jules Émile Scrive see his edited and annotated diaries: Jules Émile Scrive, *Jules Émile Scrive, Carnets D'un Patron Lillois 1879-1891*, ed. Claudine Wallart and Didier Terrier (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2009); and the special issue of the *RN* 93, no. 390 (June 2011) which used this book and archives in the ADN to present a rich and broad portrait of the man.

²⁰¹ Contemporary remark quoted in John Rylands (1801–1888) in Colin Matthew et al., eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/24416. [Accessed 6th April 2017.]

weaver.²⁰² He also left a large endowment for the founding of 'John Rylands' Library', now part of the special collections of Manchester University.

The textile industry was a particularly effective means of capital accumulation for reasons intrinsic to the production process itself. A number of its constituent stages only required simple tools and little skill, making a forgiving environment for a new-comer and opportunities for easy profit, given the steady growth in the market. Though carding was eventually mechanised, it can be easily performed by hand, and does not require the skills of spinning, nor the machinery required for weaving.²⁰³ Initial capital could therefore be spent almost entirely on raw material. Workers, if any were employed from outside the family, were low skilled and therefore low paid and easily replaceable. Men like Joseph-Desiré Scrive were therefore able to use the carding process as a way to enter the industry, supplying carded slivers to industrialists who, unlike them, possessed the greater capital required to invest in expensive spinning machines. In this way the costs of the mechanisation of textiles were widely diffused in a process that facilitated the rapid ascent of some men and their descendants. The regional clustering of the industry was crucial to this model of economic growth and class formation, as was (in the French case) the capacity of entrepreneurs like Antoine Scrive to learn from the English example.

Rapid growth and high margins in the textile industry made such ascents possible in both Britain and France, sometimes with spectacular results.²⁰⁴ Social relations between members of this segment of the middle class, and the artisans they had left behind were often surprisingly open at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The grandfather of Edward Hopkinson (1859-1922), an electrical engineer at the large Manchester firm of Mather and Platt, was a mill owner yet he married the daughter of a stonemason. 'This kind of union was common enough in the opening unstratified social phases of the Industrial Revolution when master and men shifted their positions from one generation to the next and when the distinction between them was economic much more than

²⁰² Ibid. On the basis of the Retail Price Index the present day value of Rylands' estate would be at least £250 million, per. <https://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>.

²⁰³ Even mechanised spinning required complex skills on the part of the worker, particularly when using earlier generations of machines, on which the thread was inclined to break. It was the job of a 'piecer' to fix the broken threads together when this happened.

²⁰⁴ Charle, *Social History of France in the Nineteenth Century*, 77.

social,' his great granddaughter wrote.²⁰⁵ However this initial period of openness gave way to increased stability in the second half of the century, as manufacturing firms consolidated and the increased cost of fixed capital made social mobility more difficult to achieve.²⁰⁶ While in France there were more firms run by former workers or the sons of workers than there were in England, this statistic belies the small size of most of these firms. Much of the bulk of production was carried out in a smaller number of larger firms, especially in the most developed industries like textiles.²⁰⁷ For these reasons social mobility was a less significant feature of industrialisation, especially after 1850, than the visibility of its most remarkable examples led many contemporaries to believe. A model of the nineteenth century middle class that centres the experience of 'new men' or posits the rise of an entirely new class cannot now be defended.

The model has been challenged on two fronts. On the one hand economic historians have questioned earlier interpretations of the industrial revolution in Britain, which they have 'demystified...and cut down to size.'²⁰⁸ Elongation of the time-scale of industrialisation, and an emphasis on the diversity of manufacturing processes, have undermined the 'revolutionary' nature of industrialisation in Britain.²⁰⁹ Alongside these arguments, W.D. Rubinstein and others have de-emphasised the importance of manufacturing as a whole. 'Britain's was *never* fundamentally an industrial and manufacturing economy,' Rubinstein claimed, but was '*always*, even at the height of the industrial revolution, essentially a commercial, financial and service-based economy.'²¹⁰ By analysing probate records he identifies the commercial and financial elite of the south east as always the wealthiest section of British society, though the validity of this methodology has been challenged.²¹¹ The importance of this

²⁰⁵ Chorley, *Manchester Made Them*, 48.

²⁰⁶ Lambert-Dansette, *Quelques familles du patronat textile de Lille-Armentières, 1789-1914*, 186; Landes, 'Religion and Enterprise: The Case of the French Textile Industry'; Walton, 'The North-West,' 373; Hartmut Kaelble, *Social Mobility in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Europe and the USA in Comparative Perspective* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985), 94–118.

²⁰⁷ Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe*, 33–34.

²⁰⁸ O'Brien, 'The Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration of the British Industrial Revolution as a Conjuncture in Global History,' 123.

²⁰⁹ For an overview of the debate see Peter Temin, 'Two Views of the British Industrial Revolution,' *The Journal of Economic History* 57, no. 1 (March 1997): 63–82.

²¹⁰ Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain 1750-1990*, 24; Rubinstein, 'The Victorian Middle Classes: Wealth, Occupation and Geography,' 102–3. Emphasis as original.

²¹¹ Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture and Decline in Britain 1750-1990*, 26–28; W.D. Rubinstein, 'Wealth, Elites and the Class Structure of Modern Britain,' *Past & Present* 76, no. 1 (1977): 102–7; Martin

revision to social historians is that it seems to reduce the industrialist to marginal importance, forcing us to revise our view of this figure as the only, or as the most important, representative of the middle class. This account shares a family resemblance with the arguments of Martin Wiener and Arno Mayer. Wiener believed that industrialisation prompted a seismic transformation of British society, but that in the second half of the nineteenth century a 'counter revolution of values' saw a once-dynamic and entrepreneurial middle class absorb aristocratic norms and values, while Mayer disputed that there had ever been such a revolution in the first place.²¹²

The second challenge to portrayals of the middle class as archetypally industrial – and industry as archetypally middle class – has come from readings which emphasise both the socio-economic and professional diversity of the class, and the diversity of origins of those members who were industrialists. While it was rare for members of the aristocracy to develop industrial ventures themselves, they were enthusiastic investors. Over half the shares in the Anzin mining company, for instance, were held by aristocrats.²¹³ By 1902 a third of members of boards of French railway companies were noble, a statistic which speaks both to the increasing interest of the older elite in new sources of wealth, and the enthusiasm of the more recently wealthy for the status that aristocratic titles could bring.²¹⁴ Also common among industrialists were family roots in farming or small-scale mercantilism, a point developed in biographical studies.²¹⁵ Examples are too numerous to mention but include the Béghin family, which developed a sugar refinery on its sugar beet farm, and the Ashworth and Ashton families which moved from farming to manufacturing via a turn of the nineteenth century phase of 'putting out'.²¹⁶ This was a common move: 'Not only the yeomanry, but

Daunton, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism' and British Industry 1820-1914,' *Past & Present*, no. 132 (1991): 128–29.

²¹² Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 28; Arno Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime. Europe to the Great War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

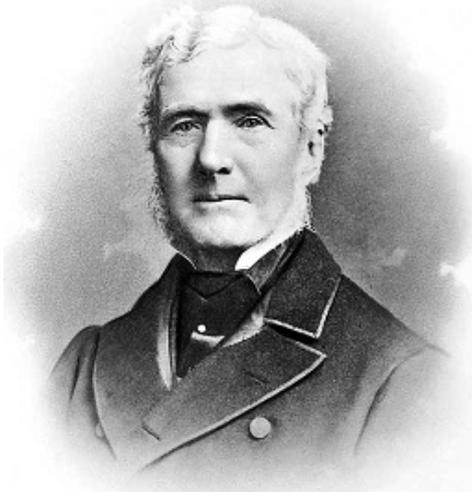
²¹³ Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe*, 31.

²¹⁴ Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 405.

²¹⁵ H.L. Malchow, *Gentlemen Capitalists. The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessman* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 342–45.

²¹⁶ For Béghin: Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, 20-21; Jean-Claude Daumas et al., eds., *Dictionnaire Historique Des Patrons Francais* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010), 70–73; For Ashworth: Henry Ashworth, (1794-1880) in Matthew et al., *ODNB*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/795; Bernard Burke, *Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry*, ed. Leslie Gilbert Pine (London: Burke's Peerage, 1952), 66–67; Reginald Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry*

almost all the farmers who have raised fortunes by agriculture, place their children in the manufacturing line,' a Lancashire writer explained in 1793.²¹⁷



Edmund Ashworth, 1800-1881. Source: www.boltonsmayors.org.uk [Accessed 2nd April 2017].

At the same time, cities like Manchester and Lille remind us that commerce and industry were much more closely aligned than a 'industrial revolution' model allows. Quarry Bank Mill, the first purpose built powered cotton factory in Britain, erected near Manchester in 1783 by the Harrow-educated Samuel Greg, was funded by the proceeds of Greg's uncles' linen merchants. Further investments were made possible by his marriage to Hannah Lightbody, who brought a £10,000 dowry from her family, Liverpool merchants.²¹⁸ The strong mercantile tradition of Flanders also informed the development of the textile industry in the region, as members of the eighteenth-century middle class engaged in what one historian has called the 'grand passage', a process of transition from entrepreneur to industrialist which preserved some of the city's mercantile character.²¹⁹ It is also important to emphasise the professional diversity of the

of Great Britain, vol. 1 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 37; Richard Cobden, *The Letters of Richard Cobden, Volume IV 1860-1865*, ed. Anthony Howe and Simon Morgan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 108–9; For Ashton: Charles Mosley, ed., *Burke's Peerage*, vol. 1 (Wilmington, Delaware: Burke's Peerage, 2003), 159–60; 'Mr Thomas Ashton', *MG*, 22nd January 1898; 'The Late Mr Thomas Ashton', *MG*, 25th January 1898; Thomas Ashton (1818–1898) in Matthew et al., *ODNB*, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/50518; 'Putting out' refers to the process by which cotton cloth was produced by hand. A merchant, such as Henry Ashworth (1728-1790) would buy raw cotton and supply it on credit to a family of hand-spinners and weavers. He would return in a few days or weeks to collect the finished cloth at an agreed price.

²¹⁷ Quoted in Rhodes Boyson, *The Ashworth Cotton Enterprise: The Rise and Fall of a Family Firm, 1818-80* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 6.

²¹⁸ Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 60-61; <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/quarry-bank/features/samuel-greg-of-quarry-bank> [Accessed 27th March 2017].

²¹⁹ Wiscart, *Au Temps Des Grand Liniers*, 41; Hirsch, 'La région lilloise: foyer industriel ou place de

middle class, especially the urban middle class, which included small but significant populations of professionals, journalists, engineers, scientists, lawyers and accountants, as well as employees in financial services which were largely localised well in to the second half of the century.²²⁰

In short, the middle class of nineteenth-century cities such as Manchester and Lille cannot be characterised as a socio-economically or professionally homogeneous whole, but was a mix of industrialists, merchants, traders, and professionals, between whom there were significant differences of wealth, politics, family background, and sometimes religion. (For this reason many historians of the period use 'middle classes' in the plural to describe this population, a term which is in line with nineteenth-century British usage as well as a tendency in the French historiography to distinguish between different types of 'bourgeois').²²¹

In response to this diversity, focus has shifted from the taxonomic investigation of socio-economic position, onto the ways that middle-class identities were discursively constructed through language and politics.²²² Rather than being rooted in a shared economic experience, 'middle class' was a representational attribute.²²³ For Dror Wahrman, the central question is therefore not 'how (or

négoce?'

²²⁰ Smith, *The Emergence of Modern Business Enterprise in France, 1800-1930*, 70, 106; Robin Pearson and David Richardson, 'Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution,' *The Economic History Review* 54, no. 4 (November 2001): 657–79; David Ayerst, *The Manchester Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971); Jean-Paul Visse, *La Press Du Nord et Du Pas-de-Calais Au Temps de l'Écho Du Nord, 1819-1914* (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2004); Robert Kargon, *Science in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977); Willis Ellwood and A. Félicité Tuxford, *Some Manchester Doctors. A Biographical Collection to Mark the 150th Anniversary of the Manchester Medical Society, 1834-1984* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); H.B. Charlton, *Portrait of a University 1851-1951: To Commemorate the Centenary of Manchester University* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1951); Jean-François Condette, *Une Faculté Dans L'histoire : La Faculté Des Lettres de Lille de 1887 À 1945* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 1999); Jean-François Condette, 'Les Enseignants D'histoire et de Géographie À La Faculté Des Lettres de Lille Sous La Troisième République (1887-1940),' *Revue Du Nord* 92, no. 339 (March 2010): 65–100; Louis Trénard, *De Douai À Lille...une Université et Son Histoire* (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 1978).

²²¹ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 12; Roger Magraw, *France 1800-1914. A Social History* (London: Pearson, 2002), 4; Rubinstein, 'The Victorian Middle Classes: Wealth, Occupation and Geography'; Langewiesche, 'Liberalism and the Middle Classes in Europe'; Pilbeam, *The Middle Classes in Europe. 1789-1914. France, German, Italy and Russia*; Alan Kidd and David Nicholls, 'Introduction: History, Culture and the Middle Classes,' in *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1–11.

²²² Simona Cerutti, 'La Construction Des Catégories Sociales,' in *Passés Recomposés. Champs et Chantiers de l'Histoire* (Paris: Autrement, 1995), 224–34; Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 2.*, 548; Crossick, 'La Bourgeoisie Britannique Au 19e Siècle.'

²²³ Magraw, *France 1800-1914. A Social History*, 5.

when) was the making of the English middle class' but rather 'how, why and when did the British come to *believe* that they lived in a society centred around a 'middle class.'²²⁴ In this respect he follows several historians of the working class in identifying language as key to the construction of class identity.²²⁵

While this approach is useful (though not without its critics)²²⁶ as a means of analysing the development of ideas and their circulation via print culture, it has less to say about the way that social class functioned as a system of power and a means for creating social solidarity. Richard Morris emphasises power as the key vector of social class, consisting of power in the state, power in ideas and culture, and power in the relations of production.²²⁷ As capitalists, employers, or rentiers, middle class Lillois and Mancunians occupied positions of power in relation to productive forces. This much is clear. Morris' contribution however is in identifying the role of social institutions and practices, especially the voluntary association and the public meeting, in representing and enacting middle class cultural and political power in a defined space.²²⁸ It was in such social interactions that power was reproduced and transmitted, and social class remade for the industrial city. Such associations existed at – and explicitly defined themselves in reference to – the level of the city. The existence of a local public sphere was greatly enhanced by the large range of local newspapers, as many as twenty three in Manchester in the 1870s.²²⁹

By their membership of intellectual and cultural associations, private clubs, charities, and local government, members of the industrial and professional middle classes developed an identity based upon intellectual cultivation, ethical probity, and marks of cultural distinction.²³⁰ Participation in these organisations

²²⁴ Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, 1.

²²⁵ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); James Vernon, 'Who's Afraid of the Linguistic Turn? The Politics of Social History and Its Discontents,' *Social History* 19 (1994): 81–97; Joyce, *Visions of the People*; Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class. Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982*, Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); William Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

²²⁶ James Thompson, 'After the Fall: Class and Political Language in Britain, 1780-1900,' *Historical Journal* 39, no. 3 (September 1996): 785–806.

²²⁷ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 1.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

²²⁹ Visse, *La Press Du Nord et Du Pas-de-Calais Au Temps de l'Écho Du Nord, 1819-1914*; Vernon, *Distant Strangers. How Britain Became Modern*, 87.

²³⁰ Odile Parsis-Barubé, 'L'occupation Savante Des Loisirs Chez Un Notable Lillois,' *Revue Du Nord* 93,

was used to develop and maintain social and kinship relationships, as well as to acquire and share technical and scientific knowledge useful to economic activity.²³¹ While there were avenues available for women to participate in these social rituals, these were mainly limited to gendered forms of philanthropy, particularly child and mother care. The public sphere was gendered as male, and highly exclusionary.²³²

Acceptance of shared values and participation in their rituals solidified communal bonds and underlined, in subtle ways, the distinctive character of the industrial middle classes. The possession of such character did not depend upon *one's own occupation* but rather on one's identification with the city itself, which was characterised as industrial.²³³ Thus the industrial city did develop subtly different modes of class identity, but this was not a *direct* product of economic forces.

Middle-class cultural and intellectual life was not lived entirely in the public sphere, however. As the home moved away from the place of business or source of wealth, it took on new characteristics, at the centre of which were the importance of privacy and the centrality of the family.²³⁴ 'Self conscious familialism was a central component' of middle-class 'social and cultural identity.'²³⁵ The Scrive family, for instance, spent six weeks every summer at Boulogne-sur-Mer, a period of time which Jules-Émile used to enjoy the company of his family, but also to socialise with other wealthy Lillois, and enjoy private rest and study.²³⁶ One morning in August 1884 is typical: it began with 'a walk on the cliff with [his son] Julio, a prayer at Calvaire des Marins, and a chat

no. 390 (June 2011): 433–34; Howard Wach, 'Culture and the Middle Classes: Popular Knowledge in Industrial Manchester,' *Journal of British Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 1988): 375–404; Adeline Daumard, *Les Bourgeois et La Bourgeoisie En France Depuis 1815* (Paris: Aubier, 1987), 389; Daumas et al., *Dictionnaire Historique Des Patrons Francais*, 747–53.

²³¹ Margaret C. Jacob and David Reid, 'Culture et Culture Technique Des Premiers Fabricants de Coton de Manchester,' *Revue D'histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 50, no. 2 (June 2003): 131–53.

²³² Magraw, *France 1800-1914. A Social History*, 40; Hall and Davidoff, *Family Fortunes*; Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*; Leonore Davidoff, 'The Legacy of the Nineteenth-Century Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant's Son,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): 29.

²³³ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 319.

²³⁴ Malchow, *Gentlemen Capitalists. The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessman*, 366; Davidoff, 'The Legacy of the Nineteenth-Century Bourgeois Family and the Wool Merchant's Son,' 30–31.

²³⁵ Mary Jo Maynes, 'Class Cultures and Images of Proper Family Life,' in *Family Life in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 195.

²³⁶ Parsis-Barubé, 'L'occupation Savante Des Loisirs Chez Un Notable Lillois,' 435.

with Julio, [Édouard] Agache, Mademoiselle de Poderlie. A lovely time.' Later that day Jules-Émile went to the bank, and then to the local library to look at albums assembled by the local Egyptologist François Mariette.²³⁷ At the centre of the various roles that he played on this typical morning – father, Christian, friend, businessman, intellectual – was the figure of the bourgeois man, defined by his culture and values.

Though Scrive – and Agache, another spinner – were among the wealthiest men encountered in this thesis, the social role of friendship and leisure were not unique to the small minority of the very rich. The diaries of the Manchester lawyer John Ernest Phythian (1858-1935), the son of a small-ware manufacturer, make frequent reference to conversations with close friends and walks together near his home, as well as features of domestic life like the sound of a grocer's delivery or a child practising piano.²³⁸ Lives of quiet domesticity were not the unique possession of the most wealthy, while Phythian's love of the local landscape which also emerges in his diaries, indicate the locally rooted nature of his existence.

While it is important not to exaggerate the extent to which the middle classes were culturally, socially or politically united, the picture that emerges in this thesis is that the local state was an effective means of checking, regulating and channelling political conflict within the class. As briefly mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, and discussed at length in Chapters 2 and 3 with reference to specific cultural fields, the powers of the local state grew more or less continuously during the second half of the long nineteenth century. The middle classes were the most powerful actors in the local state throughout the period, and they increasingly recognised the vital role it must play in the preservation of the existing social order and the achievement of their cultural, economic and political ends.²³⁹ Municipal government therefore became the institutional structure that lay at the centre of networks of middle-class power, as

²³⁷ Ibid., 436.

²³⁸ John Ernest Phythian, Diaries, 1881-1900, MCL JEP GB127.M270/9/20/4. For example: 22nd May 1885, 1st February 1886, 2nd February 1886, 4th March 1886, 5th April 1886; 'Smallware' refers to small or narrow pieces of fabric such as napkins. Such a manufacturer would have required smaller premises and less capital than Rylands, Scrive, etc.

²³⁹ Jean Lambert-Dansette, *Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France, Tome IV: Le temps des pionniers, 1830-1880. Condottiere et bourgeois*, Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2007), 'Chapter Three – Les Lieux de Pouvoir', 439–84.

well as its most potent instrument and symbol.

1.3 'A place in the world': The horizons of the provincial middle classes

In 1851, a few months before he would be removed from the Conseil du Nord for refusing the oath of allegiance to Napoléon III, Pierre Legrand published *Le Bourgeois de Lille*, a two volume collection of essays assembled from his previous writings in local periodicals.²⁴⁰ Legrand was a lawyer, a 'distinguished' member of the Lille bar, a liberal democrat in his politics, a 'brilliant orator', and a well known writer on issues of jurisprudence.²⁴¹ His sons Pierre (1834-1895) and Géry (1837-1902) would both go on to study law, but ultimately pursue lives in politics, Pierre as Minister of Commerce in several governments during the 1880s, under which responsibility he organised the Universal Exposition of 1889, and Géry as Mayor of Lille from 1881 to 1896.²⁴²

In the title piece, a reproduction of an essay published in the liberal *Écho du Nord* in 1833, Legrand explained that he intended to emulate the Parisian Anaïs Bazin, like him a lawyer and writer. Bazin's *Le Bourgeois de Paris* had appeared in a collected volume of essays on Parisian life, and seemed to capture something of the spirit of its subject, the social life and mores of the middle-class Parisian man.²⁴³ Though he admired this essay, Legrand explained, it did not apply in the city by the banks of the Deûle: the Lille bourgeois was a specific type, and required his own portrait.²⁴⁴

For Legrand, the key characteristic of this bourgeois was his insularity, that led him to cultivate a politics that was 'neither exclusively royalist, nor centrist, nor republican,' but simply sought the most stable conditions for prosperous commerce. This attitude went beyond political neutrality for the sake of expediency, Legrand explained, and amounted to a world view whose horizons went only as far as the city boundary. As such the Lille bourgeois was like the bourgeois of 'the Swiss or German cities of the middle ages' jealously guarding

²⁴⁰ Pierre Legrand, *Le Bourgeois de Lille, Esquisses Locales et Voyages, Excursions*, 2 vols. (Lille: L'Artiste, 1851).

²⁴¹ P Arnous, *Pierre Legrand, Un Parlementaire Francais de 1876 a 1895* (Paris: Plon, 1907), 1; Adolphe Robert, Edgar Bourloton, and Gaston Congny, eds., *Dictionnaire Des Parlementaires Francais*, vol. 5 (Paris: Bourloton, 1891), 71; Verly, *Essai de Biographie Lilloise Contemporaine, 1800-1869*, 137.

²⁴² Robert, Bourloton, and Congny, *Dictionnaire Des Parlementaires Francais*, 5:71–72.

²⁴³ Anaïs Bazin, 'Le Bourgeois de Paris,' in *Paris Ou Le Livre Des Cent-et-Un*, vol. 1 (Paris: Ladvocat, 1831).

²⁴⁴ Legrand, *Le Bourgeois de Lille*, 3.

'his local customs and municipal institutions' and indifferent to the world outside. 'If he receives kings graciously,' Legrand went on, 'it is out of curiosity and politeness: he would do the same for the Pope or for the Emperor of China... In a word, the Lille Bourgeois is essentially municipal. In the street, he salutes an adjunct to the mayor, and he passes by the prefect without looking at him.'²⁴⁵

Although he intended this brief portrait to be satirical and amusing, Legrand wished to make a serious point. 'The old municipal system has had its day' he explained, 'the rights granted in hatred of the claims of feudalism should not be turned against the central government, [today the] source of independence and liberty.' Evoking the belfry that traditionally adorned every town in French-Flanders, he urged the Lille bourgeois 'to climb today to [the height of] the watchman's lantern,' gaze upon 'the expanded horizon,' and let 'his ideas follow the flight of his eyes.'²⁴⁶ By doing this, and applying the same ardour and affection for the country as he did for the city, the Lille bourgeois would exchange 'the substance of a city-dweller', for 'the virtues of a citizen.'²⁴⁷

In this passage, Legrand was making a profound argument about political and social modernisation, suggesting that they could only be meaningfully achieved at the national, not the local scale. A person whose focus was upon the city was a *citadin*, but if his 'ideas follow[ed] the flight of his eyes' and encompassed the whole national space, he would be a *citoyen*. This shift in vocabulary implied not only an expansion of one's geographical horizons, it also articulated a project of refinement, and a qualitative transformation of the local political culture to a higher form that was identified with the central state.

Legrand saw his work as part of a larger French literary tradition, represented by Anaïs Bazin, but also as an engagement with a critical theme in nineteenth century debates about identity and the state. Since the Revolution, the country had had a 'deep-seated fixation with the state and national unity', which placed

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 12–13. The position of Prefect was first introduced into the French political system by Napoleon Bonaparte and remained in place through successive monarchical, imperial and republican governments. The Prefect was appointed by the Minister of the Interior to represent the central government in the Department (in this case, the Nord). A mayoral adjunct in contrast was selected locally.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 115–116.

²⁴⁷ 'Il y a en lui plus que l'étoffe d'un *citadin*. Il y a les vertus d'un *citoyen*.' Ibid., 116.

the local and the national in a dynamic and sometimes fraught tension.²⁴⁸

Rhetoric such as Legrand's appeared to identify the nation-state as the only source of significant historical innovation, while dismissing the local as 'particularistic and retrograde.'²⁴⁹ In the context of improvements in transport that appeared set to turn a city like Rouen into 'a suburb of Paris', it seemingly made little sense to some to maintain ideas about the local that now seemed outmoded.²⁵⁰

Recognising this theme in much French political writing of the nineteenth century, and identifying a nationalising effect (and intention) in Third Republic policies around education and military conscription, some twentieth century historians have described a process of nation-building from the centre. In this analysis, the primary agent of political and social change in nineteenth century France was the government in Paris, which employed new forms of state power to marginalise local identities and forms of civic culture in favour of national equivalents, oriented around the nation-state.²⁵¹ As such, the growing middle class in cities such as Lille increasingly saw itself as part of a national middle class, and pursued its political projects through national institutions.

However, in this thesis I follow more recent revisionist scholarship which suggests that as the nineteenth century unfolded, the local and national existed in a symbiotic relationship in which each was 'interpenetrat[ed]' with the other.²⁵² This was especially true in large cities such as Lille, where 'networks of urban voluntary associations' were central to the construction of bourgeois male identity.²⁵³ Instead of progressively abandoning the local in favour of a national identity that they saw as inherently more modern, the Lille middle classes saw it as an important concept through which they could give concrete shape and meaning to their ideas about politics, culture and society. Local political, social

²⁴⁸ Gerson, *The Pride of Place*, 1.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Michel Chevalier, *Religion Saint-Simonienne; Systeme de La Mediterranee* (Paris: Globe, 1832), 37.

²⁵¹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1990* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1990), 107; Miguel Cabo and Fernando Molina, 'The Long and Winding Road of Nationalization: Eugen Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen* in Modern European History (1976—2006),' *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (April 1, 2009): 264–86.

²⁵² Haupt, Muller, and Woolf, 'Introduction,' 5–6; Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany*. For a more detailed discussion of this historiography please see the introduction to this thesis.

²⁵³ Magraw, *France 1800-1914. A Social History*, 40.

and cultural institutions, such as the municipality, clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the opera or the Society of Arts, were all sources of social power and status in the city. These institutions were themselves subject to continual transformations, some of which will be discussed in this thesis.

However, my argument goes beyond the claims of historians such as Gerson, cited above, that French identity was created 'at the juncture of Paris and the localities'.²⁵⁴ This claim is true but it is not sufficient to understand the process of self-identification pursued by the Lillois middle classes in the late nineteenth century, which involved not only a dialogue between the local and the national, but also an engagement with ideas of the transnational, the European and the imperial. In other words, though Pierre Legrand, writing in 1833, might have seen the middle-class project of the nineteenth century as being achieved necessarily and exclusively at the level of the nation, this was not how it came to be pursued in Lille. Men such as Legrand's son Géry, the Mayor from 1881 to 1896, had a much more heterogeneous sense of the scale at which they should exist and act. Géry Legrand and republicans like him saw themselves as an urban elite who derived their legitimacy from their capacity to balance competing local interests and secure for the city wealth, social welfare, and the developments associated with modernisation. To secure these they found it useful to cultivate local identity, and national identity *and* a sense that the city was connected beyond the nation to cities, regions and nations across the world.

The transformation of the horizons of the provincial middle classes in the nineteenth century followed a concomitant transformation in the economies of both Lille and Manchester. Urbanisation, industrialisation, social upheaval and political change led to the emergence of a new kind of polity, the industrial city. In this new reality the middle classes were no longer served by the kind of insularity criticised by Pierre Legrand. The very character and significance of the city had changed. As John Ernest Phythian wrote in preparatory notes for a series of lectures on the history of the city to be given through an educational programme for the working class, industrialisation was 'the enormous change...

²⁵⁴ Gerson, *The Pride of Place*, 8.

Manchester a different meaning... A place in the world... Synonymous with a phase of civilisation.²⁵⁵ Phythian recognised that the industrial city represented a distinctive historical society whose industrial character made it intimately associated with important global changes.

The middle classes of the nineteenth century industrial city made considerable efforts to explore and discover the world into which their city had newly emerged. Business interests provided an obvious motive for foreign travel, as was the case for Antoine Scrive, discussed above. Businessmen's sons were more likely to have been abroad than the country gentry.²⁵⁶ Later in the century the logic of profit-seeking also took local capitalists to distant markets, notably to Russia in the case of the Lillois.²⁵⁷ Given the impact of later competition, it is an irony that most mills in Bombay were set up with Lancastrian machinery, expertise, and sometimes capital. 'Lancashire taught the world' in cotton spinning, according to one historian.²⁵⁸ In the course of an enquiry into competition from Bombay mills conducted in 1887, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce heard from witnesses including a James Scott who was investing in setting up four new mills in Bombay, Herbert Greaves whose company James Greaves and Co operated in Manchester and Bombay, and James Cocker who had worked in Oldham for ten years before working for six years as a mill manager in Bombay.²⁵⁹

The Nord (particularly the coastal sub-region known as the 'Westhoek') had a strong connection with the low countries, rooted in history, culture and geography.²⁶⁰ Environmental factors, particularly the barrier represented by the

²⁵⁵ John Ernest Phythian, *Lecture Notes-History of Manchester Series-Lecture 4*, n.d. JEP, MCL, M270/9/28/1.

²⁵⁶ Malchow, *Gentlemen Capitalists. The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessman*, 367–8.

²⁵⁷ For French involvement in the Polish textile industry see John P. McKay, *Pioneers for Profit: Foreign Entrepreneurship and Russian Industrialization, 1885-1913: Foreign Entrepreneurship and Russian Industrialization, 1885-1913* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), 49–50.

²⁵⁸ David J. Jeremy, 'Lancashire and the International Diffusion of Technology,' in *The Lancashire Cotton Industry. A History since 1700*, ed. Mary B. Rose (Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1996), 237.

²⁵⁹ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, *Bombay and Lancashire Cotton Spinning Inquiry: Minutes of Evidence and Reports*; Patterns of mobility of capital, persons and careers between Bombay and Manchester were replicated between Dundee and Calcutta, see: Gordon Stewart, *Jute and Empire : The Calcutta Jute Wallahs and the Landscapes of Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); 'In Dundee at the present moment there would be ten good applicants for any vacant Calcutta billet', remark dated 1894, quoted in Jim Tomlinson, *Dundee and the Empire. 'Juteopolis' 1850 - 1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 29.

²⁶⁰ Timothy Baycroft, 'Changing Identities in the Franco-Belgian Borderland in the Nineteenth and

higher ground of the Collines d'Artois, and the cross-border flow of the rivers Deûle and Lys, encouraged its inhabitants to orientate themselves northwards: 'the natural aspect of the Nord [was] Bruges or Antwerp.'²⁶¹ Geographical connections had encouraged the long-standing development of trading relationships, particularly along the navigable rivers, which continued during the proto-industrialisation of both Belgium and the Nord, which saw high levels of both seasonal and permanent migration.²⁶² The integration of Belgian migrants into the city was a critical aspect of the formation of the local working class, making a considerable impact on popular culture.²⁶³ Although the mixture of languages and dialects in the city meant that French remained the dominant language of common usage, and irredentism was never a feature of local politics at any level, nevertheless the idea of the city's 'Flemish' identity became a marked feature of political debates around the turn of the twentieth century.²⁶⁴ Municipal councillors framed their interest in 'that spirit and tradition which one calls local colour' as a forward-looking, modernist movement rather than a retrograde step as Pierre Legrand might have characterised it.²⁶⁵ The cultivation of Flemish identity both informed the development of the relationship between the region and the nation, and fed into increased local interest in Belgian and Dutch cities, which were frequent reference points during discussions about administration in the municipal council, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.

The large numbers of Irish people who migrated to Manchester during the nineteenth century were in some ways equivalents of the Belgians in Lille, but their presence did not evoke the city's historic or cultural heritage and their presence had minimal impact on local middle-class culture.²⁶⁶ Much more

Twentieth Centuries,' *French History* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 417–38.

²⁶¹ Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire*, 2.

²⁶² Baycroft, 'Changing Identities in the Franco-Belgian Borderland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,' 422.

²⁶³ Declerq and Vanden Borre, 'Cultural Integration of Belgian Migrants in Northern France (1870-1914): A Study of Popular Songs'; Pierre Pierrard, *Chansons Populaire de Lille Sous Le Second Empire* (La Tour d'Aigues: Aube, 1998).

²⁶⁴ Baycroft, *Culture, Identity and Nationalism: French Flanders in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 71; Gerson, *The Pride of Place*, 19; For example in a discussion about opening a local school of architecture: 'we will revive that special Flemish architecture which is disappearing, because although we are French, we have Flemish blood in our veins.' Danchin, CML 16th February 1905.

²⁶⁵ Danchin, CML 16th February 1905; The cultivation of the Flemish trope in Lille is consonant with Maiken Umbach's work on Hamburg: Umbach, *German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism, 1890-1924*.

²⁶⁶ William J. Lowe, *The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working-Class Community* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

significant was the presence of large numbers of Germans, most of whom were middle class and came to Manchester as merchants, and a small but significant population of Persians, Armenians and Sephardic Jews.²⁶⁷ In 1870 about a tenth of Manchester cotton merchants were German immigrants or their second or third generation descendants.²⁶⁸ As late as 1910-1912 there was a German language newspaper in Manchester, *Manchester Nachrichten*.²⁶⁹ This population had an impact on local culture beyond its numbers, making up a significant portion of the audience of the Hallé Orchestra – which will be discussed in the conclusion of Chapter 2.²⁷⁰

Some Mancunians developed a sense of affinity with Germans based on the perception that German values were especially complementary to those of the Mancunian bourgeoisie. On the one hand, Germany was depicted as a society of independent-minded urban burghers, who were resistant to the centralising state. 'Historical self-conceptions in provincial England and Germany began to coalesce,' with Elizabeth Gaskell's mill owner in *North and South* declaring, 'we are Teutonic up here in Darkshire... We hate laws made for us at a distance... We stand up for self-government, and oppose centralisation.'²⁷¹

Germanophilia was also associated with the cultivation of intellectual and cultural distinction in the classic liberal mode. The Schiller Anstalt, a society founded to mark the anniversary of the poet's birth, had 300 members – of all nationalities, not just Germans – by 1866.²⁷² Manchester University was shaped largely along German lines, not in emulation of Oxford and Cambridge.²⁷³ Even as late as 1912, the Mayors of Manchester and Salford attended a dinner of 300 people held to mark the Kaiser's birthday.²⁷⁴ The editor of the *Manchester*

²⁶⁷ Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

²⁶⁸ Panikos Panayi, *German Immigrants in Britain During the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 102–3.

²⁶⁹ Jonathan Westaway, 'The German Community in Manchester, Middle-Class Culture and the Development of Mountaineering in Britain, C. 1850-1914,' *The English Historical Review* 124, no. 508 (June 2009): 580.

²⁷⁰ 'The Germans had given the place a solid culture; they came to Manchester for trade and brought their music with them.' Neville Cardus, *Autobiography [1947]* (London: Collins, 1975), 48.

²⁷¹ Westaway, 'The German Community in Manchester, Middle-Class Culture and the Development of Mountaineering in Britain, C. 1850-1914,' 578.

²⁷² W.O. Henderson, *The Life of Friedrich Engels: Volume One* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 226–227.

²⁷³ Charlton, *Portrait of a University 1851-1951: To Commemorate the Centenary of Manchester University*, 67.

²⁷⁴ 'Interesting Celebration in Manchester – Maintaining Anglo-German Friendship', *MG*, 29th Jan 1912.

Guardian, C.P. Scott, gave a speech:

In this great metropolitan city which draws to itself representatives of many other lands the Germans are by far the greatest and the most important of the communities which have come to us, and we feel here in Manchester we owe them a great debt of gratitude for all that they have contributed to the common life of this city – to its culture, to its science, to its commerce.²⁷⁵

In his memoir, written after the First World War had soured Anglo-German relations, the first Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University Alfred Hopkinson, evoked his love of music and fond memories of hiking in the Alps to dream of a counter-factual Germania, centred on Vienna rather than Berlin.²⁷⁶

The mechanisms by which elite cosmopolitanism was incorporated into a coherent local culture were the same as those that served the discursive creation of the middle classes: social ritual, the cultivation of educational and cultural distinction, and participation in voluntary associations. A biography of the German musician Charles Hallé, born Karl Halle in Hagen, Westphalia, who conducted an orchestra in Manchester for almost forty years, recounts a visit he received from a modest clergyman who wished to hire Hallé to give him music lessons.

In leaving, the visitor called [Hallé's] attention to his gloves, which he only managed to pull on with difficulty.

'They have seen service', he said, 'but as I am a poor clergyman, they must see more. They cost me 3 francs 75 centimes.'

'Oh, did you buy them in Paris or Brussels?'

'No, I have never been out of England; I bought them in Market Street'

'Then why did you talk about francs and centimes?'

'Are you not a Frenchman? I gave you the French for half-a-crown.'²⁷⁷

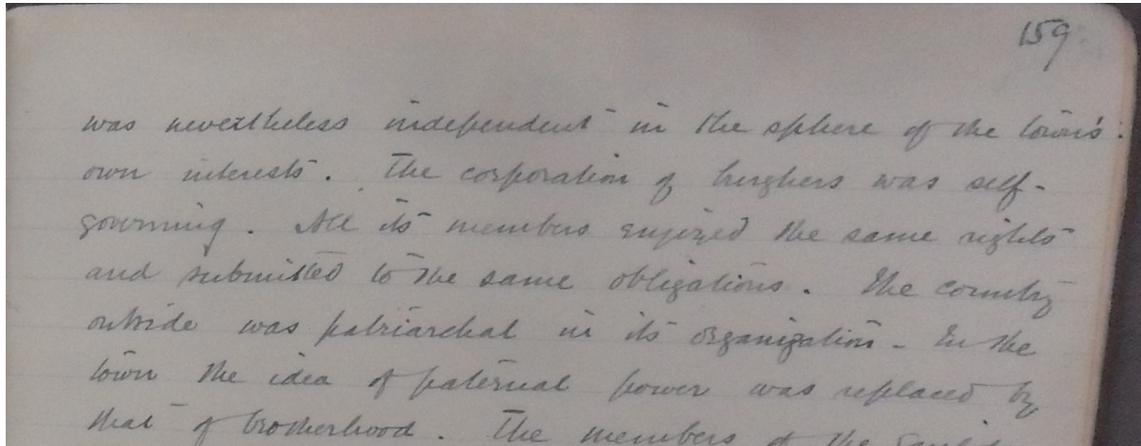
There are a number of ways we might interpret this anecdote. On the one hand, this earnest and untravelled clergyman made a basic error about Hallé's place of origin, and we might therefore see local cosmopolitanism as passing him by. But his attempt to learn the violin from the finest musician in Manchester and to accommodate himself to his perception of that man's foreignness, suggest an

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Sir Alfred Hopkinson, *Penultima* (London: Martin Hopkinson, 1930), 18–27.

²⁷⁷ Manchester Weekly Times, *Sir Charles Hallé. A Sketch of His Career as a Musician* (Manchester: Heywood, 1890), 33.

aspiration to acquire cultural markers of status that connect the Manchester middle classes to a continent-wide bourgeois experience. The clergyman's embarrassing error is of much less significance than the aspirations revealed in the attempt.



John Ernest Phythian, *Notes for Lecture on 'The Cities of Belgium'*, Source: JEP MCL M270/9/28/4, 159.

The transformation of the city challenged members of the local middle classes to develop new ideas about how it should be designed, organised and governed. Their solutions depended upon both a re-rooting of their class in the city, and an ever greater openness to the world outside. Phythian's notes for a lecture on 'The Cities of Belgium' reveal how he used the early modern Belgian city as a model for the present day industrial city, and its middle classes. What he referred to as 'Belgian democracy' involved a 'self-governing corporation of Burghers,' operating on a principle of brotherhood rather than paternalist power.²⁷⁸ This communal idea, which he linked with William Morris' vision of widespread artisanal production, was central to Phythian's vision of the perfect city: 'industry and commerce were carried on in Belgian cities in noble furtherance of a fine communal life.'²⁷⁹ Cities, he thought were 'like individuals, their art like the manner and dress of individuals, and an expression of character.' But, he went on, 'like individuals, not living to themselves, hence general history.'²⁸⁰

This remark is crucial to the argument of the thesis. Phythian, like his peers in

²⁷⁸ Phythian, *Lecture Notes-The Cities of Belgium*, JEP, MCL M270/9/28/4, 159.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 167-169.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

both Lille and Manchester, made sense of the city in the second half of the nineteenth century on the basis of two linked ideas. On the one hand, the city was individual and distinctive. It was necessary to understand it on these terms, identifying and emphasising its most important characteristics, foremost of which was its industrial character and its association with productive economic activity. On the other hand, the city – as a city – was not unique, because it was part of a European network of cities, many of which faced the same challenges of administration, and developed responses from which other cities could learn.²⁸¹

The identification of 'the city' as the crucial scale of activity in the late nineteenth century allowed for the achievement of three distinct, but linked processes. Firstly, middle classes used their network of local associations and social connections to transform the discursive meaning of the middle class and secure their dominant position in local political institutions. Secondly the city, in the form of the municipal government, became a point of tension with a centralising state whose actions were sometimes regarded as an unwanted intrusion. This dynamic was more present in Lille than Manchester. Thirdly the city, in the form either of the municipal government or other institutions such as the Chambers of Commerce, became the most important means by which the provincial middle classes made transnational connections. In all of these functions, the middle classes were the most important actors.

Given the focus on the interplay between the local and the transnational, and the ways in which the two scales were connected often without reference to the nation or the capital city, the social history of the middle classes contained in this chapter is a crucial bedrock upon which to base the rest of the thesis. A brief discussion of the use of the biographical method follows, before the chapter concludes.

²⁸¹ Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Taking up the Bet on Connections: A Municipal Contribution.,' *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 4 (2002): 507–27; Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen, *Another Global City: Historical Explorations Into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Jean Joana, 'L'action Publique Municipale Sous Le IIIe République (1884-1939). Bilan et Perspectives de Recherches,' *Politix*, no. 42 (1998): 151–78.

1.4 The flexibility of the local: a biographical approach

It may not seem quite the thing for the chairman of the Art Gallery, but never mind that, let's be jolly.

Walter Butterworth, 1909²⁸²

The approach taken in this thesis has been in a small way inspired by the work of Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff. In their book *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class*, they used biographies of their historical subjects as an entry point for their project of 'reconstruct[ing] the world as provincial middle-class people saw it, experienced it and made sense of it,' concentrating especially on 'how it was structured.'²⁸³ Though this thesis discusses public, rather than domestic, life, I hope to emulate the way Hall and Davidoff linked the individual and the social, an approach that Christophe Charle called 'a social history of individuals.'²⁸⁴ With reference to a different, more dramatic historical context, Maurice Agulhon also used a collective biographical approach to illuminate the meaning and significance of the revolution of 1848.²⁸⁵ Like all four of these historians in their different ways, I use this chapter to tell 'who' the provincial middle classes were, before discussing their ideas in the following three chapters.

Walter Butterworth was born in 1862 and grew up in the East Manchester district of Newton Heath, which was around three miles from the city centre. At the time of his birth the neighbourhood was on the edge of the continuously built up area of the city. Land was therefore abundant and cheap; a number of heavy engineering firms opened large modern works in the area during the second half of the century, including Mather and Platt, which made textile machinery, and later electric dynamos and pumps, and the steel founders Heenan and Froude. Newton Heath was predominantly working class in character, and Butterworth's childhood was modest, the family living in a street of small terraced houses. Their neighbouring households were headed by a stone mason, a saw maker, and a house painter. Walter's father Thomas was a glass

²⁸² Walter Butterworth giving a tour of Queen's Park Art Gallery in 1909, quoted L.M. Angus-Butterworth, *Lancashire Literary Worthies* (St Andrew: W.C. Henderson, 1980), 36.

²⁸³ Hall and Davidoff, *Family Fortunes*, 13–35.

²⁸⁴ Christophe Charle, 'Contemporary French Social History: Crisis or Hidden Renewal?,' *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 57.

²⁸⁵ Maurice Agulhon, *Les Quarante-Huitards* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

blower.²⁸⁶

Walter was educated at local schools and at Bennett Street Sunday School – with which he would remain connected throughout his life – until the age of nine when he began work.²⁸⁷ But the family was upwardly mobile. By the time Walter was 18 his father described himself as a 'glass manufacturer', and Walter was working as a shorthand clerk, probably in his father's business.²⁸⁸ In 1886 Butterworth Brothers was incorporated as a Limited Company, with Walter appointed as Managing Director, and the whole family moving to suburban Withington.²⁸⁹ The company initially produced glass accessories for use in the textile industry, but expanded into products for mechanical, scientific and industrial uses of various kinds.²⁹⁰ 'Though endowed with a fine brain and abundant energy,' according to a friend, Walter prioritised his interests in music, art, literature and public service over the accumulation of wealth.²⁹¹ Nevertheless his business was successful, and he was able to move to a large house in Altrincham, around ten miles to the south of Manchester, where he died in 1935.

Though his childhood education had been limited, Butterworth took evening classes at Owen's College, a higher education institution founded by a bequest from a Manchester textile merchant, which eventually became the present-day University of Manchester with the help of benefactors including Thomas Ashton, mentioned above. The University later granted Butterworth an honorary MA in modern languages.²⁹²

His intellectual and cultural interests ranged widely, including languages,

²⁸⁶ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1871, TNA: Piece: 4056; Folio: 30; Page: 53; GSU roll: 846342.

²⁸⁷ 'Death of Mr W Butterworth – A Distinguished Citizen', *MG*, 2nd September 1935.

²⁸⁸ Census Returns of England and Wales, 1881, TNA: RG11; Piece: 4009; Folio: 117; Page: 35; GSU roll: 1341957.

²⁸⁹ 'A Note on the History and Products of an Ancient Firm of Glassmakers,' n.d., Butterworth Bros. Ltd promotional material, Angus Butterworth collection, UOS, 8/2; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891, TNA: RG12; Piece: 3162; Folio: 112; Page: 26; GSU roll: 6098272.

²⁹⁰ For example an undated catalogue dating after 1913 (it refers to tests made in 1913) includes designs for lamps to be used on ships, trams, locomotives, mines. 'Butterworth Bros. Ltd. Catalogue', n.d. (post 1913), Angus Butterworth collection, op cit.

²⁹¹ From a letter by Professor W.E.S Turner, Department of Glass Technology, University of Sheffield, quoted in L.M. Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. Man of Letters*, Belfield Papers, No 3, 1977, 12.

²⁹² 'Death of Mr W Butterworth – A Distinguished Citizen', op cit.

literature, art and music. By the time of his death he could speak or read English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Classical Greek, Latin, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish.²⁹³ The latter three languages he had learned during the three and a half years he spent interned in Germany, having had the misfortune to be attending the *Bayreuther Festspiele* when the First World War began.²⁹⁴ He published articles on many subjects, some in *Odds and Ends*, an annual magazine produced by the St Paul's Literary and Educational Society, an initiative of the Bennett Street Sunday School, others with Manchester publishers.²⁹⁵ He also loved to spend time outdoors, writing about cycling and walking in the countryside around Manchester.²⁹⁶

Butterworth played an active role in Manchester Liberal politics, serving as Councillor in Newton Heath, where his firm was based, from 1904 to 1912.²⁹⁷ He was committed to public service, and participated in many voluntary organisations, including at various times the Whitworth Institute, Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, Manchester Regional College of Art, Manchester Literary Club, and Orpheus Glee Club, with which he took a group of singers on tour to Germany in 1912.²⁹⁸ Upon his death the Manchester Guardian remarked that 'he left his mark on Manchester, and he would not have wished for another monument.'²⁹⁹ Most significantly, during his time as a Councillor he served as chairman of the Art Gallery Committee, the body which managed the municipal art gallery. In this position he championed a series of wide-reaching reforms, to be discussed in Chapter 3, largely based upon his knowledge of galleries in other parts of Europe. Sharing with others 'the deep pleasure he found in art

²⁹³ L.M. Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. A patron of art*. Belfield Papers, No. 2. 1975. British Library X419/2840, 3.

²⁹⁴ Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. Man of Letters*, 6.

²⁹⁵ An incomplete list of his writing includes 'Bullfighting in Spain,' *Odds and Ends*, 1896, SPLE M38/4/2/42; 'On Boethius' Consolations of Philosophy,' *Odds and Ends*, 1906, SPLE, M38/4/2/52; *The Childhood and Youth of Ernest Renan* (Manchester: Heywood, 1893); *Poema Del Cid* (Manchester: Heywood, 1895); *Sir Philip Sidney and His Arcadia* (Manchester: Heywood, 1897); *Symbol and Allegory in Spencer* (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1902); *The Picadilly Site* (Manchester, 1910); *Ford Madox Brown and Manchester* (*From Manchester Quarterly*, June 1922) (Manchester: Manchester Quarterly, 1922); *Dante and Craftsmanship* (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1925).

²⁹⁶ Walter Butterworth, 'Country Cycling in May,' *Odds and Ends*, 1895, SPLE GB127.M38/4/2/41; Walter Butterworth, 'Stanley Gill: A Reverie,' *Odds and Ends* (*supplement*), 1895, SPLE, GB127.M38/4/2/41a.

²⁹⁷ 'Newton Heath Ward Election, A Liberal Victory', *MG*, 6th February 1904; 'Manchester Council: Elections of Committees', *MG*, 9th November 1912.

²⁹⁸ Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. A patron of art*. Belfield Papers, No. 2. op cit., 4-5.

²⁹⁹ 'Walter Butterworth', *MG*, 2nd September 1935.

[was his] constant desire.³⁰⁰

Despite the remarkable cosmopolitanism of his tastes, Butterworth was attached to local culture, and seems to have seen a place for it in the revitalised civic culture that he sought to encourage through his work on the Art Gallery Committee. For instance, during the course of giving a guided tour of the 'branch' art gallery at Queen's Park, in the working class neighbourhood of Harpurhey, near where he was born, he stopped at a portrait of the Lancashire dialect writer Edwin Waugh, and remarked that 'painting was not the whole of art; poetry had its place, and music.' He then spoke about the human interest in the stories that Waugh told, before singing 'Come Whoam to thi Childer an' me', a song about a housewife imploring her husband to return from the pub. 'It may not seem quite the thing for the chairman of the Art Gallery,' he said before beginning the song, 'but never mind that, let's be jolly.' He urged the audience to join in with the choruses.³⁰¹

Though it might be suggested that Butterworth was playing up to (patronising?) assumptions about his audience's tastes, other evidence indicates that his interest in dialect literature was genuine. One year, while making a toast 'to the Club and its President' at the Manchester Literary Club's Christmas supper, Butterworth praised the work it had done to encourage local literature and preserve the Lancashire dialect.³⁰² Among other things, he was likely referring to the club's support for the erection of a statue of Ben Brierley, which had been unveiled at Queen's Park the year before by George Milner, the chairman of the club.³⁰³ In Brierley's writings, Milner declared in his speech, 'a man would get a clearer idea of what Lancashire people were in the end of the nineteenth century than from any elaborate or purely historical volume... he wrote of the people and for the people... He spoke their language and gave expression to their feelings.' The Lord Mayor of Salford, Sir William Bailey (1838-1913) spoke after Milner, remarking to laughter from the audience how well Alderman Sir John Harwood was able to recite Brierley's story of a stuffed monkey.

³⁰⁰ Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. A patron of art*. Belfield Papers, No. 2. op cit., 4.

³⁰¹ Angus-Butterworth, *Lancashire Literary Worthies*, 36.

³⁰² 'Manchester Literary Club', *MG*, 20th December 1899.

³⁰³ 'The Ben Brierley Statue: Unveiling at Queen's Park, Mr. G. Milner on Dialectal Writers', *MG*, 2nd May 1898.

Moments such as this underline the value of the discursive construction of 'the local' to provincial middle classes seeking to maintain their social and political dominance in a changing city. The discursive or rhetorical deployment of the local could be used to create ties of solidarity across class: by measure of wealth and political status *Sir William Bailey* was very removed from the people of Manchester and Salford, yet in so far as he could present himself as 'local' these differences could be balanced against points held in common. Local identity could therefore function as a means of social influence for the ruling class.

It might also function to make sense of long term social and economic change: the *idea of the local* could represent continuity in the face of instability. In a related sense it might function as a way for individuals like Butterworth and Bailey to make sense of their own class trajectory. The fathers of both men had begun their working lives in the employ of somebody else – Bailey's father John as a letter press printer – but started small businesses which their sons had turned to considerable success and profit despite minimal formal education.³⁰⁴ Perhaps, for the subsequent generation, their local identity represented something that, unlike their class position, had not changed.

As well as being an idea, or an identity, the local was also important as a *scale of activity or organisation*. This was true for Walter Butterworth, as it was also for Léon Lefebvre, (1848-1916). Léon and his brothers were partners in the company of Lefebvre-Ducrocq, a printers which had been founded in 1847 by their father Édouard Lefebvre (1814-1889), and maternal grandfather M. Ducrocq.³⁰⁵ Édouard, the son of a carpenter, had set up the business with his father in law after serving apprenticeships as a printer in Lille and Paris.

Léon Lefebvre described himself as 'a passionate lover of the theatre, and a regular at [the theatre] of [his] home city from a very young age.'³⁰⁶ By his late teens he spent 'nearly every evening at the theatre.' Lefebvre-Ducrocq printed dozens of works on the theatre, including cheap copies of popular plays and songs performed in Lille, and according to Lefebvre this aspect of his

³⁰⁴ 'Sir William H Bailey: A Notable Citizen', *MG*, 24th November 1913.

³⁰⁵ Barbier, *Le Patronat Du Nord Sous Le Second Empire*, 40-41.

³⁰⁶ Léon Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille. I* (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1902), preface.

professional life frequently brought him into contact with theatre directors. He began to collect notes on the history of the theatre in Lille from the municipal archives and the local press. He wrote and edited various publications from the age of twenty three, in particular *Souvenirs de theatre d'un Lillois*, which he presented as an account of the experience of an older friend of his who had been a theatre regular for decades, and *Ephemerides du Theatre de Lille, 1779-1889*.³⁰⁷ This latter was published in extracts from 1898 in *La Semaine Musicale*, a weekly periodical on music, theatre and beaux arts of which Lefebvre-Ducrocq was the printer, and to which Lefebvre himself was a frequent contributor of articles.³⁰⁸ His most important work was a five-volume history of the theatre in Lille from its origins until it was destroyed by fire in 1903.³⁰⁹

Lefebvre's published writings and private papers reveal a man who was interested in universal art forms like music, opera and painting, but also had a deep attachment to place. He was a member of the Commission Historique du Nord, and the Société des Sciences, Agriculture et Arts, and his writings and papers reveal an interest in the history of local places, local churches and local festivals.³¹⁰



Société des Sciences, Agriculture et Arts de Lille, 1902

L-R: Jules Finot, Hippolyte Verly, Edouard Agache-Kuhlmann, Charles Vandenberg, Carlos Bateur, Alfred Mongy, Frédéric Lecocq, Léon Demartres, Albert Petot, Henri Rigaux, Jules Péroche, B.C. Damien, Louis Quarré-Reybourbon, Fernand Danchin, Edmond Faucheur, Henri Folet, Paul Pannier, Léon Lefebvre, Louis Vallas, Auguste Mourcou, Auguste Fauchille, Pharaon De Winter.

Source: BML, Fonds Lefebvre 6, 127-1

³⁰⁷ Léon Lefebvre, *Souvenirs de Théâtre D'un Lillois* (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1890).

³⁰⁸ *La Semaine Musicale de Lille et du Département du Nord*, 17, 1898.

³⁰⁹ Léon Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille.*, 5 vols. (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1902-1907).

³¹⁰ BML Fonds Lefebvre.

The idea of the local was politically flexible, and could be mobilised rhetorically from many different perspectives. In 1896, the recently-elected socialist mayor Gustave Delory proposed naming two newly built streets after two socialists, the communard Benoît Malon, and the Belgian Jean Volders.³¹¹ Both were recently deceased, and had been associated with political movements that were close to Delory's 'French Workers' Party' (Parti Ouvrier Français). The proposal to name two streets after them was bitterly opposed by bourgeois liberals in the municipal council. This was consistent with their politics, and as such is not surprising, but their professed rationale was that neither man was from Lille or the Nord. Only once important names from the history of Lille had been properly honoured, argued the *Écho du Nord* journalist Hippolyte Verly, would the mayor and other socialists be justified in indulging their 'personal preferences' in this way.³¹² In this example, local history could be presented as neutral fact, defusing a political disagreement by presenting it in other terms.

In other circumstances, Delory himself was capable of using the same myth of apolitical localism for his own purposes. In 1901 he attempted to persuade the Ministry of Justice that the coat of arms of the city ought to be changed.³¹³ The present design of a white fleur-de-lys on a red shield had existed since an imperial decree of 1811 had replaced an older version that made reference to the arms of the French royal household. But, Delory argued, a treaty signed by the Count of Flanders in 1199, recently discovered in the municipal archives, made reference to a different, older coat of arms of the city.³¹⁴ Such a coat of arms would predate both the imperial decree of 1811, and the French royal household itself, and could therefore be claimed as the 'true' badge of the city. Delory claimed that this document resolved a long-running debate in the city about the coat of arms' royal provenance and its suitability to a city in the Third Republic. As such, the document in the archives presented Delory with ostensibly objective justification for his already-existing project of weakening the symbolic links between the city and the royal household.³¹⁵ To his regret, the

³¹¹ Delory, CML, 8th September 1896.

³¹² Verly, CML 8th September 1896.

³¹³ Delory CML, 29th March 1901.

³¹⁴ The description referred to '*gueule à l'iris d'argent*' or 'mouth of an iris [flower] in silver'. The treaty did not include an image and, as Delory admitted, no one knew from this vague description what it should look like.

³¹⁵ Delory had advocated, without success, the renaming of the Rue Royale. CML, 1st April 1898.

Ministry of Justice chose to veto his proposal.³¹⁶

In these two incidents Delory and Verly disingenuously presented their politically motivated arguments as resting upon politically neutral readings of local history and identity. That they felt able to do so, from quite divergent perspectives, suggests that they did not perceive 'the local' as having specific political content attached to it. Instead, it was a network of symbols and ideas which was emotively and politically suggestive, but sufficiently flexible to allow various uses, perhaps similar to Raymond Williams' idea of a 'structure of feeling'.³¹⁷ The local therefore became the predominant organising theme for a multitude of activities, functioning not only as a source of social cohesion in the city but also as a point of connection to large European and global networks.

³¹⁶ Delory, CML, 25th June 1901.

³¹⁷ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128–35.

1.5 Conclusions: the middle classes, the city and the world

This chapter has outlined a number of key ideas which underpin the arguments of the thesis as a whole. In place of older historiographies of socio-economic structure, it emphasised the importance of the discursive construction of the idea of middle class which, I argued, occurred at the local scale. Thus an engagement with the social-history literature supports one aspect of this thesis' approach: its interest in 'provincial modernity' and the characteristic features of the industrial city's experience of the late nineteenth century.

However, as the chapter has also shown, the middle classes of Manchester and Lille were acutely aware of the cities' transnational connections, sought to cultivate and learn about them, and incorporate the knowledge they brought into their understandings of the world. Liberal middle-class citizens were made in the provincial industrial city not through a dialectical relationship between region and nation or city and nation, as the literature of 'heimat' has suggested. Rather the process was more dynamic and diffuse, involving connections, interactions and transfers at various distances, in a complex set of networked relationships.

Important themes in the history of the nineteenth century have led many historians to characterise the turn of the century as a sharp break in the history of the relationship between the middle classes and the city. Continuing suburbanisation led to a slackening of upper middle class engagement with the city at the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly in Britain (compared to France) where patterns of urban development led to a lack of desirable elite housing in the centres of cities: a stark contrast to Lille, where the Scrive family kept their home a few hundred metres from the Chamber of Commerce and the Opera until the 1970s.³¹⁸ A decline in nonconformist religiosity, previously an important feature of local identity, increased the integration of the Manchester middle class into the nation.³¹⁹ At the same time traditional paternalist social welfare policies began to be formalised and gradually replaced by professionalising local bureaucracies.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Thompson, 'Town and City,' op cit. 47; Charle, *Social History of France*, 80.

³¹⁹ Seed, 'Unitarianism, Political Economy and the Antinomies of Liberal Culture in Manchester, 1830-50'; Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 193.

³²⁰ Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire Du Nord; Flandre, Artois, Hainaut, Picardie* (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 359.

While there is much that is compelling in these arguments, the approach can lead to a dismissive attitude to local cultures at the end of the nineteenth century which is not warranted by the richness of the sources and the abundance of evidence for the continuing importance of the local. While I will engage further with the question of periodisation in the thesis conclusion, it is important to state here that the middle classes of the two cities continued to be intellectually and culturally robust and innovative right up to the First World War. Their pursuit of ambitious projects like the Manchester Ship Canal (1885-1894), the Chambre de Commerce de Lille (1910-1921), the Mairie de Lille (1924-1932), and the Manchester Central Library (1930-1934) suggest that there are many continuities across the first quarter of the century as well as discontinuities. The world of the provincial middle classes is therefore not one which disappeared abruptly 'at midnight on the 4th August 1914' as Katherine Chorley had it, but something which shaped the twentieth century.³²¹

³²¹ Chorley, *Manchester Made Them*, 12.

Chapter Two: Northerners 'in the Italian style': Opera as a vehicle for transnational imaginations in Lille and Manchester

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I show how the opera house in Lille was a space in which social power was shaped, transformed, and transmitted through the city.³²² The theatre was a locus for elite anxieties about proper conduct and behaviour, where their dominance was asserted, but also subject to contestation. This contestation was inherently politicised: the opera as an institution was subject to considerable political influence mediated through local institutions. In this sense the historiography of the opera has long moved beyond the older work of scholars like William Crosten, who analysed the mid-century opera in terms of its position in a cultural marketplace, where composers, writers and impresarios produced work to match the tastes of an urban bourgeoisie that was increasingly wealthy and socially dominant.³²³ Such an interpretation usefully intersects with social histories of the increasing size, wealth and assertiveness of an urban middle class, as well as acknowledging the agency of cultural 'producers'. In that sense work on the theatre industry is useful in our context of an industrial city where a 'rising' bourgeoisie was dominant and its economic rationality was celebrated as the hegemonic form. However, such an interpretative paradigm does not account for the persistent political potency of the art form.

In the first section of this chapter I show how for the Lillois middle classes the opera functioned in part as a way for them to place themselves in an imagined community of opera goers. The opera was a crucial means through which Lillois middle classes made sense of themselves, their society and their modernity. Acting primarily through the municipal council, but also through interventions in

³²² Nineteenth-century French sources use 'theatre' to refer to the building in which various forms of dramatic art, with or without music, were performed. They also use the word to refer, generically, to such dramatic arts. I follow this convention. On the other hand when I refer to 'opera' I am referring to forms of lyrical drama, in which dialogue is sung rather than spoken.

³²³ William Loren Crosten, *French Grand Opera: An Art and a Business* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1948).

the wider public sphere (particularly the press), they used the municipal theatre to articulate ideas about civic identity through the repertoire, the regulation of conduct in the theatre, and reforms to its administration. Such arguments are familiar in European cultural history, with reference not only to the opera, but also to the politics of other cultural practices in large European cities. Here the significant point to be made is that in part the opera functioned for Lillois audiences as a way to orientate the city to a larger horizon that was not only bigger than the city itself, but also bigger than the nation. This imagined community was transnational.

The opera was subject to increasing municipal political control, as I discuss in the following section, part of a wider trend of the increasing growth of the powers and ambitions of the local state. Lille, like other French cities, began to subsidise the municipal opera in the 1860s and increased its contribution periodically thereafter. In return the municipality asserted new rights over its administration. In doing so they saw the opera as belonging in a wider political-cultural terrain that was subject to municipal management. They recognised that the challenges they faced were part of European-wide developments in the art form, the economy of leisure, and the local state. In response they cited policy provisions in other cities across the north-western part of the continent as examples to be followed. As such, the management of the opera was an important way for municipal political leaders to articulate their sense of the relationship between the city and the rest of the world, particularly Europe.

I shall focus here on how these dynamics worked out in the modernising republican administration of Géry Legrand, Mayor from 1881 to 1896, a liberal republican committed to a programme of reform. In response to a purported decline in the quality of the municipal opera, amid continuing national debates about genre and style, Legrand attempted to 'decentralise' the Lille opera. The project of decentralisation, both in its broader political meaning and in the specific 'theatrical' form discussed here, was associated with renewal. In the Lille opera it meant revitalising the repertoire with modern works, and promoting the performance of new operas by local composers. This project was consistent with a deepening of interest in local and regional history and culture that was

evident across France, and across Europe in general, around the turn of the century.³²⁴ My discussion of Legrand's administration of the theatre, as in the chapter in general, is less concerned with the politics of the repertoire itself, and more with the cultural institution of the theatre and the politics of its management.

Nevertheless, in the penultimate section of the chapter I explore one operatic work in detail, to demonstrate that an interest in the opera as a *local* institution was compatible with increasing transnational influences in the art form itself. This discussion centres on *Lydéric*, an opera composed by the director of the Lille music school Émile Ratez and performed in 1895. The work told the story of a local legend, widely known in Lille, but did so in a style that audiences and reviewers identified as 'Wagnerian'. The composer, who enjoyed the patronage of Legrand, emulated Wagner's attachment to the mythic as a subject matter for opera, but applied this approach to a local rather than national or ethnic story.

The chapter concentrates on Lille, but ends with a discussion of Manchester, where there was no municipal theatre and the opera did not have the same civic status as it did in Lille. Nevertheless music, particularly concert music, was an important part of middle-class life in the city. Performances of opera by touring companies were occasions for Mancunians, as for Lillois, to demonstrate that they too belonged to an imagined community of opera audiences that existed across Europe. I illustrate this with a discussion of the first British performance of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, which took place in Manchester in 1897.

This discussion demonstrates significant differences between the two cities in terms of the ways that particular cultural institutions and practices were politicised. However in conjunction with the following chapter, this chapter will show that there were broad similarities between the two cities in the way that middle classes used the political management of cultural institutions to make

³²⁴ Julian Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890-1914: Jean Charles-Brun and French Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism. Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain 1890-1939.*; Christopher J. Fischer, *Alsace to the Alsations? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1870-1939* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Joost Augusteijn and Eric Storm, eds., *Region and State in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Nation-Building, Regional Identities and Separatism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Caitlin E. Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870-1946* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

sense of the globalisation of high culture. In their aspiration to appear as cosmopolitans they expressed, I argue, an awareness of themselves as cultural and political actors, who participated in movements that existed at a European, not national, scale. Though the politics of culture is a well developed field in nineteenth century historiography with reference to class formation, discipline (of the working class) and national identity, this aspect in contrast is so far underdeveloped.

2.2 The opera audience as an imagined community

The opera plays an important role in histories of politics, society and culture in nineteenth-century France, while changes in the art form were commonly presented by contemporary observers as related to wider changes in French society.³²⁵ This is true of the social practices associated with attendance at the opera house, the institutional structures through which opera houses or companies were managed, and the art form itself which was understood in terms that were both political and aesthetic.³²⁶ Historians and musicologists have shown how works of opera made allusions to (contemporary or historical) political events, as well as how the opera as an institution was subject to various forms of political pressure and control.³²⁷ This political-institutional dimension of opera will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. In the current section, I explore the way in which the opera audience was constructed, showing that the opera house was a politicised space, subject to the contestation of different sectors of local society, and shaped in subtle ways by audiences, politicians, performers and directors. The most significant actors in this drama were the middle classes who deliberately created a discursive association between the Lille bourgeoisie and a larger operatic industry and culture. Because of the international nature of this industry, this association was also employed to make a statement about the outward-looking nature of the bourgeoisie. As such the opera house became a symbolic point of contact between the city and the world outside.

One characteristic which distinguishes the nineteenth from the eighteenth-century opera is its identification with the city, and its bourgeois and urban - as

³²⁵ Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 482–91; See the director of the Paris opera stating in 1831, after the July Revolution, that the opera house would be to the bourgeoisie what Versailles had been for the monarchy. Quoted in Carolyn Abbate and Roger Parker, *A History of Opera. The Last 400 Years* (London: Penguin, 2015), 270.

³²⁶ Benjamin Walton, *Rossini in Restoration Paris: The Sound of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5; James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2.

³²⁷ Robert Justin Goldstein, ed., *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theater in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2009); Sarah Hibberd, 'Auber's Gustave III. History as Opera,' in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer. Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. Mark Everist and Annegret Fauser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 157–75; Mark Everist, 'The Music of Power: Parisian Opera and the Politics of Genre, 1806 - 1864,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 67, no. 3 (2014): 685–734.

opposed to courtly and aristocratic – audience.³²⁸ Anselm Gerhard explains developments in the form and content of the opera in mid-century with reference to changing 'models of perception to which the product and its reception conformed'.³²⁹ Here he borrows from Reinhart Koselleck the idea that qualitative changes in the content of everyday experience brought about by modernisation changed the expectations of modern people.³³⁰ That is to say that the opera began to reflect the experience of big city life, through dramatising the relationship between the individual and the urban crowd.³³¹ As the quintessential urban art form, the opera was a vital mark of a city's modernity and a central part of urban elite life. This was true for Paris, as in Gerhard's example, as well as in provincial cities across France, and across Europe.³³²

In Lille, an association between civic identity, the bourgeoisie, and the theatre was explicitly articulated as early as 1842, upon the opening of the new season after the city had spent 383,000 francs on renovation of the municipal theatre.³³³ In a long poem recited before the curtain at the beginning of the first act of the evening, one of the actors presented the theatre as a special space in which 'the noble bourgeois of Lille' would participate in and shape a new form of urban citizenship to replace the early-modern Flemish tradition of carnival. 'Every city in Flanders has been master of its [own] festival,' he recited, naming Bruges, Valenciennes, Cambrai, Arras, Bouchain and Douai.

These towns now where will they take their part
of pleasure and joy? They will find them in art!
No more barbarous festivals and ridiculous games
no more bloody combats, no more mad men, no more mules;

³²⁸ Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera. Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1998), 4.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

³³⁰ Koselleck, 'Time and History', 111.

³³¹ Gerhard illustrates this argument with close readings of a number of operas, and their reception in the critical press and private writings. He shows how the form changes to reflect new expectations of audiences, new experiences, and the social and economic changes of life under developing capitalism.

³³² K. Ellis, 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France: Ideologies of the Mid-Nineteenth Century,' in *Art and Ideology in European Opera*, ed. Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper, and Clive Brown (Woodbridge, 2010), 69; Carlotta Sorba, 'National Theatre and the Age of Revolution in Italy,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17, no. 4 (2012): 408.

³³³ Léon Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille. III Le Théâtre Municipal, 1821-1850*, vol. 3 (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1902), 359–63; This date fits with Gerhard's chronology: he dates the transformation of opera to the 1830s. Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*, 3. Throughout the rest of this chapter I refer to the place in Lille in which opera is performed as the 'theatre', to distinguish it from the art form.

The theatre, this is the level at which
tastes are transformed in the current century.

The poet was expressing – to the approval of the audience, according to the account of a local historian of the Lille theatre, Léon Lefebvre – the idea that a traditional Lillois civic identity based upon the popular culture of carnival, celebrated in the city streets, should be replaced with a modern attachment to the theatre. While the early-modern period had seen the towns and cities of the region differentiate themselves from the countryside by their commercial or proto-industrial specialisations, the modern city would cultivate cultural distinction as a means of preserving its status. The central actors in this transformation should be the middle classes, acting as a progressive modernising influence.

This demand was consistent with broader strains of thought in France at the time: Victor Hugo, for example, told a public enquiry in 1849 that theatre was 'a crucible of civilisation [that] forms the public soul.'³³⁴ Promoting attendance at the theatre as a morally improving modern activity was not therefore unique to Lille and dated to the late Enlightenment concept of national theatre understood as a moral institution, found in Diderot, or the ideas expressed in Schiller's letters on aesthetic education.³³⁵ Nevertheless, it was presented in this example as being a way for the 'noble bourgeois of Lille' to demonstrate his attachment to the city and his relationship with other members of his social sphere. The theatre was a brighter, more beautiful alternative to the dark, rainy city itself in the winter months: 'when the city, more sombre, every night is enveloped in mystery and shade, as the night descends from house to house... at the hour which, having finished its course, you see the sun, on the edge of your shore, descend into the Deûle; in here, it rises.'³³⁶ The poem presented the city as a closed world, with its own 'shore', and a theatre functioning as a communal space in which the social life of the world outside was reproduced in microcosm.

³³⁴ Robert Justin Goldstein, 'Introduction,' in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theatre in Nineteenth Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 12.

³³⁵ Reginald Snell, 'Introduction,' in *On The Aesthetic Education of Man* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004), 9-11, 13, 18; Sorba, 'National Theatre and the Age of Revolution in Italy'; Frederic Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher, A Re-Examination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. Alexander Schmidt (London: Penguin, 2016).

³³⁶ *La Deûle* is the river which runs roughly south-north, to the west of Lille. The sun therefore sets in its direction.

As discussed in the previous chapter, membership of the local elite in the nineteenth-century city depended in part upon participation in the private and semi-private life of the home, the voluntary association or club. However, it depended also upon visible public participation in the rituals of high culture. It was important for a local bourgeois to assert his social status by performing it publically at the theatre on nights such as the opening of a season, or the premiere of a new work. This practice was built into the architecture of the theatre itself, with its semi-circular form and several levels allowing attendees to observe each other across the auditorium. This was true across Europe, where new discursive constructions of middle-class identity required those who possessed it to regularly perform it on the urban stage.³³⁷

The public space that the theatre represented effectively existed beyond the physical space of the building itself, in the sense that it was reproduced in the local press. Newspapers carried short listings of the night's theatre schedule in every edition. Especially significant performances would be discussed in advance, sometimes over multiple editions. A performance by the Italian-American soprano Adelina Patti was already eagerly-anticipated a month beforehand, while the first Lille performance of *Lohengrin* was the only local topic of conversation, according to one sketch writer.³³⁸ Most daily papers ran longer reviews at least once a week.³³⁹ For high profile events such as premieres, reviews described the audience reception, as well as the performance itself. Journalists identified prominent local individuals in attendance such as the Mayor or the Prefect, and noted their response to the performance.³⁴⁰ Curtain calls, flowers, gifts to the composer, and other marks of

³³⁷ 'What a strange and interesting sight is the crowded theatre; how varied the types of human nature.' 'Phases of Life in Manchester. VI – Before The Curtain', *Comus*, 10, 6th December 1877, 6-7. This article also describes the sight of a man who has bought a more expensive seat than his friends, and so makes sure to arrive early and to conspicuously stand up before the act begins in the hope of being noticed.

³³⁸ Anon., 'Lohengrin à Lille', *EN*, 12th February 1865; Anon. ['Un Fauteuil d'Orchestre'], 'La Soirée Théâtrale', *EN*, 20th January 1892. Of course, this was not 'the only' topic of all conversation in Lille, but rather of conversation between members of a certain crowd, whom the reader was supposed to understand included both the writer, and the reader himself.

³³⁹ See editions of the various newspapers listed in the bibliography.

³⁴⁰ See for example a sketch in the *Écho du Nord* describing the opening night of *Lohengrin* in Lille, which names thirty nine individuals, as well as remarking upon the attendance of 'numerous members of the *Nouveau Cercle*', 'members of the [municipal] theatre commission', journalists from the Belgian press, 'and a crowd of dilettantes whom it would take too long to list.' Anon. ['Un Fauteuil d'Orchestre'], 'La Soirée Théâtrale', op cit.

enthusiasm were highlighted too.³⁴¹

Coming together in a public space such as the theatre, where behaviour was regulated by norms of etiquette, was one way by which elites built and maintained social ties between each other, and between themselves and the state: the latter represented in person by the Prefect or the Mayor, and in the building itself, which belonged to the municipality. However, the theatre was a site not only of cohesion but also of social and political tension, mirrored in the detailed gradations of wealth and status that mapped onto the space of the hall itself.³⁴² The wealthiest local notables, many of them conservative Catholics, generally held private boxes on the first tier, while artisans, petty bourgeois, and some professionals, often republican in political persuasion, were on the *parterre*. Although most *parterres* in France were seated by the 1860s, having previously been standing-only, they still had a reputation for containing rowdy young men.³⁴³ Spatial division by wealth remained common throughout the nineteenth century: in 1903 the most expensive seats in Lille cost around ten times the cheapest.³⁴⁴ However, overtly politicised conflict in the theatre was less common after the 1880s, in part because liberalisation of theatre licensing and relaxation of censorship had increased the range of entertainments available in the city and reduced the number of occasions when politically heterogeneous audiences attended a politically suggestive or controversial piece together.³⁴⁵

Prior to this liberalisation, the theatre was the only space apart from the church in which regular mass gatherings were permitted, and in this sense carried the possibility of sublimated political and class conflict.³⁴⁶ Works that were especially politically controversial were anticipated and discussed well in

³⁴¹ 'Théâtre', *EN*, 7th February 1892.

³⁴² Prices for the different seats or benches in the theatre were set by the municipality, and ranged widely. The cheapest areas of the theatre were the *parterre*, at the front of the hall by the stage, and the areas at the top and back of the hall. The most expensive seats, including the Prefectoral box, were on the first tier.

³⁴³ F.W.J Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28–46.

³⁴⁴ *Cahier des Charges*, CML, 17th January 1903.

³⁴⁵ Robert Justin Goldstein, 'France,' in *The Frightful Stage: Political Censorship of the Theatre in Nineteenth Century Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 106.

³⁴⁶ F.W.J. Hemmings, *Theater and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.

advance of their performance in Lille; local responses were voiced in this context. As such, the municipal theatre was a metaphorical point of contact between the city and the world outside, the local audience and the imagined audience elsewhere.

Political conflicts of this kind were most potent when they related to the preoccupations of French politics of the 1860s. For example, in January 1863 Emile Augier's anti-clerical play *Le Fils de Giboyer* was the subject of speculation and controversy weeks before it was performed.³⁴⁷ Performances in late January became a stage for conflict between Catholics and anti-clerical republicans in the audience, acting out a social conflict with resonances on both the local and national stage. Suggestive passages were applauded or whistled according to taste, and violent language and threats exchanged.³⁴⁸ The first Saturday performance was given to a full theatre, in an atmosphere of aggression and constant interruptions.³⁴⁹ The audience at this occasion was primarily male, reminding us that the theatre was a space in which gender roles as well as social status were shaped and upheld.

The anti-clerical portion of the audience constituted 'an immense majority' according to the cautiously-liberal Bonapartist paper *Le Mémorial*, and even the conservative Catholic *Le Propagateur*, admitted this majority, though claimed it was because the police had unfairly ejected audience members that whistled their opposition, leaving those who applauded alone.³⁵⁰ According to a later description by Léon Lefebvre, whose father was the publisher of *Le Propagateur*, after the performance crowds formed in the peristyle and the shouting match continued in the street.³⁵¹ Anticlericalism was a powerful force in Lille under the Second Empire and during the early years of the Third Republic; anti-Bonapartist voting patterns in the Nord in general and in Lille in particular in the 1860s spoke to a broad base of support for Republican politics, while when General Patrice de MacMahon appeared on the verge of a coup in 1877, Lille

³⁴⁷ 'Theatre de Lille', *Le Propagateur du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais*, 8th January 1863.

³⁴⁸ Léon Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille. IV Le Théâtre Municipal, 1850-1880*, vol. 4 (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1903), 155.

³⁴⁹ 'Theatre de Lille', *Le Propagateur*; 18th January 1863.

³⁵⁰ 'Théâtre', *Le Mémorial de Lille*, 17th January 1863; 'Theatre de Lille', *Le Propagateur*; 18th January 1863; Characterisations of the politics of the two papers are based on Visse, *La Presse du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais au temps de l'Écho du Nord*.

³⁵¹ Lefebvre, *Histoire du Théâtre de Lille*, Vol. 4, 157.

was one of a number of textile towns that followed Paris in petitioning against this possibility.³⁵² Nevertheless a number of the city's wealthiest industrialists were conservative Catholics, prominent supporters of Catholic philanthropical and cultural projects, and inclined to be warily distant from the Republican regime.³⁵³ Lille was on the border of the Flemish-speaking Westhoek region, which was associated with a greater degree of religiosity, and was politically to the right both of the French average, and of Lille itself.³⁵⁴ Indeed, anticlericalism was as much about politics and social conflict as it was about religion per se, and tensions in this area could be activated 'as a result of disagreement on secondary issues.'³⁵⁵ Concern at the influence of Catholic educational institutions in particular continued to be an important driver of municipal policy in the Third Republic, and was a significant prompt to the development of secular, municipal educational institutions.³⁵⁶ As such conflict in the theatre reflected tension in the city at large.

The importance of patronage to the staging of dramatic works meant that audiences sometimes reacted in ways that were politicised, but which did not rest on the content of the work itself. In 1865 for instance audience members at the Comédie-Française in Paris conducted a campaign against the Goncourt brothers' *Henriette Maréchal*, not because of the play's contents but because of the brothers' connection to Bonaparte, while the (legitimist) Jockey Club's disruption of the first Parisian performance of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in 1861 has been attributed by some historians to the support the work had received from the Emperor.³⁵⁷

³⁵² Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 60; Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment. Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), 60.

³⁵³ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 32; Catholic industrialists such as Philibert Vrau (1829 – 1905) and Charles Kolb-Bernard (1798-1888), among others, played crucial roles in the founding of Catholic insitutions of higher education in Lille. For a timeline of the main dates in the founding and expansion of universities in Lille, see Pierre Pierrard, *La Vie Quotidienne dans le Nord au XIXe siècle*, (Paris: Hachette, 1976), 242 ; Nord, *The Republican Moment*, 248

³⁵⁴ Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, vol. 2, 1977), 989; Baycroft, *Culture, Identity and Nationalism: French Flanders in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 49, 146.

³⁵⁵ Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945*, Vol. 2, 1039.

³⁵⁶ For example, in a petition to the Mayor, three municipal councillors stated that the plan to open a Catholic École des Arts et Métiers in Lille meant the municipality should accelerate its plans for a similar institution. CML 13th August 1879.

³⁵⁷ Goldstein, 'France,' 76; Gerald Turbow, 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France,' in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, ed. William Weber and David Large (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 149–50.

Similarly in Lille, Delecourt, a journalist for the conservative *Le Propagateur*, conducted a campaign against a locally-popular soprano called Juliette Borghèse, associating her with liberal patrons, and claiming that supporters in the Lille audience were merely 'liberal *claqueurs*'.³⁵⁸ A '*claqueur*' was a member of a '*claque*', a group of people hired by a theatre director to applaud on demand and assure the success of a particular production or artist.³⁵⁹ These '*claqueurs*' were not named, but journalists Gustave Masure and Géry Legrand, who together founded the radical newspaper *Le Progrès du Nord* two years later, were convinced that the insult referred to them.³⁶⁰ Delecourt refused to issue a retraction, and Masure and Legrand confronted him outside his offices in the centre of the city; Legrand hit Delecourt on the head with his umbrella and Delecourt responded with his cane.³⁶¹ The affair, and in particular its aftermath, became a scandal in the local press – most of whose members sided with Masure and Legrand – and was also reported in Parisian theatrical periodicals.³⁶² Legrand was given a suspended prison sentence and fined 100 francs.³⁶³ The potential for such political tension in and around the theatre was closely related to its importance in local social life and the status which dramatic arts in general – opera in particular – had nationally around the middle of the century.³⁶⁴ Indeed this partly explains the vehemence of Legrand and Masure's response to the slur on their aesthetic judgement: it was important to their self-perception as culturally refined, educated young men.

To be a member of an opera audience in the middle of the nineteenth century was to be visible to one's fellow audience members, although changes in norms of behaviour and the increasing tendency to dim the lights during the performance made this less true than it had been in the previous century.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁸ 'Le Théâtre', *Propagateur*, 24th October 1864; 'Le Propagateur sacrifie la politique au théâtre,' *Mémorial*, 25th October 1864; Lefebvre, *Histoire de Théâtre de Lille, Volume 4*, 196; Théodore Lajarte, Alexandre Bisson, 'Juliette Borghèse', in *Petite encyclopédie musicale*, (Paris: Hennuyer, 1881), 232.

³⁵⁹ Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth Century France*, 101-116.

³⁶⁰ 'Théâtre de Lille,' *Le Mémorial*, 26th October 1864.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² 'Nord,' *L'Agent Dramatique: Journal de Publicité Theatrale*, (Paris), 30th October 1864.

³⁶³ Lefebvre, *Histoire du Théâtre de Lille: Volume 4*, 196-197; The newspaper collection at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lille is missing the *Écho du Nord* and *Le Propagateur* for the dates that cover this scandal.

³⁶⁴ Jane Fulcher, *The Nation's Image. French Grand Opera as Politics and as Politicized Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁶⁵ James H. Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

Nevertheless, taking one's seat, strolling around outside before and after a performance or during an interval, leading applause or presenting gifts to a performer all offered elite members of the audience the opportunity to consciously cultivate a self-image and assert their status. Even by the 1890s, when newspaper reports of major performances in Lille make it clear that the experience of the performance itself was silent and anonymous, the *occasion* of attending the opera still represented a public moment.³⁶⁶ What is more, the identification of the audience as a collective entity did not depend only upon its tangible visibility. It depended too upon an act of imagination, that constructed the audience discursively through the local press and shared rituals of behaviour. The audience in other words was another form of imagined community, redefined in the nineteenth century by its urban character.³⁶⁷ In the poem cited above the Lille audience member was invited to see the opera standing in a special relationship with the city, and with him as its audience.

Performing the social rituals associated with attendance at the opera also gave the local audience the opportunity to connect themselves with a larger imagined community, the audience for opera across France or across Europe. This audience was substantial, while the composers, writers, impresarios and singers that entertained them were highly mobile across Europe and even parts of the Americas.³⁶⁸ The greatest stages, most of all Paris, attracted ambitious composers from across Europe.³⁶⁹ While the audiences themselves were not yet as mobile as they would come to be at the end of the century, when thousands of middle-class Europeans made 'pilgrimages' to Wagner's Bayreuth, the art form itself already operated across a terrain that was not confined to any national space. Municipal councillors in Lille made frequent reference to the opera industry's international character in their discussions on the subject.³⁷⁰

1995).

³⁶⁶ 'Lohengrin. La première a Lille', *EN*, 20th January 1892; 'Théâtre', *EN*, 7th February 1892; 'Lydéric,' *La Semaine Musicale*, 13th January 1895; Auguste Gaudefroy, *Les Premiers Au Théâtre de Lille, 1893-94 – 1894-95* (Lille: Imprimerie de Nouvelliste-Depeche, 1895).

³⁶⁷ Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*.

³⁶⁸ This mobility was longstanding. Opera singers were 'already creatures of the market' by 1800. John Rosselli, *Singers of Italian Opera The History of a Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 79.

³⁶⁹ Mark Everist, 'Il N'y a Qu'un Paris Au Monde, et J'y Reviendrai Planter Mon Drapeau!': Rossini's Second Grand Opéra,' *Music & Letters* 90, no. 4 (2009): 636–72.

³⁷⁰ For example Rochart, CML 27th Feb 1889; Thibaut, CML 22nd March 1889; Verly, CML 24th March 1893; Legrand, CML 2nd June 1893; Bigo-Danel, CML 3rd March 1893; Delesalle, CML 17th March

Lille was never an internationally important centre of opera in the same sense as Paris. Nevertheless, even the fairly average talents that made up the permanent company of a city like Lille were part of a European employment market by the 1860s. Jules-Henry Vachot, the director of the opera in the 1865-1866 season, had formerly been director of the Ghent and Antwerp theatres. After leaving Lille he returned to Belgium to manage *La Monnaie* in Brussels, at the time considered one of the finest opera theatres in Europe. He later returned to Paris, where he died in 1884.³⁷¹ Eugène Bertrand, director in 1867-68, a year Léon Lefebvre called 'one of the finest the Lillois had seen for 20 years,' had spent five years managing theatres in the United States of America, as well as time in Brussels.³⁷² Under his direction Adeline Patti gave her first performance of *Faust* in French.³⁷³ He later became manager of the Paris opera. Biographies of the hundreds of performers and directors in Lefebvre's history of the Lille theatre demonstrate that such mobility was the norm, while listings in the Parisian theatrical and musical press show that this was the case elsewhere too.³⁷⁴

Local audiences were further reminded of the international nature of the art form by occasional visits from touring performers, the most important of which represented an opportunity to demonstrate their connection with the cultures of opera viewing that existed beyond Lille itself. In 1865 'the marvel of the era' was the aforementioned Italian-American soprano Adelina Patti.³⁷⁵ That year a critic wrote that her concerts 'will not fail to have an impact across the whole of Europe.'³⁷⁶ Patti passed through Lille in March 1865, between a winter in Paris and a six-week run in Madrid.³⁷⁷ Although the normal price of tickets had been quadrupled, a sold-out theatre heard her sing Rosina in Giachino Rossini's //

1897; Delesalle, CML 22nd November 1907.

³⁷¹ Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille. IV Le Théâtre Municipal, 1850-1880*, 4:198.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 178.

³⁷³ 'Eugène Bertrand,' C.E. Curinier, ed., *Dictionnaire Nationale Des Contemporains*, vol. 2 (Paris: B. Brunel & Co, 1899), 165.

³⁷⁴ For example see under the rubric 'Chronique des Théâtres de l'Étranger et mouvement des Artistes' in various editions of the weekly *L'Europe Artiste*.

³⁷⁵ 'Lille et la Nord de la France,' *EN*, 12th February 1865.

³⁷⁶ Ferdinand Schlosser, *Le Foyer, Journal Artistique et Littéraire*, 16th November 1865, 6

³⁷⁷ Herman Klein, *The Reign of Patti*, (New York: Century, 1920), 153. Further biography and bibliography on Patti in 'Adelina Patti' in John Tyrrell and Stanley Sadie, eds., *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 19 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 238–39.

barbieri di Siviglia.³⁷⁸ She was received ecstatically by the public, who 'in the Italian style, did not cease to applaud and to call '*brava!*' [in a manner] that would make the regulars of the Fenice or the San Carlo swoon.'³⁷⁹ The audience's adoption of an 'Italian style' in their acclaim of Patti indicates that they identified her with Italian opera, and that her presence in the city was a symbol of the audience's membership of a cosmopolitan cultural formation – the urban opera audience – which was not bound by national conventions of behaviour. To receive Patti in this manner was a symbolic articulation of the urban middle classes' transnational imaginations.

Patti was presented with bouquets and a wreath by the theatre management and subscribers, and at the interval after the second act she received the Prefect, the Mayor, adjuncts of the Municipal Council and local notables in her dressing room; they begged her to give another performance the following day, a request to which she acceded, singing *Lucia di Lammermoor*.³⁸⁰ In the afternoon before her second performance the *Orphéonistes*, a choir founded by the celebrated Lillois dialect-singer Alexandre Desrousseaux, sang for her, and after the performance the director and members of the municipal orchestra played for her at the *Hotel de l'Europe*, together with a delighted crowd crying 'Vive Patti!'³⁸¹

By responding in such an animated fashion to the presence of this celebrity, the Lille public designated themselves as participants in the international phenomenon that she represented: hence the delirious reception they afforded her and the 'Italian style' they adopted. The local press turned their gaze onto themselves and celebrated the fact of their own enthusiasm as a mark of good taste: 'the crowd was fired up from the success which they had just witnessed... Mademoiselle Patti had triumphed over the ordinary reserve of the Lillois character, and it was a miracle which many [artists] before her were unable to

³⁷⁸ Lefebvre, *Souvenirs de théâtre d'un Lillois*, 77-78.

³⁷⁹ Lefebvre, *Histoire du Théâtre de Lille*, Vol. 4, 183.

³⁸⁰ 'Lille et la Nord de la France', *EN*, 13th March 1865; Léon Lefebvre recounts her referring to this as 'La Loutchia'. 'Only the ignorant', he writes, did not realise that this referred to the opera known in French as *Lucie de Lammermoor*. *Ibid*.

³⁸¹ 'Mme Patti a Lille,' *EN*, 14th March 1865. For more on the Orphéoniste movement in France, popular local choirs involving mainly petit-bourgeois and working class members, see Philippe Gumpłowicz, *Les Travaux d'Orphée: 150 Ans de Vie Musicale Amateur En France* (Paris: Aubier, 1987).

accomplish.³⁸² Such delirious receptions of touring stars were common,³⁸³ and it is likely that the Lille public were conscious of this fact, meaning that their enthusiasm was in part performative, a way of demonstrating that Lille just like any other city could recognise and celebrate artistic talent and so identify itself with cosmopolitan values. Their eagerness to participate in such occasions led them to seek out celebrated performers, some 'enthusiasts already hailing [the English soprano Laura Harris] the rival of Patti' after her first performance in Lille in 1867.³⁸⁴

Though the Lille opera audience of the 1860s was constructed as an imagined community with a specific urban referent, its norms and values drew upon a wider idea of European, often Italian, culture with which it saw itself in dialogue. These forms of audience-imagination helped Lillois to see the city as existing in a network of European opera audiences, and thus to transnationalise the local. Like other imagined communities, this one became increasingly subject to political management later in the century. This occurred in a changed set of political circumstances under the Third Republic, as well as a different French and European operatic context. The political dimension of the Lille opera is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

³⁸² 'Mme Patti a Lille,' *EN*, 14th March 1865

³⁸³ Hemmings, *Theater and State in France, 1760-1905*, 153–54.

³⁸⁴ 'Théâtres de Provinces', *L'indépendance Dramatique* 3, no. 5 (February 7, 1867).

2.3 The politics of the opera: municipal control

In nineteenth-century France opera and politics were closely entwined, as has been discussed in an extensive historiography.³⁸⁵ The opera was subject to state regulation and in many cases depended upon state patronage. Generous subsidies to four theatres in Paris, which were overseen by a committee of political appointees, ensured that the French opera was highly centralised. As musicologist Mark Everist has argued, 'No signal could have been stronger: [the opera] was as important to Napoléon III's government as the railways, the military, and probably the Church.'³⁸⁶ Besides the politicised nature of this administrative structure, operatic works were interpreted in part as political texts, with reception shaped by their textual and musical allusions, as well as by the patronage on which they depended.

The Paris Opéra has therefore been characterised as 'a subtly used tool of the state', which conveyed political meanings through an 'ineffable political transaction' from state to audience.³⁸⁷ This analysis has been criticised for its one-sided focus on the state, and its implication that the opera was a simple tool of propaganda. In fact there were diverse and conflicting voices among both creators and audiences, and power in the opera should be conceived 'less as a set of hierarchial pressures and more as a network of regulations, practices and negotiations.'³⁸⁸ Political influence was diffused across this network, and relationships of power were not one-directional.

Nevertheless, ultimately it was the state that wrote the 'cahier des charges,' a kind of contract signed by the director of a licensed opera theatre, which stipulated various conditions that he should meet, such as the genres to be performed, the length of the season, the number of performances and the

³⁸⁵ Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist, eds., *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer. Paris, 1830-1914* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009); Everist, 'The Music of Power'; Mark Everist, 'Grand Opéra-Petit Opéra: Parisian Opera and Ballet from the Restoration to the Second Empire,' *19th Century Music* 33, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 195–231; Sarah Hibberd, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, 2009); Fulcher, *The Nation's Image*; Steven Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle. Wagnerism, Nationalism, and Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³⁸⁶ Everist, 'The Music of Power,' 707–708.

³⁸⁷ Fulcher, *The Nation's Image*, 2, 202.

³⁸⁸ Hibberd, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination*, 6; Everist, 'The Music of Power,' 686.

number of new works.³⁸⁹ The *cahier des charges* was not only the mechanism through which the state exerted influence on the opera, it also defined the terrain on which other actors – directors, composers, musicians, performers, critics, and audiences – could operate.

The historiography of the politics of opera in France has examined this Parisian context at length, while work on provincial municipal theatres is comparatively underdeveloped.³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, similar mechanisms of political influence existed at the municipal level. Studying the operation of these mechanisms reveals a local political elite which saw the opera as a means by which the city was connected to broader European cultural practices. They therefore merit examination by transnational historians.

In Lille, the theatre was not managed directly by the municipality, but was run as a semi-independent enterprise. The director was not a municipal employee but a private individual who was appointed by the Mayor upon agreement of the *cahier des charges*. He undertook to manage the artistic programme, within the parameters defined by the *cahier*, and paid the municipality an indemnity against the expected theatre receipts, from which he hoped to make a profit.³⁹¹ The theatre building itself was publically-owned and maintained (though the Prefect had the exclusive right of use of a private box), while the *cahier* specified the cost of tickets, the number and type of artists who should be in the company, the genres to be played, and so on. Though the financial risk lay in the hands of the director, the city made a contribution to the upkeep of the theatre building and some of its running costs. By 1861 the city was paying 24,150 francs a year for a technician and a concierge, as well as lighting, decorations and sets.³⁹² Later in the century the director would be given an additional cash subsidy.

³⁸⁹ Everist, 'The Music of Power,' 690–692.

³⁹⁰ For existing work on provincial opera see Clair Rowden, 'Decentralisation and Regeneration at the Théâtre Des Arts, Rouen, 1889-1891,' *Revue de Musicologie* 94, no. 1 (2008); Christian Goubault, *La Musique, Les Acteurs et Le Public Au Theatre Des Arts de Rouen, 1776-1914* (Rouen: Centre Régional de Documentations Pédagogique, 1979); Ellis, 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France'; Christian Goubault, 'La Décentralisation de L'art Lyrique a Rouen (1830-1900),' in *Regards Sur l'Opera* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1976), 47–85; Yannick Simon, *Lohengrin: Un Tour de France, 1887-1891* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

³⁹¹ Such arrangements were common in French provincial theatre. 'France' in Sadie and Tyrrell (eds.) *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 153.

³⁹² Budget, CML 21st December 1861.

Municipal council discussions reveal a persistent tendency to draw a direct link between the quality of the local opera and the status of the city as a whole. Indeed the *cahier des charges*, in various versions throughout the century, stated that the performers must be 'worthy of a great city', a form of words often adopted by councillors in their discussions.³⁹³ While this was obviously tautological and did not in itself convey any idea about what worthiness consisted of, it underlines the importance of the opera to the image of a modern, cultured city that the councillors wished to promote. Emblematic of the theatre's status was its ability to stage works in the 'Grand Opéra' genre.³⁹⁴

The most important genre of opera at this time was 'grand opéra'. In its then contemporary usage the term referred to a group of works produced mostly for the Paris opera between the 1820s and 1860s, generally dealing with political or historical themes, including grand set-piece scenes with many performers, requiring considerable resources to stage.³⁹⁵ For Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, which was performed over a thousand times in Paris between 1836 and 1906, the cost of preparing the scenery, costumes and props for the first Paris production was over 100,000 francs.³⁹⁶ While a city such as Lille would inevitably economise in comparison to the subsidised theatre in Paris, Léon Lefebvre's description of the 'luxury and magnificence' of the 1851 production of another Meyerbeer grand opéra, *Le Prophète*, evokes the resources that even provincial productions required.³⁹⁷ Grand Opéra included large ballet scenes, for which a separate choreographer and ensemble were needed, driving up the cost, as well as audience expectations. Discussions about rewriting the *cahier*

³⁹³ A commission formed by the Mayor to discuss reorganisation of the theatre administration concludes that subsidising the Opera is the only way to ensure it is 'worthy of a great city.' Mercier, CML 27th March 1867; 'Our city is a great intellectual centre. It needs a Theatre which is truly worthy of that name, and which fulfils its true role; to develop good taste rather than to pervert it; to raise the artistic level rather than debase it.' César Baggio, CML 18th March 1881. Baggio, a councillor who headed the municipal commission in charge of beaux-arts, was a lawyer at the Lille bar, member of a family of Italian-Swiss origins which had manufactured furniture in Lille since the 18th century. He was a close ally of Legrand; Criticisms were often framed in the same terms: '[the company] is deplorable, worthy of a third rate stage.' Gronier-Darragon, CML 11th November 1892; Discussions on how to improve the theatre characterised reform as necessary to render the theatre 'worthy of a great city like ours.' Delesalle, CML 21st December 1907.

³⁹⁴ 'Grand opera in particular became an emblem of civic status that no self-respecting town could do without.' Ellis, 'Funding Grand Opera in Regional France', 69.

³⁹⁵ Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*, 1, 401–402.

³⁹⁶ Abbate and Parker, *A History of Opera. The Last 400 Years*, 263.

³⁹⁷ 'The shores of the Meuse, the forest covered in snow and the panorama of Munster, the sunrise, the public square, the interior of the cathedral with the perspective of its columns, formed a complete sensation... a great and moving effect.' Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille*, Vol. 4, 119, 121–122.

des charges gave a prominent place to the question of how many works of Grand Opéra would be performed each season, both because of the genre's status, and the resources it required. Changing expectations around genre at the end of the century will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The appropriate management and regulation of the opera were therefore recurring subjects of discussion in municipal council meetings. Concerns over the artistic quality of the municipal opera were inherently politicised, implicating the mayor and municipal council. The opera was a vital focus of municipal cultural policy, consuming considerable energy and resources in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth.

During the last third of the nineteenth century these discussions occurred against the background of a fragmentation of the French operatic system, compared to its stability and coherence in mid-century. Prior to 1864 a system of theatre licensing, with strict regulation of other entertainments, had given municipal theatres a near-monopoly on all forms of dramatic art. They had therefore been able to rely on the takings from more popular art forms to cross-subsidise works, like Grand Opéras, which were expensive to stage. Deregulation of theatres in 1864 effectively deprived directors of such monopolies, provoking a crisis in the provincial opera.³⁹⁸ A state of 'near chaos' endured in the years immediately following the change, when the manager of the Bordeaux theatre drily remarked that the 'liberté des théâtres' was really the 'liberté des café-concerts'.³⁹⁹ Municipalities responded to these challenges in various ways. Some introduced subsidies to directors to insulate them from financial loss, or increased them where they were already in place. Others negotiated new forms of monopoly based on sharing different dramatic and lyric genres between different theatres; still others opted for complete liberalisation in a free market of entertainment.

Faced by these challenges, municipal councillors in Lille grappled with a complex set of questions about civic pride, the politics of genre, and the moral

³⁹⁸ Katherine Ellis, 'Unintended Consequences: Theatre Deregulation and Opera in France, 1864–1878,' *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22, no. 3 (November 2010): 345.

³⁹⁹ Ellis, 'Unintended Consequences,' 327, 331. The café-concerts were a form of popular cabaret: the director was implying that only these kinds of establishment had benefited from liberalisation.

and aesthetic merits of different forms of theatre. These questions crystallised in regular debates about the provision of a subsidy to the opera. A grant of 40,000 francs per year was first introduced on an experimental basis in November 1862, on the basis that a repertoire including Grand Opéra was impossible without one.⁴⁰⁰ It was suspended the following year, reintroduced and increased to 60,000 in 1867, reduced two years later, suspended during the early Third Republic, then only finally reinstated and maintained from 1878.⁴⁰¹ As this story indicates, the process by which the city assumed financial responsibility for the opera was uneven and did not proceed in a linear fashion. Nevertheless the broad trend over the period was to entrench and normalise the payment of a municipal subsidy to the opera. By 1910 this was worth 110,000 francs.⁴⁰²

Underpinning the payment of a subsidy was an argument for the opera as an essential asset for a busy industrial city, functioning not only as an object of civic pride but also as a means of protecting 'municipal dignity' and ensuring the 'moral hygiene' of the population by keeping them away from cabarets and drinking establishments.⁴⁰³ This moral argument was a recurring theme throughout the period. A long report by the councillor in charge of beaux arts, commissioned by the new mayor Géry Legrand shortly after his election in 1881, stated that 'the theatre is not only a pleasure; it is also an education... a school of aesthetics... a school of morals [which should] develop good taste rather than pervert it [and] raise the artistic level rather than debase it.'⁴⁰⁴ Statements such as these make it clear that opera was not just seen as a luxury for the city's social elites, but as an instrument of public policy.

Financial support for the opera did not receive councillors' unanimous support. Even as Géry Legrand was putting into place his new cultural programme after his election, a vote to cancel the subsidy was only narrowly defeated.⁴⁰⁵ Some councillors expressed hostility to the subsidy even in the early twentieth century,

⁴⁰⁰ Simon Lévy, *Pétition à messieurs les membres du conseil municipal de la ville de Lille: demande de subvention*, (Lille: Alcan Levy, 1862), 1.

⁴⁰¹ Lefebvre, *Histoire de Théâtre de Lille*, Vol. 4, 154, 168-169, 220, 244-245, 263, 273-274, 338.

⁴⁰² Budget, CML 12th December 1910. This sum was in addition to around 20,000 francs of other costs spent on maintaining and running the theatre building.

⁴⁰³ Ladureau, CML 17th November 1862; Violette, CML 22nd October 1862.

⁴⁰⁴ Baggio, CML 18th March 1881.

⁴⁰⁵ The motion to cancel the subsidy was defeated by 17 votes to 14. CML 18th March 1881.

by which time it was a long-established practice.⁴⁰⁶ These objections were persistently justified by the supposedly limited appeal of the opera: as audiences were wealthy, the council's duty to help the poor would be better served by spending on health or sanitation.⁴⁰⁷ Such arguments were met with counter claims about the popularity of the opera among workers, and its capacity to support their spiritual health, which was of equal importance to its physical equivalent.⁴⁰⁸ Supporters of the opera attempted to co-opt instrumentalist ways of thinking in order to promote the subsidy, presenting it as an 'investment' which, by attracting visitors to the city, would benefit local commerce.⁴⁰⁹ 'Expenses which seem like luxuries are often productive,' argued the Dean of the Lille Faculty of Letters Léon Moy.⁴¹⁰



Géry Legrand, Mayor 1881-1896, pictured alongside François André-Bonte, known as 'André', Mayor 1791-1792
Source: BML portefeuille 97,32

This image was supposed to imply a connection between Legrand and the hero André, mayor during the city's successful resistance to the Austrian siege of 1792. Legrand himself implied this link during the centenary celebrations of 1892.

⁴⁰⁶ Brackers d'Hugo, CML 22nd November 1907; Wauquier, CML 12th December 1910.

⁴⁰⁷ For example see CML Testelin, De Melun, Morisson, 22nd October 1862; Crepy CML 18th March 1881; Bodelle, CML 22nd March 1889.

⁴⁰⁸ Faucher, Moy, CML 22nd March 1889; 'It is no less useful to make spirits more healthy than [to do the same for] Saint Sauveur': Cannissié, CML 18th March 1881. (Saint Sauveur was a central district of the city south of the train station, which was the emblematic home of the Lillois poor, as in the famous dialect song *Dors Mon P'tit Quinquin*.)

⁴⁰⁹ Charles Destigny, 'Théâtre de Lille,' *Le Mémorial*, 24th November, 1862; Defontaine, CML 17th November 1862.

⁴¹⁰ Moy, CML 22nd March 1889.

The same logic was employed to support other expenditure connected to the theatre. In 1876 the Mayor argued that the purchase of new sets should be financed over the long term, exactly like an industrialist investing in new machinery; an individual director wouldn't make the same investment himself because of his short-term perspective, so the responsibility should naturally fall to the municipality.⁴¹¹ In this way instrumentalist modes of thinking about culture that sprung from utilitarian industrial bourgeois values could with some success be corralled into supporting interventionist municipal cultural policies. This was a particularly characteristic response to the problems of cultural politics in the provincial industrial city.⁴¹²

In addition to moral or pragmatic arguments, municipal control of the opera was also justified on the basis of a new conception of the role of the local state in the late-nineteenth-century city. From its first adoption, arguments for the subsidy explicitly cited the need for political control as an end in itself: councillors hoped subsidising the theatre from municipal funds would render 'more direct, more serious and more effective the influence of our municipal administration on the theatre.'⁴¹³ The need for greater control sprang, they argued, from developments in the arts, which were tending towards formal unity between its different branches. This greater complexity in turn required for its management an institutional support structure rather than the indiscipline of the free market. Increasing municipal influence over the opera was therefore a necessary step in its modernisation. The same argument was made in Manchester – municipal control over the arts was in keeping with the 'spirit of the age' – with reference to the art gallery two decades later. Provincial modernity meant extending the powers of the local state in the field of culture.

Increasing control of the theatre sometimes brought the municipality into conflict

⁴¹¹ Catel-Béghin, CML 23rd December 1876.

⁴¹² Astute opera directors used this language in an attempt to appeal to politicians: 'The profession of Theatre Director is the most difficult of all the industries.' Simon Lévy, *Pétition au Sénat: Quelques réflexions sur les théâtres de la province*, (Lille: Alcan Levy, 1862), 6; Similar language was used by local artists in Manchester to advocate council spending on the arts, as for example when the Honourary Secretary of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, wrote to the Manchester Corporation Art Galleries Committee, saying 'apart from the educational and aesthetic standpoint, you, as practical business men, will be fully aware how deeply art permeates nearly all our manufactures.' AGC 31st March 1898.

⁴¹³ Ladureau, CML 17th November 1862.

with audience members, particularly over the *debuts* (the practice by which new performers were admitted to the company) and the status of *abonnés* (season ticket holders). The debuts, when at the beginning of a season new members of the company were subject to the vocal (and sometimes projectile) approval or disapproval of the audience, were a long standing tradition in provincial theatres and the 'bane' of theatre directors.⁴¹⁴ In 1865 the practice was reformed in Lille, the new *cahier des charges* stipulating that audiences could only manifest their opinion at the curtain call, not during a performance, and that the Mayor would have the final decision on admission to the company.⁴¹⁵ This reform was characteristic of an increasing pattern of intervention in the management of the theatre by the municipality.

Three years later a new system was adopted after a petition from *abonnés* who resented the loss of influence that the change had entailed. *Abonnés* would meet in the theatre foyer during the interval of a debutant's third performance and hold a formal vote in the presence of a police commissioner; any 'improper' noise during performances was forbidden.⁴¹⁶ Though this compromise gave a special place to season ticket holders over other audience members, their privilege was strictly regulated and subject to the supervision of state authority in the person of the police officer.⁴¹⁷ This system was in use at theatres in Ghent and Antwerp, a fact which its advocates cited as proof of its effectiveness and reason to introduce it in Lille.⁴¹⁸ Indeed the struggle for control of the theatre between municipal governments and entrenched, privileged sections of the audience was a trans-European phenomenon in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴¹⁹ If councillors in Lille believed that other European cities could provide a model for how to assert political authority over audiences it was because such cities had already done so. Thus as well as seeing the development of municipal influence over the opera as part of its modernisation,

⁴¹⁴ Ellis, 'Unintended Consequences,' 330; Rowden, 'Decentralisation and Regeneration at the Théâtre Des Arts, Rouen, 1889-1891,' 147.

⁴¹⁵ Lefebvre, *Histoire de Théâtre de Lille*, Vol.4, 220.

⁴¹⁶ 'Arret Mayorial,' Ville de Lille, 23rd October 1868; Bulletin Administratif de la Ville de Lille, 1868, AML.

⁴¹⁷ The abolition of the *debuts* in 1865 had also been accompanied by an increase in the prices of *abonnement* (subscription) for the first time since 1848, a further attempt to reduce the influence of this group of audience members. Lefebvre, *Histoire de Théâtre de Lille*, Vol.4, 199.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁴¹⁹ Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy*, Chapter 2, 'The Theatre of Social Change: The Opera Industry and the End of Social Privilege'.

as outlined above, municipal councillors also recognised that they were engaged in a European-wide programme of reform. Their version of provincial modernity as applied to the politics of the municipal opera was one that existed in a transnational frame.

Indeed, broader discussions about the administration of the opera were always conducted in a comparative frame of reference. Councillors looked to the example of other cities, both inside and outside of France, for example noting the size of the subsidy paid in one city, or the method of recruiting musicians in another. In part comparisons were conceived in terms of competition: as Lille needed to maintain its status among the top tier of cities, and opera was closely linked to city prestige, it naturally followed that the Lille opera should match that of other cities.⁴²⁰ Such references were not only based on competition, but also on the idea that certain other cities were logical reference points for Lille because of their social or cultural similarity. In particular this applied to cities in Belgium and the Netherlands, which were referred to with great frequency.⁴²¹ My claim here is not that Lille councillors followed foreign practices over French as a matter of course, or that they *only* referred to cities outside of France. Rather I argue that the routine and unremarkable nature of such references is evidence of a deeply held recognition that the opera was a political-cultural institution that existed in similar forms across a European network of cities. In this context comparisons between Lille, Rotterdam, Ghent, Brussels or even Geneva were as valid as references to Rouen, Paris, Marseilles or Lyon. Evidence from the work of other historians suggests that such a transnational perspective on the opera was shared elsewhere.⁴²²

Imitation and adaptation was made easier by similarities in institutional form between one city and another. The municipal council and the local elite were political and social structures that existed in cities across Europe. These

⁴²⁰ See for example, petition from Thibaut, Gronier-Darragon, Duflo, Cannissié, Pascal & Moy, CML 27th February 1889; Gronier-Darragon, CML 11th November 1892; Verly, CML 3rd March 1896.

⁴²¹ For example Rochart, CML 27th February 1889; Thibaut, CML 22nd March 1889; Verly, CML 24th Mar. 1893; Legrand, CML 2nd June 1893; Bigo-Danel, CML 23rd Feb. 1894; Brackers-d'Hugo, CML 3rd March 1896; Gobert, CML 2nd May 1911.

⁴²² For example a discussion on subsidising the opera in the Turin municipal council involved the production of a table of information showing the subsidies extended to municipal operas in various cities across the continent. Alberto Basso, *Il Teatro Della Città Dal 1788-1936: Storia Del Teatro Regio Di Torino* (Turin, 1976), 430–31.

structural similarities made it easier for councillors to recognise Ghent, say, as an intelligible example suitable for emulation. Political and social similarities therefore facilitated transnational exchanges.

The gradual expansion of municipal control of the theatre industry paralleled increases in municipal powers and responsibilities more generally across the last third of the nineteenth century. Practical considerations such as sanitation, housing and basic service provision remained priorities in terms of the financial resources devoted – as well as, one might say, in terms of objective need⁴²³ – but these were debated in the same council meetings in the same terms and in the same setting as questions of cultural policy. The need to annually agree the subsidy as a part of the municipal budget hastened a process by which the opera was folded into wider debates in municipal councils and the local press about the proper priorities and responsibilities of the municipality. Detailed, itemised budgets treated spending on the theatre in the same way as any other spending by the municipality. Municipal council record keeping became more thorough and organised over the period, meaning that discussions about the theatre were carefully referenced in a system that categorised knowledge, from sewers, canals, poor housing and tramways to market places, galleries, schools and the theatre; all united by their common relationship to municipal power. The development of practices of gathering and organising knowledge was integral to the liberal state's capacity to govern. It was, in part, the means through which power was exercised.⁴²⁴ As such, practices of urban governance tended to politicise the theatre.

Such practices encouraged ways of thinking about the theatre that framed it in the same terms as other council services. When introducing a new system of health insurance for the city's orchestra musicians in 1903, to be paid for collectively from the musicians' salaries and drawn on by any of them who became sick, the mayor Gustave Delory explained that he was inspired by a similar system that had already been adopted for the city's tram workers.⁴²⁵ He reasoned that what worked on the municipal tramways would also work in what

⁴²³ 'Les questions municipales en 1895 à Lille – L'Eau et Lumière' [Municipal questions in 1895 in Lille – Water and light], *EN*, 9th January 1895.

⁴²⁴ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*, 20.

⁴²⁵ Gustave Delory, CML 17th January 1903.

he called 'the quasi-municipal service' of the theatre.

Neither the association between political power and the opera, nor the mobility of its composers, performers and styles across the European continent, were innovations of the late nineteenth century. But the period did see a transformation in all of these aspects of the art form, alongside far reaching social and political change in France and elsewhere. A new kind of urban elite, moulding municipal institutions in its image, asserted itself with increasing vigour. By shifting the historiographical lens from the Paris opera to its provincial counterpart, we see more clearly how this process of politicisation worked, using the commonality of shared institutional structures to move beneath and sometimes beyond the national framework.

2.4 'Décentralisation Théâtrale'

Lille was not generally regarded as an important or innovative centre of European opera; developments in the art form tended to occur outside the city. In mid-century, theatre licencing and censorship meant that new works by prominent French or foreign composers almost always received their first French performance in Paris.⁴²⁶ Indeed Paris was the most important site for Opera not only in France but throughout Europe.⁴²⁷ Lille was not unusual among provincial cities in this respect.

Later in the century, however, Paris lost its preeminence and its reputation for producing important new works of Grand Opéra. In some years during the 1870s there were no new works at all performed at the Opéra Garnier.⁴²⁸ Some music critics and interested political observers became concerned that the Paris-centred system, particularly the emphasis placed on Grand Opéra, did not afford young dramatists and composers the opportunity to experiment and to bring their works to new audiences.⁴²⁹ Some began to develop a set of ideas and policies that associated the possibility of a regenerated French opera with a revival of the operatic scene outside Paris. This policy agenda came to be known as 'theatrical decentralisation' (*décentralisation théâtrale*).

Theatrical decentralisation represented a discursive standpoint rather than a single coherent political or aesthetic agenda. In broad terms it meant developing the financial viability and artistic credibility of the opera in cities outside Paris, but there was no agreement on the means by which this was to be achieved. In particular, as municipal council discussions of the problem of the provincial opera so often reduced it to questions of cost, they tended to dissolve into broader debates about municipal finance, the relationship with the national state, and the provision of public services. Such questions would ultimately be confronted in a sustained fashion under the Fourth and Fifth Republics with their programmes of decentralisation in culture, education and economy, which

⁴²⁶ Hemmings, *The Theatre industry in Nineteenth Century France*, 193.

⁴²⁷ Everist, 'Il N'y a Qu'un Paris Au Monde, et J'y Reviendrai Planter Mon Drapeau!'

⁴²⁸ David Grayson, 'Finding a Stage for French Opera,' in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer. Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. Mark Everist and Annegret Fauser op cit., 133.

⁴²⁹ Hemmings, *The Theatre industry in Nineteenth Century France*, 245-246.

were directed and funded by the state in Paris.⁴³⁰

In the 1880s and 1890s however, theatrical decentralisation was not associated with hopes that the state would descend to rescue the provincial stage. More commonly the term referred to an aspiration to regenerate opera in the provinces by making it much more independent of Paris. By incorporating the political language of decentralisation into their discussion of cultural politics, politicians such as Géry Legrand demonstrated that the opera was politicised not only in its relationship to municipal power, but also in the sense that it was a vehicle for ideas about the relationship between the municipality and the state, the city and the nation. Similar arguments around decentralisation had been made decades earlier with reference to the visual arts, but they received new impetus in the disrupted landscape of French opera after the liberalisation of the theatres in the 1860s.⁴³¹

For Legrand theatrical decentralisation in part meant revitalising the repertoire by increasing the number of works performed each season that had not previously been staged in Lille. Upon his election as Mayor in 1881 he revised the cahier des charges to specify that at least three new works should be performed each season (two new works per season were required at the Opéra Garnier in the same period).⁴³² In most cases a new work not previously performed in Lille had already been performed somewhere else in France, and in this sense the reform did not directly promote the independence of the Lille opera. Nonetheless it was conceived in these terms in the sense that as a first step, decentralisation required that the Lille audience be challenged by regular exposure to works with which they were not familiar. Thus the revised cahier des charges also gave the Mayor the authority to mandate the director to stage up to two new works per season by Lillois composers or writers, if suitable works were available. It was for this reason in particular that Legrand was

⁴³⁰ The 1950s and 1960s saw the foundation of 'national' cultural institutions in provincial cities such as Strasbourg and Caen under Minister of Culture André Malraux. Denis Gontard, *La Décentralisation Théâtrale En France, 1895-1952* (Paris: S.E.D.E.S., 1973).

⁴³¹ 'Although maintaining the centralisation of powers in the heart of the State is a way of maintaining unity in the body of the nation, one recognises that the decentralisation of works of genius is indispensable to provide for all members of the society the advantages that the culture of arts and sciences produce.' Reynart, 1850, 9.

⁴³² CML 18th March 1881; Grayson, 'Finding a Stage for French Opera,' 133.

recognised as 'partisan' of decentralisation by Léon Lefebvre.⁴³³ Legrand welcomed the municipal law of 1884 that gave all French municipalities elected Mayors and Deputy Mayors, as well as mandating that their meetings be public, but felt that it did not go far enough to reverse the centralisation of the state which, 'to excess, kills our efforts' in local cultural policy.⁴³⁴

As has already been outlined, Legrand (and his socialist successor Gustave Delory), pursued reform in a context in which the influence and centrality of Paris, with regard to opera, were shrinking.⁴³⁵ This diminution was coterminous with a slow shift in the repertoire, that saw greater experimentation with genre as the Grand Opéra no longer enjoyed the same singular importance. In the regulated opera scene of the mid-century, genre had been subject to institutional and organisational pressures that were inherently politicised.⁴³⁶ Under this system, the various official Parisian theatres each had a monopoly on a particular genre, each subject to a network of competing influences and pressures such that it makes sense to speak about a 'politics of genre.' Genre therefore cannot be understood independently of the institutional framework in which it stood.⁴³⁷ Liberalisation led to a fracturing of conventions around genre.

This fracturing gave a strong impetus to decentralisation of the opera, in the sense that it challenged the longstanding association between the preeminent genre (Grand Opéra) and the preeminent Parisian theatre (the Opéra Garnier). Both were sidelined by the same dynamics, while a shortage of stages for new work in Paris left composers looking for alternatives, either elsewhere in France or at *La Monnaie* in Brussels.⁴³⁸ Continuing political tensions at the national level between left and right, particularly around 1889 when a coup by General Boulanger seemed to be a possibility, meant that the opera never lost its capacity to be politically controversial. But new music nonetheless flourished in

⁴³³ Léon Lefebvre, 'La Décentralisation Théâtrale à Lille', *La Semaine Musicale de Lille et Du Département Du Nord*, 21st February 1897, 28th February 1897, 7th March 1897.

⁴³⁴ Legrand, CML 7th November 1884; On the municipal law, Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from Its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 82..

⁴³⁵ 'Repertorial stagnation' was particularly pronounced at the Garnier in comparison to the Opera Comique. Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 7.

⁴³⁶ Everist, 'The Music of Power'.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 688.

⁴³⁸ Rowden, 'Decentralisation and Regeneration at the Théâtre Des Arts, Rouen, 1889-1891,' 144.

the late 1880s and 1890s, precisely because both left and right shared an interest in 'change and regeneration', and saw new music as one way to achieve these.⁴³⁹ This changed context permitted the performance of controversial new works, such as Camille Saint-Saëns' erotically-charged *Samson et Dalila*, and Jules Massenet's *Thais*, implicitly anti-clerical.⁴⁴⁰

Around the same time, the works of Richard Wagner finally came to be performed regularly in France, three decades after the forced abandonment of the first staging of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in 1861. He was the most frequently performed composer at the Paris opera in the decade after 1890, yet his adoption into the repertoire did not take effect only through Paris but was a nationwide project which fed in to narratives of decentralisation.⁴⁴¹ It also responded to an international trend, numerous Wagner works having been performed across Europe and the Americas by that time.⁴⁴²

The first French staging of *Lohengrin* took place in Rouen in 1891, prompting the local press to write at length contrasting the capacity of provincial audiences to prioritise artistic considerations, with Parisians' hostility to Wagner based on misplaced patriotism.⁴⁴³ This premiere, together with its production of *Samson et Delila* before Paris, gave Rouen the status of the foremost provincial stage and the leading example of decentralisation according to the Lillois musical press.⁴⁴⁴ When Lille produced the first French performance of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* in 1893 it was the 'success of the season,' part of a move by Lille directors around the turn of the decade, with the encouragement of Géry Legrand, to show more works that were new to Lille.⁴⁴⁵

The administration of Gustave Delory, which succeeded Legrand, drew an explicit link between the turn away from Paris and the drive to stage new works.

⁴³⁹ Jan Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2009), 597–602.

⁴⁴⁰ Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 9.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁴⁴² See the performance histories of various Wagner operas listed at <http://opera.stanford.edu/Wagner/>. [Accessed 6th April 2017.]

⁴⁴³ For example *Journal de Rouen*, Tuesday 20 January, 1891. <https://dezedo.org/sources/id/41/> [Accessed 8th March 2017].

⁴⁴⁴ 'Théâtre des Arts, Rouen,' *Lille Artiste*, 4, 296, 16th December 1894.

⁴⁴⁵ Léon Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille. V Le Théâtre Municipal, 1880-1903*, vol. 5 (Lille: Lefebvre-Ducrocq, 1904), 132; Lefebvre, 'La Décentralisation Théâtrale a Lille', op cit.

Revisions made to the *cahier des charges* in 1897 stated for the first time that works suitable for performance were not those which had been 'subsidised by the state in Paris' as previously, but any that have been 'subsidised by the state or cities.'⁴⁴⁶ Alongside this broadening of geographical focus, a second new term in the cahier specified that at least half of the works performed should be 'from the modern repertoire.'⁴⁴⁷ The association between modernism and a turn away from Paris was made explicitly by the radical councillor Charles Debierre, a member of the committee who proposed the changes to the cahier. Debierre explained that the new provisions were necessary because Paris was no longer the only source of new works – he noted Reyer's *Sigurd*, and Saint-Saëns' *Étienne Marcel* and *Samson et Dalila*, first performed at Lyon and Rouen.⁴⁴⁸

Debierre and Delory's revised cahier des charges did not define 'the modern repertoire' in any substantive sense. In their usage, the concept functioned as a floating signifier for something broader, evoking a sense of the need for renewal. As had been a consistent theme in council discussions of the state of the opera throughout the 1880s and the 1890s, Debierre argued that the local opera's problems of low attendance or poor artistic quality, could only be solved through a serious project of innovation and transformation. Modern music, according to Debierre, was that which 'departs a little from the furrow traced by the old music.'⁴⁴⁹ He offered Wagner and Saint-Saëns as examples of modern composers, underlining the fact that modernity did not necessarily mean the most contemporary music (given that Wagner was already dead by this point) but rather that which had certain 'modern' characteristics. Though Debierre's definition of these was circular, it makes clear the sense in which modernity in music required a pronounced departure from prior practice. For partisans of theatrical decentralisation in Lille, during a brief moment in the 1890s, this departure meant a shift not only in musical genre but also in geographical terms. The hierarchical relationship between the provincial city and Paris in matters of opera was disrupted, as musical progressives among the municipal administration were given an incentive to look elsewhere for inspiration.

⁴⁴⁶ Report into the theatre prepared by the Municipal Commission for Public Education, Guffroy, CML 17th March 1897.

⁴⁴⁷ 'Theatre Municipal, Cahier des Charges', Bulletin Administratif, 1897, 227-238, AML.

⁴⁴⁸ Debierre CML 17th March 1897.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

Debate in the council chamber around the adoption of this *cahier* saw conservative voices cite the authority of Parisian elites, while advocates of reform such as Debierre justified the new policy on the basis of local autonomy. The lawyer Charles Brackers-d'Hugo objected to proposed changes to the way musicians were to be recruited to the municipal orchestra, including submitting the assistant director of the orchestra to a competitive examination. Brackers-d'Hugo cited letters he had received from the composer Jules Massenet, and the conductor of the Paris Opera Claude-Paul Taffanel. Massenet had apparently written that the proposed reforms were wrong, and that no orchestra in Paris was run on such a basis, a claim which Brackers-d'Hugo presented as self-explanatory refutation of Delory's reforms.⁴⁵⁰ Debierre objected forcefully, saying 'we have a brain like everybody and we know how to discuss and judge, knowing the facts. We don't need the authority of M.Massenet and M. Taffanel, because we are ourselves and we don't need to defer to authorities outside the city of Lille.'⁴⁵¹

In so far as the logic of decentralisation involved recognising an affinity between different French cities (something which is true of decentralisation in contexts other than the opera), it did not necessarily present itself as anti-nationalist, even if journalists in Rouen boasted about their cosmopolitanism against a narrow nationalism supposedly current in Paris.⁴⁵² In this sense, the story of theatrical decentralisation can be absorbed into a larger historiography of French opera at the end of the century, particularly its experimentation with genre, institutional reform and the preoccupation with the legacy of Wagner. The promotion of Rouen as a nationally important stage by some Parisian critics and composers was motivated in part by the need to break free from Paris' atrophy and reverse the habit of young composers to take their work to *La Monnaie* in Brussels, which in 1887 the *Revue Wagnerienne* called 'the first theatre of Paris' owing to the fact that it was much more inclined to perform new works that conservative Parisian directors avoided.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵⁰ Brackers-d'Hugo, CML 17th March 1897.

⁴⁵¹ Debierre, CML 17th March 1897.

⁴⁵² For example *Journal de Rouen*, Tuesday 20 January 1891, <https://dezede.org/sources/id/41/> [Accessed 8th March 2017]

⁴⁵³ Christian Goubault, *La Musique, Les Acteurs et Le Public Au Theatre Des Arts de Rouen, 1776-1914* (Rouen: Centre Régional de Documentations Pédagogique, 1979), 73–89.

However, the significant argument made here is that while Legrand and Delory's responses to a challenging period in French opera were consistent with broader national dynamics, they also emphasised the importance of local autonomy. In their reforms to the administration of the opera they looked to the example of other cities, including cities outside France as outlined in the previous section of this chapter, but they took from them the lessons that they thought most appropriate for the local context. This approach was consistent with the frequent expressions of frustration and sometimes hostility towards national governments expressed by both Mayors: Legrand's 'partisan' approach to theatrical decentralisation was consistent with his cultural politics more broadly and was a common theme of his mandate. In a discussion on founding a school of arts and métiers in Lille he complained that 'centralisation to excess kills our efforts[...] they want to see everything and do everything from Paris[...]The smallest credit, the most modest agreement can only be permitted by the high intervention of the President of the Republic.'⁴⁵⁴ In the same vein, Legrand's politics of decentralisation in the opera sprang from his deeply felt frustration at his lack of capacity as Mayor to effect the revitalisation of the local opera that he desired. The political circumstances in which he found himself as both the symbolic representative, and practical executor, of the municipality prompted him to search for a vocabulary which could encompass both his political and aesthetic aspirations. This was theatrical decentralisation, and his municipality used it to escape the confines of national operatic culture both by retreating to the city, and cultivating transnational connections.

⁴⁵⁴ Legrand, CML 7 Nov. 1884; See also Géry Legrand, 'Letters to the Prefect,' 15 Apr. 1882, 15 May 1882, ADN M557/82; During a discussion on the theatre, Legrand expresses frustration at close government management of municipal budgets, Legrand, CML 24 Mar. 1893.

2.5 Lydéric, sauveur de Flandre: Regionalism and transnational exchange in the opera

In this section I will discuss the effect of theatrical decentralisation on the operatic repertoire. The 1890s saw a significant increase in the number of new operas performed in the city, as the direction, with the encouragement of the municipality, engaged with new developments in the art form. In particular, I will explore the way the city responded to the controversial question of the appropriate place in France of the work of Richard Wagner. As recent literature has shown, Wagner presented too significant a figure to simply be ignored: his example and influence challenged French composers to develop a distinctly French style that adopted his compositional and dramatic techniques without simply imitating him, while his international celebrity meant that he increasingly stood in some sense for an international, rather than exclusively German, art.⁴⁵⁵ Wagner himself, in an 1879 interview with the critic Louis de Fourcaud, had suggested that French composers should adopt his methods, but in a way which was appropriate to their national context.⁴⁵⁶ This interview was widely known, (it was cited by Auguste Gaudefroy, one of the most prominent opera reviewers in Lille of the 1890s), and chimed with a sense in France that it needed to find a counterpart to Wagner, rather than simply to ignore him.⁴⁵⁷ Even composers such as Alfred Bruneau, Gustave Charpentier and Vincent d'Indy, who 'saw themselves as post-Wagnerian' found their work shaped by 'an attempt to move forwards by adapting the Wagnerian legacy... What it meant to 'move forward' was the crux.'⁴⁵⁸ Bruneau's *L'Attaque du Moulin* and Charpentier's *Louise* were performed in Lille in 1895 and 1901 respectively. The latter was 'characteristic of a new school', according to the rather conservative Gaudefroy, who concluded it would only ever be 'a passing success.'⁴⁵⁹ (In fact it

⁴⁵⁵ Kelly Maynard, 'Strange Bedfellows at the Revue Wagnérienne: Wagnerism at the Fin de siècle,' *French Historical Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 2015): 635; James Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' *Music & Letters* 84, no. 2 (May 2003): 209–40; Anya Suschitzky, 'Fervaal, Parsifal, and French National Identity,' *19th-Century Music* 25, no. 2–3 (February 2001): 237–65; Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 'Part III, Wagnerian Renewal', 255–392.

⁴⁵⁶ Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 322.

⁴⁵⁷ Auguste Gaudefroy, *Les Premiers Au Théâtre de Lille, 1895-96 – 1896-97* (Lille, 1897), 54–55; Suschitzky, 'Fervaal, Parsifal, and French National Identity,' 255.

⁴⁵⁸ Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin De siècle*, 469.

⁴⁵⁹ Gaudefroy, *Les Premiers Au Théâtre de Lille, 1899-1900, 1900-1901*, (Lille: Imprimerie de Nouvelliste-Depeche, 1901), 54-55.

was performed more than any other work in Lille in that season.)

It has been argued that the significant 'turning point' in a long process of transition from Grand Opéra to a more Wagnerian-influenced tradition sometimes called 'drame lyrique' was the performance of Vincent d'Indy's *Fervaal*, in Brussels in 1897 and Paris a year later.⁴⁶⁰ *Fervaal* told the story of a young man, raised in a forest, with a fated mission to defeat an invading force, in the form of Muslim Saracens.⁴⁶¹ Contemporary reviewers identified the work as an authentic synthesis of the Wagnerian method into the French tradition, and for that reason regarded it as a significant milestone.⁴⁶²

It is therefore interesting to compare the role *Fervaal* played in national debates on opera and national identity with that played locally by *Lydéric*, a new opera composed by the director of the local conservatoire, performed in Lille in 1895 and 1896.⁴⁶³ This comparison reveals a great number of similarities between the two operas, both of which told stories that were structurally and thematically similar to Wagner's *Parsifal*, and which did so in a musical style that was perceived by contemporary audiences as employing a Wagnerian aesthetic. Unlike *Fervaal*, though, *Lydéric* mobilised a politicized form of *local* identity to tell its story. As I shall therefore explain, *Lydéric* represents an artefact of the 'decentralised' opera, and one that is both local and transnational.

Lydéric was written by Emile Ratez on a libretto by E. Lagrillière-Beauclerc and Paul Cosseret. Ratez was born in Besançon and studied in Paris, but later became 'a Lillois...by adoption', spending forty years as director of the Lille Conservatoire.⁴⁶⁴ Along with the director of the theatre orchestra Oscar Petit,

⁴⁶⁰ Suschitzky, 'Fervaal, Parsifal, and French National Identity,' 239.

⁴⁶¹ Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' 211.

⁴⁶² For instance Pierre Lalo, son of the composer Édouard, cited in Goubault, *La Critique Musicale Dans La Presse Française de 1870 à 1914*, 224; Others have argued rather that the shift to Wagnerian drame lyrique can be dated to Debussy's *Pelleas et Mélisande*, first performed in 1902, or have characterised *Fervaal* as important only in so far as it led to this later work. See Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera*, 401; Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' 240. This debate is not especially important for our purposes here, except to note that there is consensus that *Fervaal* was characteristic of a significant shift in French opera.

⁴⁶³ Extracts were also played on the local radio in 1928. 'Radio,' *Le Populaire*, 27th May 1928; I have been asked, when discussing *Lydéric* at conferences, whether parts of the opera became popularised, perhaps sung in the street or performed in taverns with new lyrics. I have not had the opportunity to investigate this question but it occurs to me that the performance on the radio *might* point to a tradition of local re-usage of this nature. But this is mere speculation.

⁴⁶⁴ Médéric Dufour, 'Un Musicien Du Nord. Émile Ratez,' *PN*, 11 Oct. 1931. AML 1R/2/18

Ratez was one of a number of men in musical life in Lille whose political sympathies were Republican and progressive.⁴⁶⁵ These politics were shared with Legrand and at least one of the writers of the libretto of *Lydéric*, E. Lagrilliere-Beauclerc, who wrote regularly for *Le Progrès du Nord*.⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, the published libretto was inscribed with a dedication to Legrand, who had given his support to the production of the opera, as the *cahier des charges* enabled him to do.⁴⁶⁷ As well as possessing Republican views, Ratez seems to have been politically engaged on the left. He allowed the overture to a later opera *Le Dragon Vert* to be performed at a Mayday concert organised by the socialist municipality in 1901, and a few days later at a meeting of the Université-Populaire hosted by the professor of medicine, and radical municipal councillor, Charles Debierre.⁴⁶⁸ He was also involved in providing evening music classes for workers after the war.⁴⁶⁹

Lydéric was based upon the legend of Lydéric and Phinaert, a medieval epic poem, elements of which appeared in various Latin, French and Flemish versions between the 11th and 16th centuries.⁴⁷⁰ Lydéric is the son of Salvaert, a Burgundian prince, who passing through Flanders on his way to England is killed by a giant called Phinaert. Salvaert's wife Emergaert escapes and gives birth to Lydéric, before she is captured by Phinaert and held prisoner. The baby is left in the forest, where he is raised by a hermit who feeds him goat's milk. When, as a young man Lydéric discovers his origins, he challenges Phinaert to a duel on the Pont de Fin in Lille, a dramatic scene in which he kills Phinaert. King Dagobert then gives Lydéric the title of 'forestier' and grants him the right to rule over Flanders, which he does with great justice.⁴⁷¹ A popular annual celebration of Lydéric during the carnival period had existed in Lille since the 16th century, while the 'forestiers' were also celebrated in Bruges. Saint-Léger

⁴⁶⁵ Guy Gosselin, *La Symphonie Dans La Cité. Lille Au XIX siècle* (Paris, 2011), 426–427.

⁴⁶⁶ 'Lydéric,' *Lille Artiste*, 5,300 13 Jan. 1895; *Ibid.*, 427.

⁴⁶⁷ E. Lagrilliere-Beauclerc et Paul Cosseret, *Lydéric* (Lille, 1894).

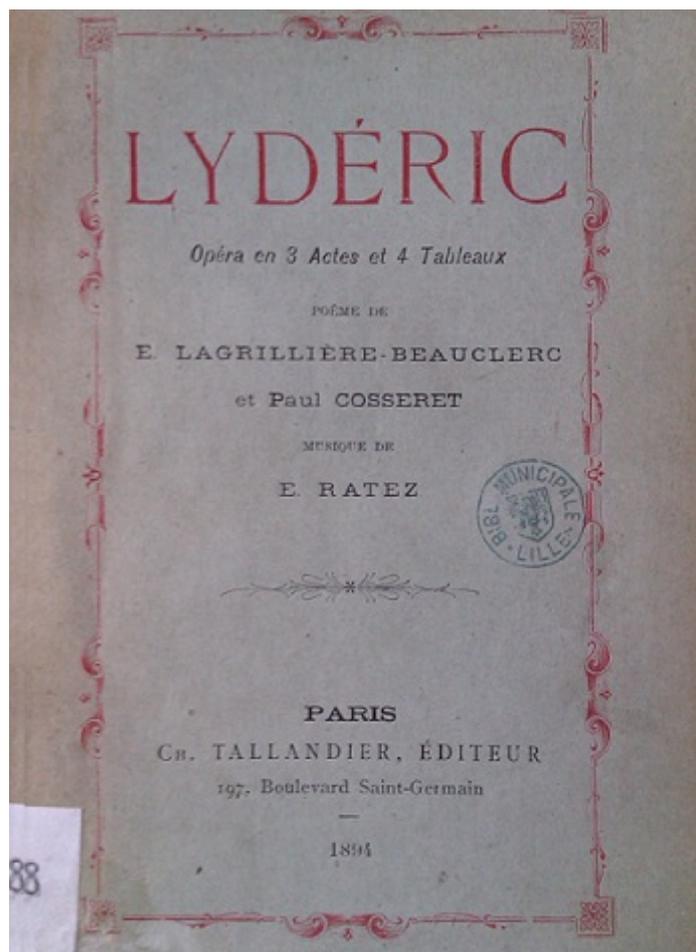
⁴⁶⁸ Auguste Gaudefroy, *Les Premières Au Théâtre de Lille, 1906-1907, 1907-1908, 1908-1909. Suivies D'une Notice Sur Le Concours Du Théâtre Définitif*. (Lille: Imprimerie de Nouvelliste-Depeche, 1909), 23–24.

⁴⁶⁹ Émile Ratez, 'Note aux journaux', n.d. AML 1R/2/11

⁴⁷⁰ A. Saint-Léger, 'La Légende de Lydéric et Des Forestiers de Flandre,' *Bulletin Du Commission Historique Du Département Du Nord*, 26, 1904.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.* Saint-Léger's summary of the story was based on the version told by the Lillois Pierre d'Oudegherst, in his 16th century *Annales de Flandres*, which Saint-Léger judged to be based on a 15th century Flemish source from the library at Douai.

believed that earlier versions of the stories had been celebrated for much longer. 'Les Flamands et en particulier les Lillois, [were strongly attached]' to Lydéric and Phinaert.⁴⁷² As well as his annual appearance in effigy at carnival, Lydéric was celebrated in local literature, both in the dialect poetry of Alexandre Desrousseaux, and in conventional verse by local hommes des lettres.⁴⁷³ The story was widely known, with Lydéric the 'popular hero' of the people of Lille.⁴⁷⁴



Source: BML Fonds Régional 23424

As well as choosing to create an opera from an identifiably local story, Ratez and his co-writers implied an association between Lydéric (the character) and the contemporary Lillois poor. In a scene in the second act, Lydéric sings a song

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Alexandre Desrousseaux, *Chansons et Pasquilles Lilloises Par Desrousseaux* (Lille, 1865), 37-43; J.-B. Deletombe, 'Lydéric, Poème de M. J-B Deletombe,' *Mémoires de La Société Des Sciences, de L'agriculture et Des Arts de Lille*, 3, 4 (1867): 469-520.

⁴⁷⁴ Anon., 'La Légende de Lydéric,' *La Depeche Du Nord*, n.d. (Loose leaf inserted into BML copy of *Lydéric*.)

about hunting in the forest, which reviewers recognised as 'sans pretension' in the style of the 'chanson populaire' or 'chanson rustique'.⁴⁷⁵ The *chanson populaire* was an important feature of working-class life in Lille: songs were often composed to mark significant events or to convey political messages, and were ubiquitous as entertainment in cafés and bars.⁴⁷⁶ The use of this musical style implied that the story had contemporary resonance, while the association between Lydéric and the local working class was reinforced by the fact that Lydéric, as in the original legend, was raised in the forest on goat's milk. A clipping from a local newspaper glued into the Lille municipal library copy of the opera suggests that this goat was an 'ancestor of those of Père Rameau', a reference to the Lille industrialist Charles Rameau, who on his death in 1876 donated a herd of goats to the city with the provision that their milk be given to its poor children.⁴⁷⁷ In other words it was implied that Lydéric, as a poor child raised on goat's milk, had some kind of affinity with the contemporary Lille working class. The provision of milk to children was a feature of early social welfare programmes in the region. It was mentioned in the social economy section of the 1902 Lille exposition, while promotional material for the Roubaix Exhibition of 1911 promised that milk would be available, serving as a great example in what it called an era of 'all out war' against infant mortality.⁴⁷⁸

These associations, and the political sympathies of Ratez and his writer already noted above, were matched by the tone of the story itself. In Salvaert's testimony, which Lydéric finds written on a parchment in a cave in the forest, he predicts a future point in which the people will revolt and support Lydéric in his task of vengeance against Phinaert. Lydéric declares that he will take on this task, and 'tear up the chains' which have fallen upon Flanders.⁴⁷⁹ After killing Phinaert he is hailed by the chorus as a liberator, and as 'Lydéric, saviour of Flanders'.⁴⁸⁰ The opera therefore seemed to carry an implicit political message, a generalised sense of frustration with authority that was consistent both with the pro-working class politics of Lagrilliere-Beauclerc and Ratez, and Legrand's

⁴⁷⁵ 'Chronique Musicale – Lydéric', *EN*, 10 Jan. 1895; 'Lydéric', *Lille Artiste*, 5, 299, 6th January 1895.

⁴⁷⁶ Pierrard, *Chansons Populaire de Lille Sous Le Second Empire*.

⁴⁷⁷ Anon., 'La Légende de Lydéric', op cit.

⁴⁷⁸ 'Exposition de Lille 1902. Règlement Général et Classification Générale', ADN CCL76J b35 d26 I; 'Exposition Internationale du Nord de la France', flyer, ADN CCL 76J b49 d26 bis c.

⁴⁷⁹ E. Lagrilliere-Beauclerc and Paul Cosseret, *Lydéric* (Lille: Dugardin, 1894).

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

repeated expressions of frustration at his relative powerlessness in the face of the centralisation of the French state.

Despite its locally-derived story and its emergence from a municipal policy of favouring local works, the opera was consistent with wider trends within the avant garde of French opera. *Lydéric* belonged to the genre of 'drame lyrique',⁴⁸¹ a form that had come to replace Grand Opéra, and had largely been associated with French wagnerism.⁴⁸² Ratez's opera was recognised as being 'modern' and 'Wagnerian' in its musical style, both by hostile reviewers and those who praised the work.⁴⁸³ Ratez had 'the skill and the science of a serious musician' according to one local periodical,⁴⁸⁴ while a review in a local paper claimed that 'he is from this modern school of which the formula goes like this: to abandon entirely the form of opera with a series of airs in duets or trios, with no link attaching one to the next; to achieve the intimate union of the poem and the music, by giving to the vocal and symphonic parts their appropriate place; and doing so by the constant employment of characteristic motifs'⁴⁸⁵ The prominent Wagnerian critic Louis de Fourcaud had two years earlier named Ratez among a list of seven young composers who in recent years had played 'an important part in the movement of the modern [musical] art.'⁴⁸⁶

It was noted by the *Progrès du Nord* that Ratez used the characteristic Wagnerian device of the 'leitmotif', a musical phrase associated with a particular character, place or dramatic theme, employed in the score to highlight the presence or importance of the associated object at a particular time during the story.⁴⁸⁷ '[Ratez's style is]... wagnerienne!' the *Progrès* explained with mock horror. *Lydéric* similarly evoked Wagner in its staging, storytelling and dramatic themes. The reviewer in the Paris paper *Le Temps* remarked that the opening scene in the wood reminded him of the first performance of *Tannhauser* in Paris. The story was also structurally similar to that of *Parsifal*: in both operas an innocent young man discovers that he has a moral obligation to defeat a

⁴⁸¹ Gaudefroy, *Les Premiers Au Théâtre de Lille, 1893-94 – 1894-95*, 56.

⁴⁸² Peter Lamothe, 'Questions of Genre. Massenet's *Les Érinnyes* at the Théâtre-National-Lyrique,' in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer. Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. M. Everist and A. Fauser, op cit, 283.

⁴⁸³ M. Weber, 'Lydéric', *Le Temps*, 21 Jan. 1895; 'Chronique Théâtrale', *PN*, 11 Jan. 1895.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Lydéric', *Lille Artiste*, 4, 298, 30 Dec. 1894.

⁴⁸⁵ Gaudefroy, *Les Premiers Au Théâtre de Lille, 1893-94 – 1894-95*, 56.

⁴⁸⁶ Louis De Fourcaud, *La Salle Pleyel* (Paris: Réunion, 1893), 90.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Chronique Théâtrale', *PN*, 11 Jan. 1895.

tyrant and prove himself a worthy leader of a new, purer age. In both there is a scene in which this revelation is transmitted to the character. The grail scene in *Parsifal* is matched in *Lydéric* by a scene in which the hermit prays to god to give Lydéric the strength to remove a large stone from the entrance of his father's tomb, revealing a scroll on which his testimony is written.

As performances in Lille of *Lohengrin* (1892) and *The Flying Dutchman* (1893) had demonstrated, to perform Wagner himself was no longer an act of extraordinary provocation by the mid 1890s.⁴⁸⁸ Indeed the Wagnerian critic Alfred Ernst claimed in 1888 that 'to admire Wagner has become banal', somewhat prematurely, given that the first Paris run of *Lohengrin* the year before had been cancelled after one performance under immense nationalist pressure.⁴⁸⁹ Nevertheless, to stage his work was still to make a statement about the sophistication and status of the city, as local audiences recognised. Celebrating the positive local reception of *Lohengrin*, the liberal *Écho du Nord* remarked that it was to Lille's credit that the 'the kitchen boys of Lille are not anti-Wagnerian like those of Paris, [which proves their good sense].'⁴⁹⁰

However, the notion that his ideas and style could be a legitimate influence in French opera itself was still a matter of debate that preoccupied composers, critics, and patrons. Even during his period of greater acceptance after 1890, Wagner continued to be perceived by some as representative of a 'Germanic' culture that should be met with hostility in the wake of the Franco-Prussian war, a perspective to which even sympathetic reviewers alluded.⁴⁹¹ How could French composers 'respond to Wagner's legacy from within,' absorbing his ideas about myth and musicodramatic structure, without compromising whatever ideas they had about national character in music?⁴⁹² This was the 'most compelling issue facing contemporary French opera,' one with which composers continued to grapple throughout the 1890s, and Wagner had referenced in his 1879 interview.⁴⁹³ As outlined above, Vincent d'Indy's *Fervaal* was a landmark in the development of the French response to this problem.

⁴⁸⁸ Turbow, 'Art and Politics: Wagnerism in France,' 134.

⁴⁸⁹ Cited in *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴⁹⁰ Anon., *La Soiree Theatrale, EN*, 20 Jan. 1892.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' 209.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*; Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 322.

Comparison between this work and *Lydéric* both sets the Lillois opera into the wider context of the development of French opera at the end of the century, and demonstrates some significant differences.

The dramatic themes and plotline of *Fervaal* are similar to those of *Parsifal*.⁴⁹⁴ They are also remarkably similar to *Lydéric*. Like *Lydéric*, the title character is raised in a forest and discovers as a young man that fate has given him the sacred task of freeing his country from an invading force; in this case saracens.⁴⁹⁵ Earlier French operas such as *Sigurd* (Ernst Reyer, 1883) bore comparison with Wagner, for example in some aspects of plotting or musical style, but had not incorporated them into a full, symphonic construction 'with the sophisticated use of interrelated leitmotifs throughout the score'; a contrast noted both by historical musicologists (describing *Fervaal*) and contemporary reviewers of *Lydéric*.⁴⁹⁶ Like Ratez, d'Indy used an identifiably regional setting, that of the Cevennes where he grew up, and references to folk culture such as a scrap of traditional shepherd's song.⁴⁹⁷ Unlike Ratez, d'Indy used this regional setting to make a claim about the French nation, suggesting that in order to revive itself from decadence it needed to return to its roots, which he identified as Celtic and Catholic. D'Indy was 'an ardent anti-semite and nationalist', and many audiences, particularly on its revival in 1913, recognised *Fervaal* in these terms.⁴⁹⁸

Lydéric in contrast was drawn from a popular local legend, performed in a municipal theatre and commissioned by a mayor who advocated decentralisation in both the theatre and politics more generally. While d'Indy used a regional location as the setting of a national revival achieved through the expulsion of a national enemy, Ratez implied a more dedicated focus upon the region itself as the terrain upon which working class Lillois would find liberation through the person of *Lydéric*. In this respect he might have been influenced by socialist readings of *Parsifal*, including those of the Bonnier brothers, who came

⁴⁹⁴ Suschitzky, 'Fervaal, Parsifal, and French National Identity,' 240.

⁴⁹⁵ Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' 211.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. 213; 'Ce ne sont pas de simples rappels, des themes particuliers a chacun des heros du drame lyrique, comme dans *Sigurd* ou *Manon*; mais bien un ensemble symphonique que constitué par la modulation de ces themes, leur rapprochement, leur fusion, leur superposition dans la forme...wagnerienne.' 'Chronique Théâtrale', *PN*, 11 Jan. 1895.

⁴⁹⁷ Ross, 'D'Indy's 'Fervaal': Reconstructing French Identity at the 'Fin de Siècle,' 220.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 209; Huebner, *French Opera at the Fin de siècle*, 325.

from Templeuve twelve miles from Lille, and whose work was available in the Lille municipal library.⁴⁹⁹ The contrast between *Fervaal* and *Lydéric* serves to underline the political flexibility, already noted by historians, of both regionalism and Wagnerism.⁵⁰⁰

One might be inclined to think of *Lydéric*, and its now-unknown composer, as irrelevant. This would be to cede too much to hindsight. The audience of the premiere, who received the composer with sustained applause at the intra-act and final curtains, clearly had no idea that the work would end up a forgotten relic. Their reaction is a marked contrast to that of the same crowd to *La Bohème* four years later. The reception of *Lydéric* was comparable to that of works by nationally celebrated composers which received their first performance in Lille that season. It was performed six times, the same number as Bruneau's *L'Attaque du Moulin*, and two more than *Phryné*, a new work by Saint-Saens that had debuted in Paris the year before.⁵⁰¹ A few days after the premiere the *Progrès du Nord* reported excitedly that it had been reviewed in several Paris papers, and that the publishing house had received a request for the words and music from a theatre in Vienna that was considering staging it.⁵⁰² Given how seriously its contemporary audience took *Lydéric*, we should approach it in a similar fashion.

Given the importance of *Fervaal* in the eyes of both twenty-first century musicologists, and contemporary critics, a work as similar as *Lydéric* should be examined as carefully. While D'Indy was unable to find a Parisian stage for *Fervaal* in 1897 and had to give the premier in Brussels, Ratez had already performed *Lydéric* in Lille two years earlier, with the personal support of the mayor, Géry Legrand.⁵⁰³ This is not to imply that Ratez is an unfairly overlooked talent, or even that it would matter especially if he was, but it does suggest that the adoption of Wagnerian methods and principles into French opera occurred not only through the most significant, celebrated composers, but through a

⁴⁹⁹ Maynard, 'Strange Bedfellows at the Revue Wagnérienne: Wagnerism at the Fin de siècle,' 647.

⁵⁰⁰ For the political heterodoxy of Wagnerians see W. Weber and D. Large, eds., *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics* (Ithaca, 1984), 16, 24; of regionalists and regionalism see Wright, *The Regionalist Movement in France 1890-1914*, 10.

⁵⁰¹ Lefebvre, *Histoire Du Théâtre de Lille*, Vol. 5, 154–155.

⁵⁰² 'Lydéric et la Presse', *PN*, 14 Jan. 1895.

⁵⁰³ *Le Gaulois*, 5th January 1895.

wider process of diffusion which included the provincial stages. This gradual absorption allowed for multiple ways of using Wagner, including as a way of articulating regionalist or progressive politics. This claim is consistent with arguments already made about the way in which Wagnerism at the fin-de-siècle functioned as a vehicle for a great variety of thinking that went beyond the 'political, cultural and ideological minefields' of the 1880s.⁵⁰⁴ This has significance far beyond the field of opera history, serving to highlight the *modernism* of French regionalism at the fin-de-siècle. Indeed, its relevance goes beyond France itself, as further comparative work could demonstrate. The search for local composers to be held up against Wagner was an international phenomenon too. In Bologna for instance, Stefano Gobatti was at first rapturously received at the Teatro Comunale for being the new Italian Wagner, before fading into obscurity.⁵⁰⁵ Regionalism at the turn of the century was not a locally or nationally limited phenomenon, but 'a widespread international trend.'⁵⁰⁶ The story of Lydéric, 'sauveur de flandres', is part of this story too.

⁵⁰⁴ Maynard, 'Strange Bedfellows at the Revue Wagnérienne: Wagnerism at the Fin de siècle,' 658.

⁵⁰⁵ Körner, *Politics of Culture in Liberal Italy*, 243–245.

⁵⁰⁶ Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism: Art, Architecture and International Exhibitions in France, Germany and Spain, 1890-1939*, 1.

2.6 Conclusions: Lille and Manchester, similarities and differences

In this final section of the chapter I draw out some contrasts between the role and status of opera in the two cities, relating these to the themes of the chapter and the thesis as a whole. As outlined above, in Lille the municipal opera was a focal point of elite attempts to assert their position of social and cultural leadership in the city. These interventions, which were increasingly far-reaching at the end of the century, were conducted explicitly as political acts, achieved through the municipal council. As well as functioning as a means of managing social change within the city, municipal intervention in the opera served to answer elite anxieties about the city's status – conceived in comparative, competitive terms – and its capacity to reproduce norms of cultural consumption visible elsewhere. As such, the opera became a political tool for modelling the relationship between the city and the rest of the world, particularly the rest of Europe. This modelling process took place both through the assertion of greater managerial autonomy within France, and attempts to connect to cultural trends across Europe by means of the aspiration towards cosmopolitanism.

Opera did not operate in the same institutional framework in Manchester. Manchester, like other British cities, had no municipally funded theatre, a difference which at least some recognised and lamented.⁵⁰⁷ Nor was there any kind of opera company, publically funded or otherwise, based permanently in the city; an attempt by the proprietor of the Theatre Royal to establish a permanent opera in Manchester, with Charles Hallé as conductor, ended after one season (1854-55) at great financial loss.⁵⁰⁸ Performances of opera were nonetheless frequently given, and well attended. Though the organisational framework was different – there were no *debuts* or *abonnés* in Manchester – opera audiences underwent a similar transformation in listening habits. Reviewers in the *Manchester Guardian* in the 1840s complained of barely being able to hear the performance over the talking of other audience members, whereas by the 1870s audience habits had changed in the face of an increasing

⁵⁰⁷ A letter in the local press asked, 'Can we not, in Manchester, proceed on independent lines? Is there no other but pictorial art which deserves the support of a great Corporation? Why not consider, after the example set by many continental cities, a municipal theatre?' 'Letter,' *MC*, 6th July 1910.

⁵⁰⁸ *Manchester Weekly Times*, *Sir Charles Hallé. A Sketch of His Career as a Musician* (Manchester: Heywood, 1890), 48.

perception of opera as art, rather than entertainment. The word 'work', to describe an opera, entered the *Manchester Guardian* writers' lexicon in the mid-1860s.⁵⁰⁹

The theatre industry in Britain had been de-regulated two decades earlier than France with the passage of the Theatres Regulation Act in 1843, which effectively set the government up as a neutral regulator (and censor) overseeing a market governed by *laissez-faire*.⁵¹⁰ 'Passage of the Theatres Bill... was tied up with pro-capitalist free trade debates.'⁵¹¹ As a result of this early impulse, and Britain's shorter distances and more developed railway network, touring professional companies in all dramatic genres were a sizeable part of the dramatic economy.⁵¹² In opera, the most important of these were the D'Oyly Carte Company and the Carl Rosa Company, both founded in 1875.⁵¹³ By the last decade of the century the latter spent most of its time on tour.⁵¹⁴ This fragmented performance landscape was frequently lamented as a source of weakness in the English opera by some, but ultimately never challenged in any significant way prior to the war.⁵¹⁵ While there were attempts to develop the English opera – indeed the Carl Rosa Company was established to perform works in English, and was praised for its efforts in this respect – the health of the 'national' opera never provoked the same anxieties as it did on the continent.⁵¹⁶ This is not to suggest that England was not also affected by the European-wide movement at the end of the century wherein anxieties over decadence or degeneration led nations to more aggressively assert their

⁵⁰⁹ John Storey, 'Inventing Opera as Art in Nineteenth-Century Manchester,' *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 9, no. 4 (2006): 437-440.

⁵¹⁰ Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34–41.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵¹² Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century. A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 57.

⁵¹³ John Lowerson, *Amateur Operatics. A Social and Cultural History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 7, 17.

⁵¹⁴ Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage, 1800-1914*, 341.

⁵¹⁵ Manchester writer Thomas Derby lamented that opera in England was hampered by its seasonal pattern, and the predominance of touring artists. Thomas Derby, 'In Defence of Opera', *Odds and Ends*, 1890, 133. SPLE, MCL GB127.M38/4/2/36.

⁵¹⁶ Alexandra Wilson, *The Puccini Problem. Opera, Nationalism and Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16–17; On the praise for Rosa 'A large debt of gratitude is owed to Mr Carl Rosa both by the musical world and also by the average playgoer. He has placed within the reach of this latter personage, to whom Italian opera has been, if not a bugbear, almost an impossibility, the chance of listening to the musical classics [by performing them with English lyrics].' 'Theatricals', *City Jackdaw*, 24th March 1876; Also see 'The Carl Rosa Company', *Comus*, 13th November 1877.

identities, entrench and develop new invented cultural traditions. In the case of England this meant a greater determination to develop a national music. But this energy was not focused on opera in the same way as it was in Italy or France.

Nevertheless, music and drama were significant features of the cultural landscape in Manchester. In the last decades of the century the city consistently had the largest population of resident musicians of any provincial British city.⁵¹⁷ The founding of the orchestra by Charles Hallé in 1857 spurred the creation of a number of other orchestras and concert societies, such that the city enjoyed a vigorous concert life: in October 1891, for instance, there were eighteen concerts by professional ensembles in the city listed in the *Manchester Guardian*.⁵¹⁸ The classical music concert became 'the principal form of officially-sanctioned polite entertainment' in the city.⁵¹⁹

The *Hallé Orchestra* in particular was an object of pronounced civic pride, employed as a rhetorical rejoinder to the suggestion that the city was dull or its inhabitants coldly materialist. On the appointment of the former conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Richter as director of the orchestra in 1899, a local magazine remarked that his presence was proof that, though 'our city may be dull to ordinary observers... there is a world behind the dullness which responds to the appeal of genius, and gives back inspiration in return.'⁵²⁰ Upon moving to Manchester Richter increased his salary five-fold, demonstrating that Manchester audiences (specifically the industrialists Gustav Behrens, Henry Simon and James Forsyth, who underwrote the orchestra upon Charles Hallé's death) were keen to ensure the orchestra continued to represent the very best.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ This includes the figure for musicians resident in Salford. Without Salford Manchester was marginally behind Liverpool. Dave Russell, 'Musicians in the English Provincial City: Manchester, c.1860-1914,' in *Music and British Culture, 1785-1914*, ed. Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 235–6.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁵¹⁹ Simon Gunn, 'The Sublime and the Vulgar: The Hallé Concerts and the Constitution of 'high Culture' in Manchester c.1850–1880,' *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2, no. 2 (1997): 208.

⁵²⁰ 'Hallé Orchestra Society', *Manchester Faces and Places*, January 1900, 166-7.

⁵²¹ Michael Kennedy, *The Hallé, 1858-1983. A History of the Orchestra* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 7–8.

The *Hallé* was the first permanent, professional orchestra in Britain.⁵²² Unlike the existing 'Gentlemen's Concerts', private societies whose membership was mostly Tory and Anglican, the *Hallé* concerts were open to all upon payment of admission, with a range of ticket prices reflecting the Mancunian social order: 'hierarchical yet open.'⁵²³ The orchestra was therefore seen as another institution of Manchester liberalism, with Hallé himself 'a kind of musical Cobden,' praised as the bringer of 'free trade in music'.⁵²⁴ This image of the concerts as open to all contained some truth around 1860, when only about a third of the audiences were season-ticket holders, but the proportion doubled in the next two decades. At the same time the number of tickets available in the cheapest bracket decreased, while prices overall rose.⁵²⁵ The effect was to ensure that music in Manchester became a potent symbol of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, with the *Hallé* the prime site in which elite distinction was cultivated.⁵²⁶ This is a sharp contrast to simultaneous attempts in Lille, however tense and partially successful, to use the opera to shape a cross-class institution of urban culture under the management of the municipal council.

The *Hallé* was noticeably cosmopolitan in its personnel. In the 1880s around 45% of the musicians were foreign, though this figure had fallen to 9% by 1914, by which time a fifth of the orchestra had trained at the Royal Manchester College of Music, which Hallé had helped to found and where Adolph Brodsky (who had previously worked in Vienna, Moscow, Leipzig and New York) was the principal.⁵²⁷ Mancunians were proud of the cosmopolitan character of their orchestra and quick to contrast the situation in the city with the rest of the country. A profile of *Hallé* published in a local paper remarked that the large number of foreign musicians should be attributed to a lamentable 'disregard by the nation and the Government of musical education.' The writer compared this situation unfavourably with the continent, where 'the German boy who displays a taste for music, and a delight in studying it, has every chance of making the

⁵²² Gunn, 'The Sublime and the Vulgar,' 209.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 212; 'Mr Charles Hallé,' *City Jackdaw*, 15th March 1878.

⁵²⁵ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 143.

⁵²⁶ Gunn, 'The Sublime and the Vulgar,' 221.

⁵²⁷ Russell, 'Musicians in the English Provincial City: Manchester, c.1860-1914,' 242.

best of his gifts.⁵²⁸

The city, increasingly a metropolis of consumption and leisure for the surrounding region, had many theatres too: there were around nineteen major venues throughout the period 1900-1914, the highpoint of the city's theatre land.⁵²⁹ These catered to a wide range of tastes and social classes; the behaviour in and around some of these theatres of male adolescent gangs, called 'scuttlers', became an issue of acute concern to 'respectable' publics in the late 1890s.⁵³⁰ But this cultural landscape was privately run, and never catered to elite audiences in great numbers, possibly because of nonconformist religious hostility to the theatre and music hall over the more 'cerebral' pleasures of concert music.⁵³¹ As such there was no direct equivalent to the Lille municipal opera in Manchester.

Nevertheless, there are clear similarities in the way that audiences in the two cities used prominent performances of opera to connect themselves to continent-wide cosmopolitan conventions of behaviour. Though 'the Continental Bohemia [was] a terra incognita' in grey Manchester, Mancunians flocked to the Theatre Royal on a Thursday evening in April in 1897 to hear 'Signor Puccini's already famous 'The Bohemians'.⁵³²

The Carl Rosa Company had come to the city to give the first English language performances of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*. They were joined by 'a large and brilliant audience', in the presence of Puccini himself, a composer immensely keen on international recognition and foreign travel.⁵³³ The audience 'received it very kindly – nay, enthusiastically – and at the end of every act the

⁵²⁸ Manchester Weekly Times, *Sir Charles Hallé. A Sketch of His Career as a Musician*, 27.

⁵²⁹ Russell, 'Musicians in the English Provincial City: Manchester, c.1860-1914,' 237; 'Every large town has its Quartier Latin, but none of such magnitude as Manchester, a magnitude due to the fact that there are no fewer than twelve theatres and variety halls in the district, and two more projected.' 'Our Theatrical Colony. The Bohemian Quarter of the City', *MCN*, 15th May 1897

⁵³⁰ Viv Gardner, 'The Image of a Well-Ordered City: Nineteenth-Century Manchester Theatre Architecture and the Urban Spectator,' in *Culture in Manchester. Institutions and Urban Change since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 95–100; Andrew Davies, 'Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford,' *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 2 (1998): 349–69.

⁵³¹ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 152; Chris Waters, 'Manchester Morality and London Capital: The Battle over the Palace of Varieties,' in *Music Hall. The Business of Pleasure* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), 158.

⁵³² 'Carl Rosa Company', *MG*, 23rd April 1897.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

composer had to appear and bow his acknowledgements.⁵³⁴ This positive reception was couched in terms that emphasised the work's 'continental' nature and the unfamiliarity of 'bohemia' to a Manchester audience, in comparison to a Spanish, French or Italian counterpart who would recognise the story 'as part of their existence.'⁵³⁵ Though reviewers in both the *Manchester Guardian* and *City News* noted in passing the influence of Wagner on Puccini, neither gave any indication of being aware of the controversies that Puccini had at times provoked at home, nor did they remark on innovative elements of the work, such as the subtle realism of the street scenes, where sellers' cries are melded into the music.⁵³⁶ The music was praised with 'high approval' as 'original... melodious and very vocal.'⁵³⁷

The response of audiences and reviewers in Manchester was shaped by the extraordinary success of the work, of which they had read in the local papers ahead of its appearance, and by its characterisation as Italian (despite its Parisian setting). 'English audiences, as a rule, are colder and less demonstrative than those of Italy,' the *Guardian* wrote, 'but last night the reception of the new work must have convinced the composer that his music was not less cordially appreciated in Manchester than it had been in Milan.'⁵³⁸ This self-conscious adoption of what the audience took to be Italian behaviours echoes the reception of Adelina Patti in Lille and underlines the fact that, as in the north of France, opera in Manchester could function as a means of connecting the local audience to cultural practices across the continent. In both cities, opera was encoded with ideas that associated it with certain behaviours, certain emotions, forms of distinction, and certain geographical places. Attending, listening to, watching, applauding, reading or writing about, debating or subsidising the opera were gestures towards the urban middle classes' existence in a transnational – particularly, transeuropean – network defined by shared cultural practices.

The two cities were not identical in the manner in which these dynamics took

⁵³⁴ 'A New Italian Opera in England', *MCN*, April 24th 1897

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁶ Wilson, *The Puccini Problem. Opera, Nationalism and Modernity*, 1; Abbate and Parker, *A History of Opera. The Last 400 Years*, 419.

⁵³⁷ 'Theatre Royal: Carl Rosa Opera Company', *Manchester Evening News*, 23rd April 1897.

⁵³⁸ 'Carl Rosa Company', *MG*, *op cit.*

shape. In Manchester, the capacity of the city to support a permanent opera with regular performances of modern works was of little interest to municipal councillors, local patrons of the arts, or writers and editorialists in the local press. Manchester's prestige was not greatly affected by the health or otherwise of its opera, in contrast to the Hallé Orchestra, which occupied a central position in middle-class images of the city as cosmopolitan.

This is not to suggest that the city was indifferent to the art. Many individuals had profound affection for and knowledge of the opera. The industrialist and municipal councillor Walter Butterworth was a great admirer of Wagner, and indeed spent the duration of the first world war interned in Germany as he had had the misfortune of visiting Bayreuth shortly before war was declared.⁵³⁹ Charles Rowley similarly made a 'pilgrimage' to Bayreuth in the 1890s and wrote that 'no exalted spiritual experience like this has ever touched my soul.'⁵⁴⁰ Katharine Chorley describes a childhood neighbour who 'could read a[n opera] score as easily as he could read a book.'⁵⁴¹

Yet for these men opera was a private passion, not something that they engaged in as a civic statement or civic duty. They pursued such priorities in other ways. Butterworth, for example, was chair of the council Art Gallery Committee, while Rowley was a core member of the Ancoats Art Museum and the St Pauls Literary Society. For both of these men – who we shall discuss in the next chapter – the state of the opera was not a public matter in the same way that it was in Lille. This, as well as the structural institutional differences, is the main difference between the two cities so far as opera is concerned.

The direction of this chapter would therefore seem to reassert an interpretative paradigm in cultural history that emphasises above all national difference, following a long standing tradition of differentiating English cultural practices from those pertaining on the continent. It perhaps recalls hackneyed arguments about the different cultural preferences and norms of the English, questions that have been explored in recent comparative work.⁵⁴² Manchester was indeed

⁵³⁹ R. Peel, 'Ruhleben, What is it Like?', *Odds and Ends*, 1916, SPLE MCL GB127.M38/4/2/62.

⁵⁴⁰ Charles Rowley, 'A Pilgrimage', *Odds and Ends*, 1894, SPLE, MCL GB127.M38/4/2/40.

⁵⁴¹ Chorley, *Manchester Made Them*, 118.

⁵⁴² Antje Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle Class Culture. A Comparative History of Nineteenth Century Leipzig and Birmingham* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

different to Lille in that it did not develop a local institutional structure to support the regular performance of opera, and the art form played only a minor role in the city's self-image. However, if we think more broadly about the role the opera plays in the argument of this thesis, there are significant similarities. This chapter has concerned the political dynamics surrounding the Lille opera, the way it was used to promote urban prestige, and the tendency to conceive of it in a comparative frame of reference that took in cities across the continent. The penultimate section of the chapter explored an example which demonstrated that at the turn of the century local elites were using opera to try to be both more self-consciously local, *and* more rigorously cosmopolitan. In a broad sense, the same dynamics that are visible in Lille around its opera, are present in the Manchester art gallery, which is the subject of the next chapter of this thesis. Thus while a direct comparison of the opera in the two cities seems to present mostly contrasts, a lateral comparison between opera in Lille and the art gallery in Manchester offers many similarities.

Chapter Three: 'Stretching out the hand of friendship from one town to another': the art gallery and the local state in Manchester and Lille

3.1 Introduction

In 1856 a group of Manchester industrialists led by the railway and shipping engineer Thomas Fairbairn formed the idea of holding a huge art exhibition in the city the following year. They were inspired by recent exhibitions in Paris, Dublin and London, but wished that their city should do something different. They set upon the idea of borrowing thousands of the most beautiful and celebrated art works then held in private collections in Britain, and displaying them in the city.⁵⁴³ Having read the work of the German art historian Gustav Waagen on the private collections held in Britain, the organisers were well aware of the possibilities open to such an exhibition of 'Art Treasures.'⁵⁴⁴

This was an elite project led by wealthy industrialists, merchants and local politicians. The chairman of the fundraising council was the Mayor James Watts (later knighted), a wealthy cotton merchant. The idea quickly caught local enthusiasm, and within a few months subscribers had raised £74,000 to meet the cost of transporting and insuring the loaned articles. Subscribers included three bankers, eighteen manufacturers, five merchants, three engineers, eight Members of Parliament, and twelve members of local government, five of whom would at some point serve as mayor of Salford or Manchester.⁵⁴⁵ However, the story of art in nineteenth century Manchester is not simply one of a small minority of extremely wealthy individuals, but rather of a negotiation between

⁵⁴³ Ulrich Finke, 'The Art Treasures Exhibition,' in *Art and Architecture in Victorian Manchester*, ed. John H.G. Archer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 105–106.

⁵⁴⁴ Early promotional material produced in support of the proposed exhibition makes direct reference to the work of Waagen as an inspiration and a guide to what might be achieved. Elizabeth A. Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. Entrepreneurs, Connoisseurs and the Public* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), Appendix II, 'Suggestions for an Exhibition at Manchester in 1857 of the Art Treasures of Great Britain,' 241–243; Waagen was the first director of the Department of Painting at the Berlin Museum, and was regarded in Britain as an authority on art generally. He had published a number of books including guides to British art collections; James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World. From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 105.

⁵⁴⁵ Katy Layton-Jones, *Beyond the Metropolis: The Changing Image of Urban Britain, 1780-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 73–74.

different interests within the middle classes, in which the local state played an increasingly important mediating role.

The Art Treasures exhibition, opened by Prince Albert in May 1857, was a triumph for the city and its pioneering organisers. It was hailed in the artistic press as a spur to the nation to extend and reorganise the National Gallery.⁵⁴⁶ It was also, in many ways, an international event: though all the work displayed belonged to owners based in Britain, it was not all created by British artists, and many visitors came from overseas. The French art critic Théophile Thoré remarked that 'Manchester's collection is worth almost as much as the Louvre's.'⁵⁴⁷ During the four months of the exhibition around 1.3 million visitors saw over sixteen thousands works of art, most of which came from private collections, and had never before been displayed publically.⁵⁴⁸

Some collectors, including Fairbairn himself, were locally-based industrialists, but the majority of works exhibited came from the royal collection and from landed aristocrats, many in the south of England. Though the exhibition eventually proved to be a great success, some were sceptical of the venture and doubtful that an industrial city such as Manchester could possibly be a suitable location for an art exhibition.⁵⁴⁹ Famously, one Duke refused the request of a loan. 'What in the world do you want with Art in Manchester?' he is supposed to have replied. 'Why can't you stick to your cotton-spinning?'⁵⁵⁰

This unattributed remark may be apocryphal, but it was faithfully reported by the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, for whom it evoked the very reasons for holding the exhibition. Manchester was indeed a city of labour, he wrote in response, but its wealth was being put to good use: the industrialists were generous patrons of the arts, as the exhibition demonstrated, and there were

⁵⁴⁶ Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 110–112.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857', *The Burlington Magazine*, 99,656 (November 1957), 361-363.

⁵⁴⁸ Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 282.

⁵⁴⁹ Layton-Jones, *Beyond the Metropolis: The Changing Image of Urban Britain, 1780-1880*, 75.

⁵⁵⁰ Unattributed quotation, Anon, *A Handbook to the Gallery of British Paintings in the Art Treasures Exhibition: Being a Reprint of Critical Notices Originally Published in The Manchester Guardian* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1857), 3; The catalogue of the 2007 exhibition *Art Treasures in Manchester: 150 Years On* (Manchester: Manchester Art Gallery, 2007) attributes this remark to the Duke of Devonshire, wrongly according to Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 10.

more opportunities than ever before for workers to enjoy them too. The exhibition, conceived in a modern democratic spirit, would be to the benefit of all, 'duke or day-labourer, cotton-spinner or country gentleman, croaker, critic, utilitarian, or economist.'⁵⁵¹ Thus the industrial city could be the site of a new kind of social order and harmony based not upon inherited status but on a shared commitment to productive economic activity (whether as capitalist or labourer) and the opportunity for shared participation in civic ritual.

The organisers embraced the characterisation of the city as industrial, striking a commemorative medal featuring a figure representing Manchester sitting on a bale of cotton, accompanied by a rudder to symbolise the Atlantic trade.⁵⁵² The industrial city of Manchester, in its own self-perception at least, was as much a home for art as anywhere else. The exhibition was a 'symbolic reconciliation of supposed antitheses: art and industry, 'high' and 'self-made' culture, metropolis and provinces, aristocratic state and industrial bourgeoisie.'⁵⁵³ There is a rich irony in the fact that in Lille, around the same time, a local writer was refuting suspicions of base materialism by denying that his city was 'the Manchester of the continent.'⁵⁵⁴

Such anxieties were a powerful clue to the motives behind wealthy citizens' support for art in Manchester. Just as in Lille, where municipal spending on the opera was partly justified by its capacity to present the city and its people in a better light, supporters of art in Manchester argued that a public gallery was an essential modern amenity which would demonstrate that the city and its people had risen 'above' material concerns. The city council therefore played an increasingly important role, opening the city's first municipal gallery in 1882, when they took over ownership of the gallery of the older, private Royal Manchester Institution. This move was in line with European-wide trends towards seeing art in terms of morality, and the art gallery as an instrument of

⁵⁵¹ Anon., *A Handbook to the Gallery of British Paintings in the Art Treasures Exhibition*, 3.

⁵⁵² Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 5.

⁵⁵³ Simon Gunn, 'The 'Failure' of the Victorian Middle Class: A Critique,' in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 39; On the fear that art and industry were antithetical see Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas. The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 198.

⁵⁵⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *L'Agrandissement de Lille Au Point de Vue Des Arts* (Lille: Destigny, 1859).

public policy.⁵⁵⁵ Just as the previous chapter discussed the politics of the opera in Lille with reference to the larger concerns of this thesis, so this chapter will explore the politics of the art gallery in Manchester with the same questions in mind.

At the same time that art came to derive a moralising function associated with an increasing role for the state, the consumption of art became a feature of the industrial middle class' accumulation of social capital. While this had long been the case for the mostly aristocratic collectors who loaned the bulk of the exhibits to the 1857 exhibition, the association between an industrial or commercial elite and art was something new. Manchester in the middle of the century represented a significant market for art, with more dealers and painters resident than any other city outside London.⁵⁵⁶ The 1857 exhibition therefore marked a convergence between the use of art as a marker of social distinction for urban elites, and its function as a focus of 'an emergent civic culture' of public ceremony.⁵⁵⁷ It is in this sense that the exhibition marked a significant milestone in the development of the public role of art in Britain more generally.⁵⁵⁸

'Everyone up here is an art lover just now, and the talk is all of the pictures at the exhibition,' Friedrich Engels wrote to Karl Marx during the exhibition.⁵⁵⁹ The

⁵⁵⁵ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995); Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Daniel Sherman, *Worthy Monuments. Art Museums and the Politics of Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989); Janet Wolff and John Seed, eds., *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995); Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre. Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For Manchester see Amy Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty. Art Museums in Industrial Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Amy Woodson-Boulton, 'Industry without Art Is Brutality': Aesthetic Ideology and Social Practice in Victorian Art,' *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2007): 47–71; John Seed, 'Commerce and the Liberal Arts': The Political Economy of Art in Manchester, 1775-1860,' in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 45–81.

⁵⁵⁶ Seed, 'Commerce and the Liberal Arts': The Political Economy of Art in Manchester, 1775-1860,' 52–56.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 71; Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* 1; Simon Gunn, 'Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective,' *The British Journal of Sociology* 56, no. 1 (March 1, 2005): 49–64.

⁵⁵⁸ Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 2.

⁵⁵⁹ Stephen J. Milner, 'Manufacturing the Renaissance: Modern Merchant Princes and the Origins of the Manchester Dante Society,' in *Culture in Manchester. Institutions and Urban Change since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 70; The same point was made satirically in Lille. In a spoof series of letters from a retired wholesale grocer to his army-officer son that appeared daily during the 1866 Lille exhibition, the bourgeois attitude to the arts is affectionately satirised. In his concluding letter, the father writes: 'One conclusion that can be drawn at present, is the effect produced in our Lillois population. There are currents of ideas which are like atmospheric currents,

political and social dimensions of the relationship between provincial urban middle classes and the arts has been explored in an extensive literature, which has established the inaccuracy of an image of this heterogeneous group as unusually philistine or 'gradgrind' in its approach to culture.⁵⁶⁰

Provincial middle classes used art as a marker of their own social status and cultural distinction.⁵⁶¹ They also used public policy around art to represent the city itself to both internal and external audiences. This meant making connections to the European continent, identifying themselves as part of a social formation whose intellectual and cultural life drew upon influences and relationships from outside of Britain. The extensive historiography on the nineteenth century development of the public art gallery in Europe has tended to treat the various national settings discretely, rather than exploring this transnational example.

To illustrate this point, in the following section of this chapter ('The Manchester International Art Exhibition of 1860') I discuss the Royal Manchester Institution exhibition of 1860. Unlike the exhibition of 1857, this included works borrowed from contacts in France, Belgium and Germany. I argue that this is an illustration of the fact that Mancunians saw their city as belonging in a wider European space linked by shared cultural practices and institutions. This is a potent example of a core theme of this thesis; that for the middle classes in the provincial industrial city, their participation in and management of cultural institutions was a way through which they both made sense of, and broadcast, their ideas about the city's transnational connections.

In the third section of the chapter ('The incomplete municipalisation of the

nobody is unaffected by them; one must, willingly or unwillingly, submit to them. I'm not saying that we have all become [art] appreciators, experienced connoisseurs. But already we are no longer novices, we have more or less discussed the drawing of this, the colour of that. We have formed our own opinion, and that's something.' 'Isidore Laplume,' *Le Bourgeois de Lille À l'Exposition Des Beaux-Arts*, (Lille, 1866), BML 34822.

⁵⁶⁰ For example Gunn, 'The Middle Class, Modernity and the Provincial City: Manchester, c.1840-80,'; Gunn, 'The 'Failure' of the Victorian Middle Class: A Critique,' 17–43; Janet Wolff and John Seed, eds., *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); Janet Wolff and Mike Savage, eds., *Culture in Manchester: Institutions and Urban Change since 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); John H. G. Archer, ed., *Art and Architecture in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

⁵⁶¹ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics*, 11. Bennett is using 'distinction' in Bourdieu's sense, as do I in this chapter.

Manchester gallery') I outline how the city council came to take over the Manchester art gallery from the Royal Institution in 1882. Increased municipal activity in managing the arts parallels increased control over the opera in Lille, discussed in the previous chapter. However, I also note the incomplete nature of this transformation and the continued role of Royal Institution members in the management of the gallery. This section engages less directly with the transnational interests of this thesis, but provides an important backdrop to the comparison between Lille and Manchester, which is returned to later in the chapter.

In the penultimate section of the chapter ('Stretching out the hand of friendship from one town to another'), I focus on a moment in the first decade of the twentieth century in which a faction of the Manchester city council, embedded in a wider network of middle-class institutions, tried to use art to promote a new form of urban modernism. Contrary to the Ruskinian tradition of hostility to the industrial city, men like Walter Butterworth celebrated the city's identity as industrial, seeing this as the basis for new practices of collecting and exhibiting art. In doing so they drew upon connections they made with art gallery directors and municipal politicians across Europe, arguing that Manchester should build a new art gallery inspired by the best examples across the continent. This proposal and the debate surrounding it represented an explicit claim that the city was part of a European-wide network of cities, and should aim to cultivate and celebrate the transnational links this involved.

Many of the recommendations of Butterworth and his peers were taken up, but the new gallery itself was never built. The failure to build a new gallery requires explanation, particularly when contrasted to Lille where the new *Palais des Beaux Arts* was completed in 1892. In the final section of the chapter ('Conclusions: what's wrong with Manchester?') I locate this explanation in the structural weakness of municipal institutions in Britain as well as contingent budgetary problems in Manchester. This involves a discussion of the different roles of the art gallery in the two cities. In Lille it was more significant as a locus of negotiation between the city and the national, republican idea. As such it was less useful as a vehicle for local elites to think transnationally than it was in

Manchester.

The art gallery was not simply a place for the cultivation of a proper aesthetic sense in citizens, or for their disciplining by means of the modelling of suitable behaviours: it was also a means of overcoming the distinction between art and industry by finding connections between them. In the provincial industrial city, what connected these was the idea of local specificity. If art could be made to serve the needs of local industry, the two fields of activity could be reconciled. Because of the globalised nature of the cities' economies, this localism was at the same time a form of transnationalism. But as I will explain in both this chapter and the next, it was a transnationalism of cities rather than a transnationalism that was mediated through the capital city or through the idea of the nation.

3.2 The Manchester International Art Exhibition of 1860

During five and a half months the Art Treasures exhibition received over 1.3 million visitors. Dozens of guidebooks were produced and sold to an eager audience.⁵⁶² Foreign visitors marvelled at the fact that such an extraordinary exhibition was being held in a city like Manchester. 'I can't get used to the idea that I am going to see the same Leonard Da Vinci guarded by a 'policeman', the French critic Charles Blanc wrote, 'and that I'm going to be taken in front of the Jean Bellinis, the Goirgiones and the Veroneses by bus and not by gondola.'⁵⁶³ The exhibition was the first major one in Europe to organise works both chronologically and by national 'school' 'in order to reveal the historical development of art'.⁵⁶⁴ 'The chronological arrangement which has been adopted in the Manchester galleries... enables the eye to take in at a glance the broad distinguishing characteristics of successive periods and schools of art,' the *Times*' correspondent wrote.⁵⁶⁵

By any measure the exhibition was a significant milestone in British art history. The appointment of Fairbairn to the Royal Commission for the International Exhibition of 1862 represented official recognition of its success.⁵⁶⁶ Yet, notwithstanding more recent literature published around the 150th anniversary, it has generally been ignored in histories of art collecting and exhibiting.⁵⁶⁷

Along with its marginalisation in this historiography, the exhibition has also been treated in isolation in the historiography of Manchester. Its implications for subsequent local history have been under-examined, or reduced to Thomas

⁵⁶² For example Thomas Morris, *An Historical, Descriptive and Biographical Handbook to the Exhibition of the United Kingdom's Art Treasures, at Manchester, 1857* (Manchester: Heywood, 1857); Gustav Waagen, *A Walk through the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Manchester under the Guidance of Dr. Waagen* (London: John Murray, 1857); Anon, *A Handbook to the Gallery of British Paintings in the Art Treasures Exhibition*.

⁵⁶³ Charles Blanc, *Les Trésors de L'art À Manchester* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1857), 5.

⁵⁶⁴ Jacqueline Yallop, *Magpies, Squirrels & Thieves: How the Victorians Collected the World* (London: Atlantic Books, 2011), 233; Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 2.

⁵⁶⁵ 'Exhibition of Art Treasures at Manchester', *The Times*, Monday, May 15, 1857.

⁵⁶⁶ Finke, 'The Art Treasures Exhibition,' 124.

⁵⁶⁷ See Pergam, the first book-length treatment of the subject and special issue of *Bulletin of John Rylands' Library*, Volume 87, Number 2, January 2005 *Art, City, Spectacle: The 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition Revisited*; For general histories see McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, and *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao*; Duncan *Civilising Rituals: Inside the Public Art Museum*; Bennett, 'The exhibitionary complex' and *The birth of the Museum*; Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*. None of these examine the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition.

Fairbairn's unsuccessful attempt to found a permanent gallery in the city.⁵⁶⁸

Recent scholarship on the municipal gallery eventually founded in 1882 has mentioned the Art Treasures exhibition only in passing, seeming to assume – implicitly at least – that it had little bearing on the subsequent history of art in the city.⁵⁶⁹ Yet exhibitions held in the 1860s reveal a continuing desire on the part of local middle classes to use art to educate their fellow citizens, as well as to make a statement about the city's status. In doing so they aimed not only to promote the city on a national stage, but also to connect it to the world beyond the nation's borders.

These exhibitions were the work of the Royal Manchester Institution, a private membership society which existed to promote literature, science and the arts. With formal municipal involvement in the arts limited until 1882, the Institution was the most important body of its kind in the city. As Richard Morris has noted, voluntary societies were a key technology by which middle classes 'express[ed] and develop[ed] their view of the world' in mid-nineteenth century provincial cities.⁵⁷⁰ Drawing on this insight, I argue that the exhibition of 1860 tells us about the willingness of the Mancunian bourgeoisie to see themselves in relation not only with a national idea, but also to find connections with their counterparts in other western European nations. The cultivation of civic and personal distinction was the common language and currency for such exchanges.

The Royal Manchester Institution was founded in 1823 with £30,000 of subscriptions raised from 'Manchester merchants and other influential residents' in order to promote 'an alliance between Commerce and the Liberal Arts.'⁵⁷¹ The founders envisaged providing an art gallery, public lectures in both the arts and the sciences, and technical education for the working class, hoping to emulate

⁵⁶⁸ He was forced to abandon this effort as wealthy citizens were unwilling to contribute in the face of the severe economic and social crisis that gripped the region during the American Civil War. During the height of this crisis, November 1862, the Poor Law Guardians or the Relief Committees gave aid to half of all workers in the cotton district. Arthur Redford, *The History of Local Government in Manchester* (London: Longmans Green, 1940). 266.

⁵⁶⁹ Amy Woodson-Boulton, 'Industry without Art Is Brutality': Aesthetic Ideology and Social Practice in Victorian Art,' *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2007): 66.

⁵⁷⁰ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 4

⁵⁷¹ S.D. Cleveland, *The Royal Manchester Institution, Its History from Its Origin until 1882* (Manchester: Royal Manchester Institution, 1931), 3; AGC, 30th September 1897.

Glasgow's Anderson's Institute, or Edinburgh's School of Arts.⁵⁷²

The Institution's members and patrons were drawn from the local area.⁵⁷³ They were professionally heterogenous – for instance, at a 1854 meeting of the council of the School of Art, an initiative of the Institution, of nine individuals listed in the minutes as having spoken, two were medical professionals, one was a reverend, one was a printer and publisher and four were a 'Merchant' or 'Merchant and Calico printer' – but they shared membership of a broadly defined middle class.⁵⁷⁴ As discussed in Chapter 1, bodies such as the Institution were an important means by which members of the middle classes overcame professional (or confessional or political) divisions to bind themselves together as a class.

Despite its geographically confined social base the Institution's interests were not parochial: from its inception it concerned itself with intellectual and scientific life outside of the city. An 1839 catalogue of its library shows that it was collecting guides to artworks, catalogues of art collections, statistical and scientific reports, and printed proceedings of similar institutions across the country.⁵⁷⁵ This approach was a logical development from Manchester's economic influence, which was geographically wide-reaching, stemming from its position as the mercantile centre for the entire Lancashire cotton industry. Economic leadership gave rise to other forms of leadership, and the

⁵⁷² Kargon, *Science in Victorian Manchester: Enterprise and Expertise*, 16-19; Anderson's Institute provided technical instruction for the working class and was founded by a bequest in the will of John Anderson, a scientist at Glasgow University. In the twentieth century it became the University of Strathclyde. Comparisons between provincial cities were a common part of discussions on cultural production in the nineteenth century provincial city, as the previous chapter illustrated with reference to municipal council discussions on the opera in Lille.

⁵⁷³ Of around 600 'Hereditary Governors' listed in 1839, almost 580 lived in Manchester or in towns up to ten miles away. Hereditary Governors were those who had paid for a 'share' in the institution – though this share carried no possibility of monetary reward. As the name suggests, this share could be passed on to a successor. Any Hereditary Governors living more than twelve miles from the Manchester Exchange were exempted from paying the annual subscription fee of one guinea. Royal Manchester Institution. *Regulations of the Royal Manchester Institution with a List of the Governors and Annual Subscribers* (Manchester: Sowler, 1839).

⁵⁷⁴ Royal Manchester Institution. *The First Annual Report of the Manchester School of Art (Late School of Design, Instituted in 1838). Read at the Annual Meeting, Held in the Council Room of the RI, Mosley Street, Monday 31st July 1854* (Manchester: Cave and Sever, 1854). Professional artists in Manchester tended not to join the Institution, preferring the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, founded in 1859. In this sense the Institution was concerned with the *promotion* of art and its moral, political, aesthetic and social *use*, rather than with the practice of its production.

⁵⁷⁵ 'List of items held by the institution,' Royal Manchester Institution, *Regulations of the Royal Manchester Institution with a List of the Governors and Annual Subscribers*.

Manchester Institution, like other bodies in the city, assumed a pre-eminent role in the region. The council of the Institution's School of Art explicitly articulated an idea of itself as serving the needs of the 'manufacturing district' of South Lancashire, rather than the city alone.⁵⁷⁶

The cultivation of horizontal connections with similar provincial bourgeois institutions was part of a process that bound the city into a national space and the Institution's members into a national middle class, as has been described with reference to several different European contexts.⁵⁷⁷ However, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, provincial middle classes and their institutions also cultivated contacts with their counterparts overseas. This was true for the International Exhibition of 1860, which the Institution organised together with the recently founded Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, an association of professional artists, to produce an exhibition of 'much greater magnitude' than usual: around 900 works were displayed.⁵⁷⁸ Their aim was to 'improve the acquaintance [of the Manchester audience] with the modern school of painting' in a more comprehensive way than had ever been attempted in the city before.⁵⁷⁹ Works by Manchester artists, members of the Academy, were displayed, but around a fifth of works were by artists from the continent.⁵⁸⁰ This was the first time that a Manchester exhibition had displayed the work of foreign contemporary artists delivered direct from the continent, rather than from private collectors or dealers in England.

The exhibition entailed a very considerable organisational effort. Paintings were loaned from German, French and Belgian artists via contacts in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Paris and Brussels. Contact was first made with Gustav Waagen by the institution's secretary Sigismund Stern in the late summer of 1859. Stern was a German-born partner in the cotton merchants Leo Schuster and Co, and evidently already knew Waagen, who had stayed with him during a previous

⁵⁷⁶ Royal Manchester Institution, *The First Annual Report of the Manchester School of Art*.

⁵⁷⁷ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*; Gerson, *The Pride of Place*; Confino, 'The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Heimat, National Memory and the German Empire, 1871-1918.'

⁵⁷⁸ 'Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 3rd September 1860. The comparison made is with ordinary annual exhibitions of the Institution, which were made up primarily of paintings from that year's Royal Academy show, together with some local artists.

⁵⁷⁹ Letter, Sigismund Stern to Waagen, 18th August 1859, RMI GB127.M6/1/57-58

⁵⁸⁰ 'Exhibition of Pictures at The Royal Institution, Works of the Artists of Manchester', *MG*, 20th October 1860.

visit to Manchester.⁵⁸¹ Stern explained the institution's ambition to provide Manchester audiences with a fuller picture of contemporary painting than had ever previously been available to them. Waagen in turn provided introductions to the Paris art dealer François Petit, and to François-Antoine Bossuet, a painter and professor of the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. At Waagen's suggestion, The assistant-secretary Richard Aspden also began a correspondence with the 'Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen', a fine arts society in Düsseldorf.

A flurry of letters were exchanged between Manchester and the four cities over roughly a year and a half.⁵⁸² Though Stern, who was born in Germany, wrote in his own hand, the services of a Manchester translation agency were used to translate incoming letters, demonstrating that they were circulated among the Institution board more widely: the exhibition was not simply the initiative and responsibility of a clique of ex-patriate Germans.⁵⁸³ Letters to France and Belgium were written in French, mostly by the architect Edward Salomons. Little indication was given of the type of work they hoped to receive beyond the fact that it ought to be by highly regarded contemporary artists: at the annual general meeting the following year Salomons stated that they were seeking 'foreign artists of repute.'⁵⁸⁴ Although the Institution effectively ceded to others the selection of works to be displayed, with little specification given beyond that they be 'modern', it was not passive. There was a huge range of practical matters to consider including shipping and rail schedules, the purchase of insurance, and timing the exhibition to fit with other events in the German and Belgian art calendars. Stern, Aspden, and Salomons all communicated with their correspondents about shipping schedules from Hamburg and Rotterdam, railway timetables from Hull, and other information about the exhibition itself that artists had requested. Once the works arrived in Manchester, they were hung by age and 'school' as at the Art Treasures Exhibition, the hanging being

⁵⁸¹ Pergam, *The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857*, 33.

⁵⁸² The letters, numbering over 350, are in two locations of the Royal Manchester Institution archive, RMI, GB127.M6/1/57 and GB127.M6/1/58.

⁵⁸³ This is also demonstrated by the fact that although Stern could presumably have composed a letter directly in German, draft 'letters-out' exist written in English. This suggests that their contents were agreed with other members of the Institution council.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Latest News', *MG*, 29th March 1860.

performed by members of the Institution.⁵⁸⁵

The arrangements for the exhibition depended upon the cultivation of a symbiotic relationship between actors with different perspectives and agendas. Petit was a commercial agent, a professional art dealer, and presented himself in his correspondence as a businessman providing a service. The work of art, for him, was a tangible and demystified commodity: when discussing the number of paintings he might supply, Petit negotiated over the desirability of several smaller-sized canvasses against a lesser number of larger ones. Though Bossuet was a painter himself, he showed sufficient shrewdness to give extra legitimacy to his approaches on behalf of the Institution by printing, on his own initiative, headed paper for the '*Société Royale des Beaux Arts de Manchester*', which identified him as a 'corresponding member'.⁵⁸⁶ As these anecdotes demonstrate, the private market in art, already well established and well adapted to meeting the needs of wealthy bourgeois customers, could easily be adopted for a 'public' (albeit privately organised) exhibition. Sixty pictures were sold after just days on display.⁵⁸⁷ At least one work, a small image of a man standing at a window by the French historical realist painter Ernest Meissonier, was sold *in Paris* by Petit while it was still in Manchester.⁵⁸⁸

The largest portion of the collection of letters was exchanged with the 'Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen', in Düsseldorf. Founded in 1829 with the sponsorship of Frederick of Prussia in to promote contemporary art and support artists, the Düsseldorf society was 'the largest art union in central Europe' in the 1830s.⁵⁸⁹ As the city and the region continued to industrialise and grew increasingly wealthy in the 1840s the Kunstverein grew in membership and status, performing an important role as a marketplace for artists and arbiter of bourgeois taste; characteristics which were also possessed by the Royal Institution.⁵⁹⁰ The letter writers in both cities recognised this affinity, writing to each in warm tones that were markedly different to those of Petit or Bossuet.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 3rd September 1860.

⁵⁸⁶ Letter, Bossuet to RMI, 29th March 1860, RMI op cit.

⁵⁸⁷ 'Royal Manchester Institution', *MG*, 4th September 1860.

⁵⁸⁸ 'Art Literature and Science', *MG*, 10th September 1860.

⁵⁸⁹ Marion F. Deshmukh, 'Between Tradition and Modernity: The Düsseldorf Art Academy in Early Nineteenth Century Prussia,' *German Studies Review* 6, no. 3 (October 1983): 464.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 465.

The Düsseldorf society offered to act as a 'jury' of local works, selecting the best specimens to send to Manchester, a service which Aspden 'willingly accept[ed]' on behalf of the Institution.⁵⁹¹ At the time the 'Düsseldorf School' of painters contained 'some of the most eminent painters of modern times,' exhibited across Europe and awarded prestigious prizes.⁵⁹²

The resulting exhibition, which also included works by members of the Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, was 'one of the best we have ever had in Manchester.'⁵⁹³ Not only was it much larger than previous autumn exhibitions, but it boasted 'features new to Manchester, and in a great measure new to Great Britain'.⁵⁹⁴ This novelty resided in the fact that the exhibition had been jointly organised by the Institution and the Academy, and that it contained 'a direct and classified exposition of the respective schools of France, Germany, Belgium and England', which one reviewer took to represent 'almost every artistic portion of the globe'.⁵⁹⁵ The arrangement of the works into national 'schools' meant that the exhibition functioned as 'a means of much sound instruction in aesthetics'.⁵⁹⁶ The *Manchester Guardian's* reviewer wrote that simply by displaying works in such an order the exhibition would 'silently work its lessons on the popular mind,' noting differences in tone, emotion and technique between the different works displayed.⁵⁹⁷

Without a copy of the exhibition catalogue surviving in the Institution's archives it is difficult to know in totality what works were displayed, but reviews of the exhibition in the *Manchester Guardian* over several weeks are revealing of Mancunian expectations of the various national schools. French and Belgian artists were noted for how 'rich' they were in 'expressions of domestic life and humour,' with the latter supposedly representing artistically, as they did geographically, a mid-point between Germany and France.⁵⁹⁸ Bossuet was

⁵⁹¹ Letter, Aspden to Kunstverein, 15th March 1860, RMI op cit.

⁵⁹² Anon., 'The Düsseldorf Gallery,' *The Cosmopolitan Art Journal* 2, no. 1 (December 1857): 43; Uta M. Simmons, 'Review: Oswald Achenbach (1827-1905): Sein Künstlerisches Wirken Zur Hochzeit Des Bürgertums by Mechthild Potthoff,' *The Burlington Magazine* 140, no. 1143 (June 1998): 404.

⁵⁹³ 'Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 3rd September 1860.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ 'Royal Institution,' *MG*, 28th December 1860; *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁶ 'Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 3rd September 1860.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*; 'Exhibition of Pictures, Royal Institution', *MG*, 28th September 1860.

praised for the 'intense concentrativeness of his bursts of sudden and powerful light' in two Mediterranean landscapes, but most of the Belgian works remarked upon were scenes of village or school life, such as 'The Village Festival' by Florent Crabeels, or Theodore Bernard de Heuvel's 'The Schoolmaster', both of which evoked the crowd scenes of early-modern Flemish painting.⁵⁹⁹ Louis-Jean Somers was praised for his depiction of the different 'shades of character' revealed in his painting of several choristers of various ages in 'The Chorister's Singing Desk'.

Germans in contrast were perceived as landscape artists, and praised for being 'peculiarly rich in suggestions of modes of recognising certain facts of nature.'⁶⁰⁰ These apparent qualities in German art were reflected in the works that local critics chose to highlight. 'The finest German picture in the whole collection', according to the *Guardian*, was a painting of a sunset by the Berlin-based artist Eduard Hildebrandt, which the reviewer thought was 'Turnerian in the intricacy of its colour manipulation [and evocation of] atmospheric phenomena.'⁶⁰¹ Hildebrandt was a landscape painter much influenced by English artists, though he had trained in Paris and Berlin; the reference to Joseph Turner suggests a dark, romantic landscape of the kind for which Hildebrandt was celebrated.⁶⁰² While the comparison might suggest that what the *Guardian* reviewer really liked about Hildebrandt was his English influences, the identification of his work with a German tradition of expressive landscape painting suggests a sophisticated understanding of the interlinked nature of influence and exchange in mid-century European painting.

The Düsseldorf School member Oswald Achenbach was also praised for his painting of a street scene in Naples which was 'full of graphic energy' and made the writer feel a sensation of the 'dusty heat' of the scene.⁶⁰³ Given that Achenbach had won a gold medal at the Paris salon the year before, and his work had been exhibited in New York two years before that, the presence of his

⁵⁹⁹ 'Exhibition of Pictures, Royal Institution', *MG*, 28th September 1860.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰¹ 'Exhibition of Pictures, Royal Institution', *MG*, 28th September 1860.

⁶⁰² Peter Bloom, 'Robert Schumann and Mary Potts,' *Notes*, 2nd, 65, no. 2 (December 2008): 271; Volkmar Kohler, 'Richard Toepffer Als Freund Und Förderer Der Kunst,' *Tradition: Zeitschrift Für Firmengeschichte Und Unternehmerbiographie* 13, no. 1 (January 1968): 24.

⁶⁰³ 'Exhibition of Pictures Royal Institution', *MG*, 28th September 1860.

work in Manchester underlines the scale of the achievement of the exhibition organisers.⁶⁰⁴

The display of work from collections on the continent was not repeated at such a scale in Manchester until the early twentieth century, the Institution finding that 'the great expense attending [the] transit' of large numbers of oil paintings from continent precluded them from doing so.⁶⁰⁵ The autumn exhibition of the following year also included foreign works, but 'perhaps not up to last year's mark' according to a reviewer.⁶⁰⁶ Foreign artists continued to exhibit in Manchester throughout the decade, but were described as a 'sprinkling' or as present 'in [less] force [than] formerly'.⁶⁰⁷ The organisation of correspondence in the Institution archives, in which letters relating to the 1860 exhibition are labelled and stored separately (unlike correspondence for other exhibitions during the decade) indicate that 1860 was seen as a year apart. Nonetheless, it is important to underline that non-British artists continued to exhibit in Manchester after 1860 – Camille Corot's famous *Saint Sebastian* was displayed alongside work by David Cox and Ford Madox Brown in 1874 – suggesting that the failure to repeat the triumph of 1860 owed more to the very substantial practical obstacles rather than a lack of appetite locally.⁶⁰⁸

The Manchester exhibition of 1860 allows us to investigate the way that provincial elites used art as a way to make connections with other parts of the world, thereby articulating their ideas about the city itself. This investigation leads us to make three conclusions that are crucial to the arguments of this chapter, and this thesis as a whole. Firstly, we see that at the height of its mid-victorian boom the Manchester elite was confident enough to make international connections at some logistical difficulty and expense. Communication practices that were second nature to them through their commercial activities – the appointment of agents, the use of translation services, the value of personal introductions – could be employed by the Institution to insert itself into an art

⁶⁰⁴ Anon., 'The Düsseldorf Gallery,' 43; Simmons, 'Review: Oswald Achenbach (1827-1905): Sein Künstlerisches Wirken Zur Hochzeit Des Bürgertums by Mechthild Potthoff.'

⁶⁰⁵ Report on RMI Annual General Meeting: 'Royal Manchester Institution', *MG*, 27th March 1862.

⁶⁰⁶ 'Exhibition of Works of Modern Artists', *MG*, 10th October 1861.

⁶⁰⁷ 'The exhibition of pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 14th September 1866; 'The Exhibition of Pictures at the Royal Institution', *MG*, 17th December 1867.

⁶⁰⁸ 'Royal Manchester Institution', *MG*, 10th September 1874.

market which was already more than capable of supplying works of art as commodities. Their instinctive sense that the spatial logic of industrial modernity put their city in communication with the rest of the world was used to serve their agenda in the realm of cultural politics.

Secondly, the openness of the mid-nineteenth century British state to private and municipal initiative in the provinces meant that political connections could also be drawn into this fluid network, at once personal and commercial. For instance, Prince Albert's private secretary Dr Becker offered to help the Institution to secure the co-operation of artists from Düsseldorf.⁶⁰⁹ Given such connections, as well as the association of Gustave Waagen with national cultural institutions in London, the organisation of the exhibition can be said to have depended on intra-european political connections existing at a national level, as well as on individuals in Manchester itself. The transnational network that secured the loan and transportation of hundreds of works of art to Manchester thus depended upon vertical connections as well as horizontal ones – indeed, much of the time the two were intertwined. In a sense therefore, people of national importance in British cultural life, as well as the personal connections of Britain's German monarch, were important to the achievement of the exhibition in Manchester.

However, this is *not* to undermine the transnational character of the exhibition, but rather to underline the need for a rethinking of the paradigm of national culture more generally. Self-effacing descriptions of Mancunians (or Lillois) acquiring lessons in sophistication through exposure to contemporary art can imply a spatialised vision of the development of taste, whereby art is brought to the city and the knowledge and appreciation appropriate to it is imported with it. The role played by moments of transnational connection from the provinces in the acquiring and developing of bourgeois taste are so important because they undermine a historiography of the nationalisation of taste. That Mancunians made connections *beyond* the national demonstrates that even if we accept an 'importation' model, we must recognise they did not perceive London as the only authority in this respect, using art to put themselves and their city in

⁶⁰⁹ Letter, Stern to Waagen, 22nd February 1860, RMI op cit.

connection with other parts of the world.

Finally, it is vital to underline the central role played by the Royal Institution as the organiser of the exhibition and as its plausible face. The Belgian painter Bossuet highlighted the role of the '*Société Royale des Beaux-Arts de Manchester*' in organising the exhibition of which he was an agent not (I would speculate) because he thought that Belgian artists would know and have a high opinion of that institution, but because it portrayed a certain solidity which guaranteed the protection of their works (and the possibility of their sale in a large, wealthy city.) The familiarity of the institutional form of the fine arts society on the continent explains the volume and the warmth of letters between the Royal Institution and the Düsseldorf Kunstverein – the correspondents instinctively recognised the similarity of their institutions and the social class from which they were drawn. In part this depended upon a degree of convergence in cultural norms between urban elites in Germany and England, and in part on their similar role in a socio-economic order. The Royal Institution, like the Kunstverein, was the primary representative of the interests of that order in the cultural sphere. Just as will be described in the following chapter with reference to the Chambers of Commerce, the similarity of institutional outgrowths of urban bourgeois life across the continent made possible this kind of transnational connection through local institutions. As has been repeatedly underlined in this thesis, these transnational relationships did not depend upon connections mediated through the capital city, or the national government, or a hyper-mobile supranational class. Instead they were embedded in the very local institutions of the city itself and as such were proximate to the daily lives of its middle classes.

The primary trend in the development of art in Manchester in the half century before the First World War was the gradual sidelining of private initiative, represented by the Royal Institution, and the increasing role of the municipal government. After 1882, when the Royal Institution ceded its gallery to the corporation, the latter became the most important actor in the management of art in the city, and the principal agent which developed transnational connections based on art. These two developments are described in the next

two sections of the chapter, 'The incomplete municipalisation of the Manchester gallery' and 'Stretching out the hand of friendship from one town to another'. While the corporation could call upon greater resources than the Royal Institution, it was forced to weigh the cause of art against other priorities and interests in the city, making art increasingly a question of municipal politics, as the opera was in Lille.

3.3 The incomplete municipalisation of the Manchester gallery



G. Grundy, Royal Manchester Institution, 1861
Source: MCL Local Image Collection, M59060

Despite the successes of 1857 and 1860, by the late 1870s criticism of the quality of exhibitions in Manchester was widespread in the local press. The Royal Institution's annual exhibition was of diminishing national importance, and Manchester's native artists derivative in the eyes of some.⁶¹⁰ Given that art was now associated with morality and the middle class more than with aristocracy and profligacy, to suggest that the city was artistically deficient was to imply a moral criticism, a problem which explained the continued public importance of debates about art until the First World War. One such debate beginning in 1880 concluded in a decision by the Institution to cede its building and collection to the city for a municipal gallery, a decisive shift in the politics of culture in Manchester.⁶¹¹ This section explores the arguments for municipal co-option of the gallery and subsequent developments. The transnational element is less present here than elsewhere, but is a presence in the background in the sense that the development of the role of local government described here is a

⁶¹⁰ Describing a painting of Troutbeck, in the Lake District, by Clarence Whaite, the Guardian's reviewer wrote, 'Two or three melancholy trees, a melancholy peasant, and a rather cold sky... It is as though Manchester were trying to produce counterfeit Corots at a price, as she produces cheap equivalents of certain Indian goods.' 'Exhibition of the Manchester Academy', *MG*, 10th March 1875.

⁶¹¹ Though the debates leading up to this decision were discussed in a recent monograph on the Manchester Gallery, its longer term development after municipalisation falls outside its scope. Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty. Art Museums in Industrial Britain*.

necessary precursor to its later attempts to use art to connect the city with an idea of European urban modernity, discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The debate of 1880 began in the pages of the local press, as two members of the council of the Institution wrote long letters to two different papers on consecutive days.⁶¹² Manchester's present situation, the writer, printer and publisher George Falkner argued, 'reflects most unfavourably upon our appreciation and support of art [compared to] Liverpool [which] possesses a people more actively alive than ourselves to the advantages and enjoyments of art culture.'⁶¹³ 'The Manchester public cares little for art', the spinner Charles Pooley added, 'unless of a sensational character, well advertised, well puffed.'⁶¹⁴

These public proclamations precipitated much debate in the local press, as had surely been the writers' intention when they launched their co-ordinated correspondence. Though such a critical perspective was by no means universal,⁶¹⁵ there was widespread agreement among the local press and its correspondents about Manchester's failings in art. The people are 'deeply engrossed in business, and have the impression of the office £ s d stamp upon them,' one writer lamented, approvingly citing Ruskin on the cultural failings of the industrial city.⁶¹⁶ These discussions took on a moralising tone, but framed their proposed remedies in the language of technical management and practical action. The social reformer Thomas Horsfall in particular identified the problem as spatial, arguing that Manchester's character as an industrial city meant that 'people of the picture-loving class' were physically removed from the centre and needed greater inducement to come 'looking at pictures... a very tiring occupation.'⁶¹⁷ He contrasted Manchester with Liverpool, which as a commercial and mercantile city had fewer problems with pollution and had tended to develop a different form of spatial segregation by class which left many wealthy

⁶¹² George Falkner, 'Letter', *MC*, 29th January 1880; Charles Pooley, 'Letter', *MG*, 30th January 1880.

⁶¹³ Falkner, 'Letter', op cit.

⁶¹⁴ Pooley, 'Letter', op cit.

⁶¹⁵ See for example letters from Edward Bellhouse, ('Civis') and James Harvey ('Mancuniensis'). Nineteenth Century Press Clippings book, CMAG. '[Florence] has a history of centuries, Manchester is a town of a day. What was Manchester 100 years ago, nay 70 years ago?', Harvey pointed out.

⁶¹⁶ CF Courtney, 'Letter', *MG*, 3rd February 1880.

⁶¹⁷ Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, 'Letter', *MG*, 6th February 1880. Horsfall was referring to Manchester's urban form: a commercial core, surrounded by smokey factories and working class dwellings, with wealthy residents already living at a few miles remove from the centre by the time Friedrich Engels described the city in the 1840s in *Condition of the Working Class in England*.

citizens residing close to the centre.

Recognising the success of galleries in Liverpool and London in becoming sites of leisure and social life, Horsfall suggested that on two afternoons and evenings every week performances of music could be given in the gallery: 'Ladies would arrange to do their shopping on [those] day[s], in order that when their work was over they might spend an hour or two with their husbands, lovers, or brothers, in looking at pictures, in listening to music, or in conversation with friends.'⁶¹⁸

As well as an overt expression of the need to maintain male surveillance over female sociability, these proposals also expressed a paternalistic sense of the need to model correct behaviours to the working class. Horsfall suggested that presenting music on Saturdays would be even more useful than during the week, offering 'intelligent workpeople' the opportunity to find 'pleasant occupation and healthful thought and feeling' for themselves and their families.⁶¹⁹ A similar concern was voiced by GF Langford, who argued the practice of closing the gallery for three hours at 4pm before opening for the evening at 7pm effectively meant that such men had no opportunity to visit the gallery during the week. Instead, the gallery should open for the evening at 5pm.⁶²⁰ Langford proposed issuing a special season ticket valid only for the evenings, at the relatively low price of one shilling. 'Hundreds of purchasers of them would be occasional visitors throughout the season, and the exhibition rooms would become a meeting place for them and their children and other members of their families and connections.'

Clearly the subject of the health of art in the city was a conduit for discussions of broader significance. These encompassed public morality as well as the preservation of a social order which maintained elite male dominance through its ritual performance in public space. Within a month of provoking this discussion Pooley and Falkner, together with Charles Turner and Thomas Worthington, presented a detailed report to the Institution's governors

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Langford, 'Letter', *MG*, 3rd February 1880.

presenting their proposed reforms.⁶²¹ They urged that the Institution should be refounded under the wing of the Manchester corporation. As Falkner had put it, Liverpool's gallery was a municipal institution, 'and thereby invested with an authority and influence *which no proprietary body can be expected to rival*.'⁶²² In other words, while the Institution had achieved good things since its founding by 'individual effort and self- sacrifice', its institutional form had outlived its usefulness.⁶²³

As such, the development of a municipal gallery was in keeping with the 'spirit of the age,' following Library and Museum Acts and other increases to the power of local government 'the practical value of which is universally accepted and acknowledged.'⁶²⁴ Such practical advantages included the capacity to use the greater resources of the local state to promote cultural policies, 'elevating the taste and improving the social and moral tone of the people' by using the city's new power to 'subsidise Art through the rates.'⁶²⁵ Such 'permanence and security', promised by municipal involvement, would also encourage the donation of private gifts and bequests. At the same time, citizens would come to appreciate the gallery more fully, because they would identify more closely with a municipal gallery than they did with the Institution gallery which technically remained the private property of its members. This was the example given by Liverpool, where the success of the Walker gallery 'is further enhanced by its becoming the property of the people, who recognise that it is maintained for their advantage and enjoyment.'⁶²⁶ A Manchester municipal gallery would be one 'which the city could call its own.'⁶²⁷

In advocating the municipalisation of the gallery, Manchester elites both expressed their expanded sense of the capacity and responsibilities of local government, and their idea that art was a socially and morally useful activity that was nevertheless unprofitable and therefore needed to be 'subsidised' by a public authority. In doing so they drew a clear identification between the city, its

⁶²¹ RMI minute book, 1st March 1880, RMI GB127.M6/1/1/5

⁶²² Falkner, 'Letter,' op cit. Emphasis added.

⁶²³ From a petition distributed at a meeting of the RMI governors, reprinted in *MG*, 1st March 1880.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid*.

⁶²⁵ RMI minute book, 1st March 1880, op cit.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*.

⁶²⁷ 'Editorial', *MG*, 1st March 1880.

people and the local council. It was a responsibility of the latter to meet its duties to the first two by promoting art: according to the *Guardian* the development of a municipal gallery '[would] remove a reproach from what we like to think of as the greatest of modern English municipalities.'⁶²⁸ The similarities between the arguments cited here and those made about the opera by municipal councillors in Lille, cited in the previous chapter, are clear.

Under an agreement between the council and the Institution finalised in March 1882, the gallery would be run by the council's Art Gallery Committee. This body had executive authority over the running of the gallery, as well as substantial independence over the interpretation of its mandate. However, its regular budget and any additional capital expenditure was set by the council. As part of the arrangement, the council undertook to open the permanent collection to the public for free not less than three days a week, and to spend £2,000 per year for twenty years, plus any profits made on any exhibitions, on the purchase of new works of art for the permanent collection.⁶²⁹ Fourteen of the twenty-one members of the Art Gallery Committee would be nominated by the council, most being councillors or other officials. The remaining seven members of the Committee were nominated by the Institution, giving it an enduring (though minority) role in the administration of the gallery.⁶³⁰

Ford Madox Brown's *Work* (1852-1865), a teeming scene of a street in Hampstead, was one of the first works bought by the city after municipalisation. Requests were frequently received from art magazines for permission for its reproduction and though definitive evidence is not available it seems likely that copies were sold in the gallery itself. *Work* was so potent an example of art for the industrial city because it celebrated the value of labour, being centred around a group of navvies digging up the road. As such it carried the potential for subversive readings – Brown made a number of satirical references in the painting, for example depicting the mutual suspicion of two dogs as a metaphor for the English class system – but these were surely undermined by the large

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ This money would come from the rates levelled on local residents by the city council.

⁶³⁰ After the twenty-year agreement expired the council was free to set new terms on the purchase of new works and the composition of the Committee, which they did – reducing the number of Institution appointees.

wood-and-gold-leaf frame, on which were painted biblical verses such as 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread' and 'Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings.'⁶³¹ The official meaning attached to the painting was therefore the celebration of labour as a source of dignity rather than as a vector of injustice, while a patriotic framing was also encouraged by Brown's statement that an English navy was 'at least as worthy of the powers of an English painter as the fishermen of the Adriatic, the peasants of the Campagna or the Neapolitan lazzarone.'⁶³² Brown was celebrated in Manchester for the special connection he was thought to have with the city, 'on account both of the great series of mural paintings by him in our Town Hall, and of the number of his works in our permanent collection.'⁶³³

A diversity of perspectives on the proper function of the art gallery made it difficult for members of the new committee to agree on the metrics by which they might measure success in their management. In the absence of such clarity they reasoned that increasing attendance at the gallery would necessarily be positive. This became an increased focus of their activities from the mid 1890s onwards. In January 1895 the committee agreed to increase the number of hours the permanent collection, which was free, was open to visitors. Evening openings were extended by an hour, to 9pm, and Sunday afternoon opening, from 2 – 5pm, was introduced for the first time.⁶³⁴ Gallery materials were made more easily accessible: in January 1896 a new version of the gallery catalogue was produced that could be sold for 1 pence instead of 4.⁶³⁵ In December the cost of entry to the Autumn Exhibition was halved to 6 pence in the daytime and 3 pence in the evening.⁶³⁶

In order to measure the results of such changes, records of attendance were broken down by exhibition, by the days of the week and in the case of the Sunday opening experiment, by the hour of the day. Figures were recorded in the monthly reports of the gallery, read at committee meetings and pasted in to

⁶³¹ <http://manchesterartgallery.org/collections/search/collection/?id=1885.1> [Accessed 15th March 2017].

⁶³² J.E. Phythian, *Handbook of the Permanent Collection of Paintings* (Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1905), 5.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶³⁴ AGC, 31st January 1895.

⁶³⁵ AGC, 30th January 1896. The importance of this subject is evidenced by the fact it involved a 'long discussion', though sadly the contents of this discussion are not recorded in the minute book.

⁶³⁶ AGC, 2nd December 1896; AGC, 26th March 1896.

the committee minute books. In this sense, the value attached to gallery 'popularity', defined by the number of visitors, became formalised in the development of bureaucratic procedures to test and measure it. As a result of these changes, in the nine months from September 1895, the number of visitors admitted into the gallery for free was around 230,000, against 168,000 in the same period the year before.⁶³⁷

The gallery collection consisted almost entirely of works by British artists. Mancunian collectors tended to buy paintings by members of the Royal Academy, and these were the works that found their way to the gallery as gifts.⁶³⁸ The annual purchase fund supplied by the city council was spent in a similar way; efforts to broaden the collection focused on capturing a fuller chronological range of British art.⁶³⁹ The Pre-Raphaelite school was especially popular, with the Committee prizing works it had bought by William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, such as *The Hireling Shepherd* and *The Shadow of Death* (Hunt) and *Autumn Leaves* (Millais).⁶⁴⁰ Provincial artists were underappreciated. Their paintings were less likely to be accepted for the annual exhibition, and were hung separately from the Royal Academicians.⁶⁴¹ In the 1880s and 1890s therefore the municipal gallery tended to affirm received ideas of taste in painting, even while the committee attempted to broaden the gallery audience.

The process of popularisation of the gallery was also one of commercialisation, in the sense that a visit took upon some characteristics of other commercial leisure activities, understood through the rubric of consumption. It became standard practice to advertise temporary exhibitions with posters placed in the city's railway stations and libraries.⁶⁴² For one temporary exhibition in 1897, the committee hired an advertising agent, and spent £600 on placing newspapers notices and distributing posters.⁶⁴³ With the construction of a tea room in 1896 (extended in 1901), it was increasingly easy for Mancunians to incorporate

⁶³⁷ AGC, 25th June 1896.

⁶³⁸ Phythian, *Handbook of the Permanent Collection of Paintings*, 5–6.

⁶³⁹ AGC, 3rd Feb 1897.

⁶⁴⁰ Phythian, *Handbook of the Permanent Collection of Paintings*, 22–25, 32–35, 47–48.

⁶⁴¹ AGC, 4th September 1895; AGC, 27th August 1896.

⁶⁴² AGC, 26th March 1896; AGC, 21st May 1896; AGC, 25th June 1896.

⁶⁴³ AGC, 12th April 1897; AGC, 27th May 1897.

attendance at the gallery into their social lives, with a visit being squeezed in after work or during a weekend's shopping trip. The gallery began to sell souvenir reproductions of the paintings in the collection.

Commercialisation of this kind went hand in hand with the extension of the powers of the municipality. The placement of posters inside the city tram cars underlined the municipal character of the gallery more effectively than any formal changes to the way it was actually managed. The ubiquity of the tram poster, like the trams themselves, stood for the extension of the powers of the municipal government and its increasingly extensive reach over the city. As Patrick Joyce has argued, the development of municipal services such as street lighting and sanitation entailed a conceptual expansion of the idea of the local liberal state, that made a significant contribution to shaping ideologies of government on the part of both the governors and the governed.⁶⁴⁴ As the art gallery, borne on the growing tram network, became increasingly visible across the city, its significance as a municipal institution was enhanced.

Development of the gallery as a form of entertainment in a quasi-commercial framework, existed in unstable equilibrium with committee attempts to enhance its usefulness as an educational tool. Intermittently from 1896, and then with much greater regularity in the next century, temporary exhibitions – and then later, the permanent collection too – were explained by lectures held in the gallery 'aimed at popular audiences.'⁶⁴⁵ Free or reduced price entry to exhibitions was agreed for school groups, and the collections reorganised in 1899 to more effectively meet the needs of children and their teachers.⁶⁴⁶ Education for adults was also practiced through a programme of outside lectures held in inner city neighbourhoods like New Islington, Openshaw, Hulme and Longsight.⁶⁴⁷ After several years of lobbying, in 1906 the small gallery in Queens Park was ceded to the Art Gallery Committee, having previously been run by the Parks Committee. A gallery was also opened in Heaton Hall, in the corporation's new Heaton Park. Members of the Committee had long expressed

⁶⁴⁴ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*. Such a relationship between ideologies of rule, and transport advertising is also visible in contemporary London.

⁶⁴⁵ AGC, 30th January 1896; AGC, 26th April 1897.

⁶⁴⁶ AGC, 26th January 1899; AGC, 29th June 1899.

⁶⁴⁷ Maxwell Reekie, Report, AGC, 29th March 1900.

a desire to run these smaller galleries as 'a sort of school leading up to the Art Gallery.'⁶⁴⁸

Though the council's capture of the gallery and its assumption of new responsibilities around the social use of art were clearly transformative for the city, Manchester was not especially forward-thinking in making these reforms. The Liverpool council had taken responsibility for a gallery in 1877, and Birmingham ten years before that.⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, the municipalisation of the gallery was only partial before the turn of the century. The Royal Institution was not formally dissolved, continuing to exist as a powerful interest group within the Art Gallery Committee and within local cultural life more generally. Meetings of its governors were extensively reported in the local press. Many of the most significant developments and reforms in the administration of the Art Gallery Committee over the first two decades of municipal management seem to have originated in these meetings. As such the Institution's governors functioned as a committee-within-the-committee, attempting to direct their colleagues where possible, but lacking the majority of votes and financial power, (which rested with the council) to always get their way. Decisions continued to be made by a committee dominated by councillors who were at best amateur enthusiasts.⁶⁵⁰ Members of the Royal Institution urged the appointment of a trained, professional director with executive managerial power, such as Whitworth Wallis or Walter Armstrong, then working at Birmingham and Dublin respectively.⁶⁵¹ Only upon the death of the long-serving curator William Stanfield in December 1913 did the Art Gallery Committee decide to appoint a professionally trained director. Their eventual choice was Lawrence Haward, who had been educated at Uppingham and Cambridge, had studied art and languages in France and Germany, and had written on art for the *Times* since 1906.⁶⁵² Municipalisation was therefore a gradual and disjointed process whose progress was closely tied in to local politics.

⁶⁴⁸ 'Royal Institution - Meeting of Governors', *MG*, 28th October 1892. The quotation is from the Guardian's paraphrase of Pooley's remarks.

⁶⁴⁹ Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain*, 19. The Lille gallery had been under the control of the municipality for many decades, but the structure of the relationship between the gallery and the state was somewhat different, as I will discuss in the conclusion.

⁶⁵⁰ 'Editorial - Mr Moore's criticisms of Manchester in "The Speaker"', *MG*, 22nd October 1892.

⁶⁵¹ 'Royal Institution - Meeting of Governors', *MG*, 28th October 1892.

⁶⁵² 'A Manchester Art Director', *MG*, 1st January 1914; 'Manchester Art Galleries: New Curator The Appointment Made Yesterday', *MG*, 24th April 1914.

3.4 'Stretching out the hand of friendship from one town to another'

In November 1909 William Burton, a manager at a ceramics manufacturer, wrote to the *Manchester Guardian*:

I have waited with almost painful interest for some decided expression of opinion on the part of the citizens of our great city as to the necessity for a Manchester museum such as is now advocated. For many years I have been familiar with the museums at Rouen, Lille, Cologne, Bonn, Mainz, Nimes, Arles and Avignon ...

While I venture to add my voice to that of Professor Tait in pleading for a museum that shall adequately display the relics of the remote past of Manchester and the district, may I also say a word for those who desire a museum of even wider scope? Why is it that in Manchester we have no museum illustrative of the development of decorative art, though every fourth-rate town on the Continent has such a museum? Are we so indifferent to art, or are we only waiting to be asked? With all my heart I believe that our city is only waiting to be asked!⁶⁵³

Burton and his correspondent James Tait were referring to a subject that was then being prominently discussed in the Manchester press: the possible construction of a new art gallery and library in the centre of the city. The proposal had been the agreed policy of the Art Gallery Committee since 1905, when the mayor and several councillors had drawn up a lengthy report detailing their plans, which were agreed by the city council in 1910.⁶⁵⁴ During the intervening years the proposal received the close attention of the editorial and letters pages of the city's papers, as well as its most prominent politicians, intellectuals and business people.⁶⁵⁵ The committee's proposals, set out in a published report, made reference to developments in art gallery management across Britain and the continent, suggesting that Manchester had much to learn.

⁶⁵³ William Burton, 'Letter', *MG*, 24th November 1909. Burton referred to a letter to the Guardian two days earlier from Professor of Ancient and Medieval History at Manchester University, James Tait. Tait had expressed the hope that the new museum's proposed local history section would also include artifacts from, and information relating to, the Roman origins of Manchester.

⁶⁵⁴ The Art Gallery Committee was responsible for managing the gallery within the budget and any other parameters set by the council. Though the new gallery project was developed by the Art Gallery Committee it would need the support of the council to be put in to effect.

⁶⁵⁵ Tait, the son of a local merchant educated at Manchester and Oxford universities, wrote books on Manchester and Lancashire in the middle ages, among other subjects. He also 'liked pictures' and served on the Manchester Art Gallery Committee. V. H. Galbraith, 'James Tait,' *The English Historical Review* LX, no. CCXXXVII (May 1, 1945): 129–35; Burton was the General Manager of Pilkington's Lancastrian Pottery company, which produced decorative tiles inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement. He had previously given lectures at the gallery on 'material and design in pottery'. Angela Corbett and Barry Corbett, *Pilkington Tiles, 1891-2010* (Bolton: Pilkington's Lancastrian Pottery Society, 2013), 7–9; AGC, 24th February 1898.

This was a theme taken up in much of the coverage in the Manchester press.⁶⁵⁶ The way that the committee conducted its research on the continent, and the conclusions it drew, demonstrate that they conceived of building a new art gallery as a way of expressing their ideas about the place of Manchester in a wider European community of cities.

Thanks to new purchases made after municipalisation of the gallery, by 1897 the permanent collection was 'one of the best of its kind outside London,' according to the Art Gallery Committee. This collection was increasingly popular with visitors, partly because entry was free, in contrast to the Autumn Exhibitions. From just 18,000 in 1884, by the end of the century the collection received over a quarter of a million visitors a year. At the same time attendance at the Autumn Exhibitions dwindled.⁶⁵⁷ As the permanent collection had continued to expand, and new exhibitionary conventions developed – particularly the practice of hanging pictures at the eye line in a single row, rather than all over the wall at various heights – it was increasingly difficult to find sufficient space for the collection. In common with other British cities at the time, Manchester needed more space for its gallery.⁶⁵⁸ In 1900, the lack of space cost the city the donation of a collection of more than a thousand items, including oil paintings by Botticelli, Rembrandt and Delacroix, which the Manchester-born Greek merchant Constantine Alexander Ionides gave to the Victorian and Albert Museum instead.⁶⁵⁹ The Art Gallery Committee proposed to the Council the abandonment of the annual Autumn Exhibition, in favour of continued development of the permanent collection, supplemented with occasional thematic temporary exhibitions that would be free to the public.

Initially the committee hoped that the increased space required might be supplied by extending the gallery onto an adjacent plot of land. A plot was bought by the city in 1900 for the purpose, and a delegation of councillors sent to Glasgow to study the newly opened Kelvingrove gallery, which they regarded as especially appropriate for emulation given that it was run by a city council, in

⁶⁵⁶ For example, 'Art Galleries: What Some Other Cities Have Done', *MG*, 13-14, 16-18, December 1907 in 'Press Cuttings, 1906 to 1909', CMAG.

⁶⁵⁷ AGC, 30th September 1897.

⁶⁵⁸ Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty. Art Museums in Industrial Britain*, 164.

⁶⁵⁹ Manchester City Art Gallery, *A Century of Collecting 1882-1892. A Guide to Manchester City Art Galleries* (Manchester: City of Manchester Cultural Services, 1983), 15.

contrast with other modern galleries like South Kensington.⁶⁶⁰ However, it was soon determined that an extended gallery would still be too small, and the Committee proposed the construction of a new gallery in the centre of the city instead.⁶⁶¹ This new gallery would be big enough to accommodate a greatly extended permanent collection, a range of temporary exhibitions, and purpose built rooms for public lectures and administration. It was planned for the site of the Royal Infirmary, which had stood at the centre of the city until it was closed and sold to the council in 1903.

The Committee's proposal for the new gallery was drawn up by four men. John Milne, a member of the Royal Manchester Institution, was joined by the former councillor and amateur art enthusiast John Ernest Phythian, and the Councillor and industrialist Walter Butterworth. The group was completed by Thomas Thornhill Shann, a member of the Education Committee and also the mayor of the city.⁶⁶² The participation of the mayor is indicative of the importance of the project. All four had a long-standing interest in the gallery and had served on the committee at one time or another, but they agreed that in order to familiarise themselves with the best practices in modern gallery design and management, they should make a tour of galleries and museums in north-western Europe, which they did in April 1905.

The group travelled to Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne, Lille, London, Bristol, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Birmingham, visiting 30 continental museums, seven galleries in London, and the main art galleries in the provincial British cities.⁶⁶³ Their itinerary included collections of oil painting, sculpture, decorative art, prints, drawings, industrial art, photographs, antiquities and local historical

⁶⁶⁰ AGC, 27th June 1901. This point is noted in order to emphasise the importance the Committee placed on recognising affinity based in part on institutional similarity.

⁶⁶¹ After discussion in a number of sub-committees, the construction of a new gallery was formally adopted by the Art Gallery Committee on 23rd February 1905.

⁶⁶² This delegation was responsible for designing the Art Gallery portion of the new building. Similar investigations were going on in the Library Committee at the same time – which included visits to libraries in New York and Boston – but I have not researched them at any length.

⁶⁶³ Notably, the delegation did not visit the most famous continental gallery, the Louvre. The report notes that this was because all the members were already familiar with its contents and organisation. This is likely to have been true, but it is noteworthy that the final report does not once mention the Louvre, tending to cite galleries in industrial cities which the committee obviously felt were a more appropriate model.

material. They met with gallery directors including Alfred Lichtwark in Hamburg and Wilhelm von Bode in Berlin, curators and conservators, and local politicians.⁶⁶⁴ In Munich they were welcomed to a ceremonial dinner with municipal councillors. The result of this research was an extensive report synthesising their findings and making detailed proposals for the new gallery in Manchester.⁶⁶⁵

Such a building would function as a combined art gallery and library. This position was agreed partly for practical reasons as the existing city library was too small and the Libraries Committee was already planning a new building. It was also made for more profound reasons. Given the close relationship between the visual arts and literature in the thought of reformers such as John Ruskin, whom committee members admired, it made sense to them to envisage a new kind of municipal institution, that combined suitably-regulated leisure with academic and technical education. They noted that Manchester's existing permanent collection was mainly limited to modern British oil paintings and watercolours, together with a few sculptures in marble and bronze.⁶⁶⁶ There was little opportunity for the public to see other kinds of art work, and the few gallery possessions in textiles, photographs, drawings, engravings, pottery and metalwork were either stored out of site or loaned to other institutions. Extension was therefore necessary 'in order more adequately to provide for the study and enjoyment of art by the people of Manchester.'⁶⁶⁷ Alongside eclecticism of genre, the committee also proposed a more expansive artistic geography, collecting and displaying works from all schools of painting, from all nations. This was a major shift in curatorial practice.⁶⁶⁸

Because of the new gallery's educational function, collections were to be assembled to illustrate the history and the development of all the arts displayed, as well as their present condition. In order to achieve this aim it would be appropriate to display copies rather than originals, so that students and the

⁶⁶⁴ Lichtwark is the subject of a number of studies of German provincial art culture, including Jennifer Jenkins' *Provincial Modernity*, a major influence on this thesis.

⁶⁶⁵ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council of a Visit to Certain Art Galleries and Museums in Belgium, Holland and Germany and in Great Britain*, (Manchester: Manchester City Council, 1905).

⁶⁶⁶ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 5-6.

⁶⁶⁷ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 1.

⁶⁶⁸ As late as 1897 the Art Gallery Committee was still as a matter of policy limiting itself to collecting British painting. AGC, 3rd Feb 1897; 'Art in Manchester', *MC*, 28th November 1905.

public might be able to observe especially important works, the originals of which were unavailable. In the case of sculpture, as in Dresden the collection should be so arranged within the gallery as to illustrate 'the historical and aesthetical development of the art' to the visitor as they moved through the gallery.⁶⁶⁹ Classical sculptures should be displayed alongside photographs and architectural models of their original architectural context, underlining the educational function of exhibiting copies.⁶⁷⁰ In general, works would be displayed with appropriate information and supplementary details so that the public could understand the nature and development of the fields concerned.

The educational purpose of the new gallery would also be met by the provision of regular temporary exhibitions. Unlike the older annual exhibitions which simply displayed newly produced works of any sort, these would focus on particular techniques, geographical locations, or artistic movements.⁶⁷¹ They would also be designed to 'stimulate and revive the public interest' in the permanent collection 'enabling [them] to enjoy [it] with increased zest and understanding.'⁶⁷² The report noted that galleries in Berlin, Dresden and Munich had dedicated rooms or buildings expressly for the use of temporary exhibitions, a practice that they recommended for Manchester too. For the same reasons of pedagogy, the committee recommended that the new gallery should be equipped with a large lecture hall in which lectures such as Phythian's could be held.⁶⁷³ This hall should have its own dedicated entrance from the street, so that evening classes on art history for working people could easily be held there even after the gallery itself had closed.

The report emphasised the material utility of this approach to the city's industries. If high quality examples of industrial arts and crafts could be displayed to the people of Manchester, especially its working class residents, the city's industrial products would be of a higher quality. In this sense the money to be spent on the new gallery was framed as an 'investment', with material as well as immaterial returns. Here the committee members looked

⁶⁶⁹ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 10.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 17.

most of all to the example of German cities, where the industrial art museums managed 'to inculcate good craftsmanship as well as to give refined pleasure, to improve the standard of public taste, and to foster a love of the beautiful.'⁶⁷⁴ The report therefore recommended that Manchester follow the example of Cologne, which as an industrial city in a large industrial region, 'seems the best adapted for a community like that of Manchester.'⁶⁷⁵

The Arts and Crafts (*kunstgewerbe*) museum in Cologne had a large collection of prints 'adapted for technical and industrial purposes' illustrating various aspects of several industrial processes and crafts available for inspection, with some examples on general display and others indexed and retrievable from open shelves, along with photographs and cheap reproductions. In this print room 'a workman may find illustrations of any detail of the craft in which he is interested,' and take them to a well lit room with reading stands to place work and space to sketch copies.⁶⁷⁶ Establishing a similar room in the new Manchester gallery was a key recommendation of the report, which argued that through the opportunities it would provide working class men to train themselves to produce beautiful objects, it 'would occupy a useful place in connection with the commercial activities of the city.'⁶⁷⁷ Such a provision within the gallery was explicitly framed as a way to connect with practices widespread elsewhere in Europe but almost totally neglected in Britain: 'It is remarkable how little of this work is done in this country outside London in view of its almost universal adoption on the continent. In the United States also it has been adequately taken up.'⁶⁷⁸ 'I believe this Kunstgewerbe Museum will be the type of institution that will be taken up by advanced municipalities in the future, and that it is the type that we ought to study in Manchester,' Butterworth told a *Manchester Guardian* journalist in an interview after their return, while the Mayor nodded along.⁶⁷⁹

After several councillors visited the city of Lyon in May 1907 as guests of the municipality, the example of that city ('the centre of the silk industry as

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁷⁹ 'Art Galleries Abroad: Hints for Manchester', *MG*, 29th April 1905.

Manchester is of the cotton industry' according to Walter Butterworth) became an influence for further revised gallery plans.⁶⁸⁰ Lyon's collections were visited 'by students, designers, manufacturers, and experts, and [are] a constant stimulus to the staple industry of Lyons.' Butterworth regarded it as 'high time' that Manchester had galleries not only for paintings, but for all the arts and crafts, 'not least the arts and crafts which can be more or less applied to the manufactures busily carried on by Lancashire.'⁶⁸¹ It is important to underline the fact that the drawing of lessons from cities such as Cologne and Lyon was explicitly predicated on the identification of an affinity between those cities and Manchester, based on their character as industrial centres.

As well as being an educational institution and a stimulus to local industry, the gallery would also present a new vision of urban modernity, embodied both in its contents, its uses and the building itself. The committee paid especially close attention to the newest museums such as the *Kunstgewerbe* in Cologne, founded in 1888, and the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin, which had only been completed the year before their visit and which they described as 'a model museum of fine arts.'⁶⁸² The Manchester gallery would be built in a 'modern' architectural style. The characteristics of this style were not spelled out in detail, but the report noted that the 'fresh ideas' they planned to draw upon were 'now in vogue on the Continent'.⁶⁸³ With respect to the design of a new art gallery, it was necessary to look outside of Britain for inspiration, interpreting that inspiration in the light of local needs: a meeting of the European and the local. This 'modern' style prioritised functionality over showy external effect, according to the writers of the report. In that spirit, the report included much discussion about the appropriate provision of service elevators, heating, lighting, ventilation, and internal spaces that facilitated the easy flow of visitors. The director of the Hamburg Art Museum Alfred Lichtwark was quoted approvingly: 'Even though the exterior does not tally with our preconceived notions of the

⁶⁸⁰ 'Old Infirmary Site' *Manchester Evening News*, 10th March 1909; AGC, 27th June 1907; The influence of the visit to Lyon in May 1907 on the councillors who participated was noted at the time by the Guardian correspondent who accompanied them: 'this tour in France has broadened and assisted the ideas of some of the Manchester delegates about the treatment of the infirmary site.' 'The Municipal Tour', *MG*, 25th May 1907.

⁶⁸¹ 'Old Infirmary Site,' *Manchester Evening News*, 10th March 1909. .

⁶⁸² Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 7.

⁶⁸³ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 14.

monumental or the picturesque, it will...have the monumentality of truth and the pictorial quality of size and mass.'⁶⁸⁴

As Jennifer Jenkins has argued in her book on Lichtwark, modernity represented a challenge to the coherence of the social and cultural order of the provincial city in part because the changes with which it was associated were often portrayed as coming from outside of the city.⁶⁸⁵ An association between 'old' and 'local' (or new and national) was a common trope in popular literature, even where modernisation was not depicted in negative terms. For example, in an article published in the magazine of a Christian educational society of which Butterworth was a member, the writer used dialect words such as 'whilom' ('in former days') to evoke the reaction of an old Mancunian brought forward to the 1890s: 'I can imagine with what feelings of admiration our newly awakened citizen would ramble about the centre of the city...now glorified with a Town Hall...where, whilom, stood the humble cottages of his fellow citizens of long ago.'⁶⁸⁶ The title of this article, 'Manchester's Improving Daily' was taken from a popular ballad of the same name that described recent changes with tongue-in-cheek humour.⁶⁸⁷ The same trope was at times used in Lille, as in an imagined dialogue between the new and old neighbourhoods of the city, in which the former spoke in 'the language of the Académie Française' while the latter used the local dialect.⁶⁸⁸

While Manchester had generally embraced industrialisation as integral to its identity and the source of its wealth and importance, its elite still experienced anxieties over related health and social issues, concerns which the provision of cultural institutions was supposed to ameliorate.⁶⁸⁹ What is more, the constant renewal of the urban environment meant that the link between the city's past

⁶⁸⁴ Alfred Lichtwark, quoted in *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁸⁵ Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity*.

⁶⁸⁶ Thomas Derby, 'Manchester's improving daily'. Being notes on City Improvements,' *Odds and Ends*, 1892, 398-399, SPLE MCL M38/4/2/38.

⁶⁸⁷ Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester, an Architectural History*, 56; Harry Boardman and Roy Palmer, *Manchester Ballads* (Manchester: City of Manchester Education Committee, 1983).

⁶⁸⁸ Charles Decottignies, *Dialogue Entre Le Vieux Lille et Le Nouveau Lille, Sténographié Par Ch. Decottignies* (Lille, 1877).

⁶⁸⁹ The Manchester reformer Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, who was interested in education and housing reform, argued that 'art galleries will be [an] effective means for bringing on that good time when the working classes shall insist on smoke prevention, and on the provision of places for physical exercise.' Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, *The Study of Beauty and Art in Large Towns. Two Papers... with an Introduction by John Ruskin*. (London: Macmillan, 1883), 40.

and its present was becoming severed. Therefore the proposed new gallery would include a local interest section containing portraits of significant local personalities, and drawings and paintings of the city itself, particularly those buildings or scenes that had now been destroyed.⁶⁹⁰ It would also include archaeological remains of medieval, Roman and pre-historical Manchester, which had relatively recently been uncovered. In this respect, the new gallery would be run in co-operation with the university, a proposal that received the support of academics such as William Boyd Dawkins and James Tait.⁶⁹¹

In this respect, the committee wrote, Manchester could emulate the Brussels Municipal Museum's collection of pictures of 'Old Brussels', the Hague gallery, and the Hamburg Industrial Art Museum. The example of Hamburg is particularly revealing. By the time of the Manchester party's visit, gallery director Alfred Lichtwark had been in his post for almost twenty years. He had pursued an ambitious programme designed to create 'a new form of civic culture' by developing the museum as an instrument of social, political and aesthetic education whose vital force would come from its emphasis on local culture and identity.⁶⁹² He pursued a policy of commissioning and collecting work that depicted local scenery for his gallery.⁶⁹³ In this way he aimed to cultivate an appreciation in the city of the special charm of the local region through the development of a distinctive artistic aesthetic, that could successfully navigate the tension between local character and modernity. The same concerns were present in the Manchester proposals. Lichtwark himself may also have struck the Mancunians as a man worthy of their respect and emulation. The son of a miller, raised in respectable poverty, Lichtwark had begun his working life as a schoolteacher. Initially at least, his expertise in art came from self-education and

⁶⁹⁰ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 12; AGC, 28th January 1909; The portrait collection would presumably have incorporated the set of mayoral portraits held in the Town Hall, the subject of an article by Louise Purbick. Louise Purbick, 'The Bourgeois Body: Civic Portraiture, Public Men and the Appearance of Class Power in Manchester, 1838-50,' in *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 81–98.

⁶⁹¹ 'Infirmary Site: A New Art Gallery is Needed', *MG*, 8th April 1907; James Tait, 'Letter', *MG*, 22nd November 1909; For background on Boyd Dawkins see Mark White, *William Boyd Dawkins and the Victorian Science of Cave Hunting* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2016).

⁶⁹² Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity*, 61; Lichtwark published his vision in Alfred Lichtwark, *Drei Programme*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Cassirer, 1902).

⁶⁹³ Jenkins, *Provincial Modernity*, 183-186.

attendance at public lectures at the Hamburg Museum of Art and Industry.⁶⁹⁴

Walter Butterworth might have recognised him as a man whose life experiences were similar to his own.



Portrait of Walter Butterworth, Reginald Barber, 1891
Source: University of Sheffield

Achieving their expansive aims would require closer co-operation between Manchester's various artistic and cultural institutions, with the municipality acting as a mediating force: it was time to follow French municipalities, Walter Butterworth argued, by allowing private initiative to be superseded by public.⁶⁹⁵ Another of the committee's principal recommendations was the foundation of a Manchester society of 'Friends of Art', to be based on those which were found 'in almost all continental cities'.⁶⁹⁶ This body would draw upon its wealthiest members to channel private contributions to the gallery, but it would not only be composed of this stratum, being envisaged as 'a far more democratic organisation' than other art bodies, which would include the 'mass of the people'.⁶⁹⁷

This aspect of the plans was elaborated by Butterworth in a public lecture called 'Art and Citizenship', which was followed by a lengthy discussion, reported in

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁹⁵ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 13; 'Art and Citizenship', *MCN*, 2nd December 1905.

⁶⁹⁶ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 12.

⁶⁹⁷ 'Art and Citizenship', *MCN*, op cit.

the local press.⁶⁹⁸ The gallery would be professionally managed by an expert professional Director rather than a committee of municipal councillors; the importance of this change was 'impressed upon your Committee by the practice abroad,' and was reiterated by observers in the city who admired the work of Whitworth Wallis, the director of the Birmingham galleries.⁶⁹⁹ This merging of expertise with mass participation was only possible, the Committee believed, through the mediation of the municipality.

In taking lessons from their tour of the continent, the committee attempted to be syncretical, absorbing what they saw but only adapting those things that they regarded as relevant to the city, taking care to highlight areas in which Manchester's existing practices were more appropriate. Next to Dresden, for instance, 'Manchester compared favourably in regard to attendance, local interest, free entrance, and number of hours which the galleries are open for the pleasure of the public.'⁷⁰⁰ As such they portrayed themselves as learning from galleries in Europe in order to create a better gallery adapted to local conditions, rather than simply setting out to create facsimile of galleries they had encountered abroad.

The crucial local characteristic around which this effort coalesced was the identity of the city as industrial, and particularly as a centre of textiles.⁷⁰¹ From this fact flowed the need for the gallery to be educational, displaying works of industrial art from which local workers could learn. While the figure of local identity lay at the centre of this programme of reform, it clearly drew inspiration and energy from an engagement with galleries – and also local politicians and curators – on the continent. This attitude marked a striking contrast between the new gallery of 1905 and the plans of Thomas Fairbairn of the late 1850s. Fairbairn saw himself as proposing an institution of 'national importance' for Manchester, a gallery which would be 'no puny and purely local affair.'⁷⁰² For Butterworth, Milne, Phythian, Shann, and their many supporters in the council,

⁶⁹⁸ 'Art in Manchester', *MC*, 28th November 1905; *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁹ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 13; 'Art Galleries: What Some Other Cities Have Done', *MG*, 13th December 1907.

⁷⁰⁰ Art Gallery Committee, *Report to the City Council*, 14.

⁷⁰¹ The revised plans, prepared after the visit to Lyons, stated that 'Manchester is a much more important centre of Textiles [than Lyon]', and therefore that its textile collection should be bigger and given more prominence. *AGC*, 27th June 1907.

⁷⁰² Finke, 'The Art Treasures Exhibition,' 124.

'local' did not equate to 'purely local', and it certainly did not imply puniness.

Members of the Manchester art gallery committee saw themselves as belonging in a social and cultural space whose boundaries were not identical with those of the nation. Believing that promoting artistic beauty could be both a means and an end of reform in the industrial city, they recognised that similar attempts were being conducted in other parts of Europe, where they were often more advanced. They therefore, on the basis of an identified affinity between Manchester and other cities in north western Europe (especially Germany), set out to learn from the practice of those cities. As this thesis has consistently highlighted, Mancunian elites viewed the management of cultural institutions as a way both to respond to their experiences of globalisation, and to make new connections across national borders. The art gallery was both a means of making Manchester into a European city, and an expression of the extent to which it already was.

Mancunians were able to make this conceptual and spatial leap thanks to the similarities that existed between the social and economic structure of Manchester and other cities, as well as the many cultural values that the bourgeoisie shared across Europe. While earlier moments of transnational connection such as the exhibition of 1860 had been achieved by the private Royal Manchester Institution, this time it was the municipal government that was the common, mutually comprehensible form that existed across the continent. As historians of the 'municipal moment' have noted, the building of connections between European and American cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries depended on the existence of 'transboundary connections between individuals [with] certain rules, principles and/or concepts in common.'⁷⁰³

Such connections included those between the Manchester councillors and the various officials and politicians they met on their trip in 1905. They also included the friendship that developed between Walter Butterworth and Édouard Herriot, the radical mayor of Lyon and later Prime Minister of France. This friendship dated to the visit of a group of Lyon councillors to the city in 1906, when

⁷⁰³ Saunier, 'Taking up the Bet on Connections: A Municipal Contribution.,' 510.

Butterworth, as the best French speaker on the council, held many conversations with Herriot. They met again during a return trip to Lyon in May 1907.⁷⁰⁴ This trip to Lyon was to form the basis of the proposed textile gallery in Manchester, which had not been discussed at much length in the initial committee report.⁷⁰⁵ Butterworth was also a fluent speaker of German – indeed, he was something of a polyglot who spoke eleven languages by the time of his death – which facilitated conversations with Lichtwark, Bode and others during the visit to Germany. Underlying such connections was the idea that the municipality was a common entity across different parts of Europe, and that municipalities could be compared with, or rival, their counterparts elsewhere. As such the existence – or perceived existence – of institutional similarity across borders was at least as important as the relationships formed between individuals.

In the proposals for a new art gallery, and the discussions surrounding their possible implementation, the European continent seems to have been perceived as something resembling a network of cities, rather than a patchwork of homogenous nations. Relationships could be formed and affinities identified that went across borders, without being conceived through the paradigm of the nation. When the Manchester delegation was in Munich, for instance, it was treated to a grand luncheon by the local council. In a speech, the Mayor of Manchester presented himself first of all as an emissary of the city, rather than his country. He thanked his hosts 'heartily in the name of the city of Manchester, the great commercial city I have the honour to represent.'⁷⁰⁶ 'Art especially stands above geographical relations,' he also said, '[and] we feel that you stretch out the hand of friendship from one town to the other.' This is not to claim that politicians in Manchester (or Munich) were not nationalists, or would not have sent their sons to fight in northern France nine years later, but rather that their plans for the art gallery were an opportunity for them to articulate a way of thinking about the European space in a way which did not foreground the nation.

⁷⁰⁴ This friendship seems to have been of some substance, given that Butterworth's son states that his father was invited to Paris as Herriot's guest when the latter was Prime Minister. Angus-Butterworth, *Walter Butterworth, M.A., J.P. Man of Letters*, Belfield Papers, No 3, , 5.

⁷⁰⁵ AGC, 27th June 1907.

⁷⁰⁶ 'Manchester and Munich,' *MG*, 27th April 1905.

3.5 Conclusions: the comparison with Lille, what's wrong with Manchester?

The plan for reform of the gallery outlined in the Committee's report should not be reduced to the construction of a new building. Several significant changes recommended by the committee were adopted. Having previously collected and exhibited mostly paintings by British artists, the first decade of the twentieth century saw a decisive shift towards displaying a greater range of arts from a wider range of countries. There were exhibitions of Japanese, Chinese and Dutch art, as well as displays of lithographs, industrial art, and new designs for working class housing. In 1907 an exhibition of French impressionists such as Manet, Monet, Corot, Pissaro, Sisley, Degas was held, the largest exhibition of that group held in the United Kingdom up to that time.⁷⁰⁷ The Committee bought for the gallery a number of exhibited paintings by Eugène-Louis Boudin, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Georges d'Espagnat, and Gustav Loiseau.⁷⁰⁸ Wynford Dewhurst, a Manchester-born artist who had trained in France, declared in a lecture accompanying the exhibition that England was 'the only civilised nation which had refused steadfastly to recognise the claims of the Impressionist school.' He praised the Art Gallery Committee for the 'independence' they had shown in defying this consensus.⁷⁰⁹

Greater prominence was given to local artists with exhibitions in 1909 and 1912.⁷¹⁰ Attempts were made to understand the work of the 'Manchester School' in the context of European art history, with references above all to French landscape and figure painters of the Barbizon School. 'The distinctive Manchester school is founded on Corot and his congeners' the 1909 exhibition catalogue explained, 'in the sense that the works of Corot opened the eyes of the two Hagues, Somerset, Partington, Meredith and J.H.Davies, the pioneers of that movement, to certain truths of nature and to certain principles as to the methods according to which nature can be interpreted.'⁷¹¹

⁷⁰⁷ Manchester City Art Gallery, *Exhibition of French Artists- Catalogue*, 1907, CMAG.

⁷⁰⁸ Manchester City Art Gallery, *Concise Catalogue of Foreign Paintings* (Manchester: City of Manchester Cultural Services, 1980), 13,23,31,60.

⁷⁰⁹ 'Impressionist Painters: The Manchester Exhibition,' *MG*, 12th December 1907.

⁷¹⁰ Manchester City Art Gallery, *Manchester Academy of Fine Arts half centenary exhibition*, 1909, CMAG; Manchester City Art Gallery, *Four Local Artists Exhibition*, 1912, CMAG.

⁷¹¹ From introduction, Manchester City Art Gallery, *Manchester Academy of Fine Arts half centenary exhibition*, op cit.

Moves made in the 1890s to make the gallery an instrument of working class education were further consolidated by the transformation of exhibition catalogues from mere lists of works to instruments of pedagogy, including short introductory essays.⁷¹² The nineteenth century conception of the moralising and 'improving' role of art had been transformed by a more technocratic approach which focused on education, leisure and the capacity of galleries to inform citizens about distant parts of the globe. Municipal management of cultural institutions was a key means of shaping and defining the relationship between the municipality, citizens and the state. The city council provided for basic human wants in the form of sanitation and schooling, as well as leisure, moral and intellectual improvement. The turn of the century municipality derived its legitimacy both from its capacity to meet these needs, and to place them in close relationship with each other. The three decades leading up to the First World War saw these different municipal functions increasingly converge.⁷¹³

Yet the new gallery was never built. This is surprising given that the Art Gallery Committee had long been in favour, a series of Mayors were supporters of the proposal, and the council voted for its construction by 50 to 36 in 1910.⁷¹⁴ Under pressure from a portion of the public, the council reversed course and appointed a special committee to investigate further.⁷¹⁵ Subject to competing claims to the space from shareholders of the city's stock exchange, the council called a public meeting which rejected both the gallery and the stock exchange and voted that the land should be left empty for at least the next five years. The controversy 'all but ended' the political career of Walter Butterworth, who lost his seat in 1912 after a campaign in which the gallery had featured heavily.⁷¹⁶ 'An

⁷¹² See for example J.E. Phythian, 'Introduction', in Manchester City Art Gallery, *Exhibition of French Artists- Catalogue*, 1907, CMAG.

⁷¹³ See for example the account of how locals spent a sunny Bank Holiday in Heaton Park, North Manchester, drawing together descriptions of children enjoying fresh air and play, music, and the council's 'branch gallery' in Heaton Hall, a former mansion in the park recently bought by the city for a local art gallery: 'The joy of the children was multiplied yesterday, for Corporation workmen were haymaking, and with a consideration that did them credit they allowed the little ones the maximum of liberty in romping amongst the new-mown grass. Not far away others listened to a band. At Heaton Hall there were endless processions of visitors to the newly arranged collection of water colour drawings and Japanese ware lent temporarily from the City Art Gallery.' 'Haymaking at Heaton Park', *MCN*, 7th August 1906.

⁷¹⁴ 'Editorial,' *MC*, 22nd September 1910.

⁷¹⁵ James R. Moore, 'Urban Space and Civic Identity in Manchester 1780-1914: Piccadilly Square and the Art Gallery Question,' *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 153 (2004): 115.

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 116.

art gallery can wait' the *Manchester City News* complained in an editorial, 'is not the lot of the ratepayer to be considered before we indulge (at his expense) in ideals on Art?'⁷¹⁷ The proposed library and gallery idea was formally abandoned in 1918.⁷¹⁸

The frustration of the gallery project between 1905 and 1912 resulted from two factors. Firstly, the functioning of local government in Britain tended to lead to inertia where limited council resources were subject to competing claims. Many nineteenth-century Mancunians for this reason portrayed British local government as structurally deficient in comparison to its continental counterparts. Butterworth in particular contrasted Britain unfavourably with France, where he said that municipalities had a much more expansive view of their responsibilities in the arts.⁷¹⁹ Such comparative perspectives on British cities were common: Thomas Horsfall described British cities as 'mean and underdeveloped' to German eyes., while the Mayor remarked that 'in Germany a city like Manchester would have four or five large [gallery] buildings... placed in splendid positions, with wide streets all around them.'⁷²⁰ Horsfall was so frustrated with the functioning of British local politics that he had earlier written that the council should be replaced by a professional executive with similar powers to a colonial governor, and previous experience as such.⁷²¹

Twentieth-century Marxists such as Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn have developed a similar argument in the context of their account of Britain's supposedly incomplete modernity. For Nairn and Anderson, the 'archaic, bastard conservatism' of the British political elites precluded the development of British cities as centres of national political power.⁷²² Nairn's personal

⁷¹⁷ 'Urgency and Necessity,' *MCN*, 16th April 1910.

⁷¹⁸ In 1918 both the libraries committee and the art galleries committee decided that their needs would be better met separately. A competition to build a new library was launched in 1926 and the present Central Library completed in 1934. No new art gallery was constructed, but Thomas Coghlan Horsfall's 'Manchester Art Museum' in Ancoats, aimed at a working class audience, was taken over by the city and became in effect a branch of the central gallery. The latter was extended on its existing site in 1938. The existing stock exchange building was extended between 1914 and 1921, and a need for new municipal offices was met by the Town Hall Extension in 1938.

⁷¹⁹ 'Art and Citizenship', *MCN*, 2nd December 1905; 'Art in Manchester', *MC*, 28th November 1905.

⁷²⁰ Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, 'Letter,' *MG*, 10th June 1910; 'Art Galleries Abroad: Hints for Manchester', *MG*, 29th April 1905.

⁷²¹ Thomas Coghlan Horsfall, *The Government of Manchester. A Paper read to the Manchester Statistical Society*, (Manchester: Cornish, 1895).

⁷²² Tom Nairn, 'The British Political Elite,' *New Left Review* I, no. 23 (February 1964): 19–25; Perry Anderson, 'Diary: Forget About Paris,' *London Review of Books* 36, no. 2 (January 23, 2014): 38–39.

enthusiasm for Scottish independence is a logical development of this perspective. While I have made clear already in this thesis that the Mancunian middle classes around the turn of the century were politically and intellectually invested in the city, it is true that the institutional structure of British local government imposed limits to its ability to pursue reforms.

Local government in Britain, having developed in a piecemeal fashion throughout the nineteenth century, suffered from a limited capacity to raise taxes or access funds for capital projects through other means. The project to supply water to the city from Thirlmere, in the Lake District, had almost bankrupted the city in the 1870s.⁷²³ The city was at a further disadvantage in that the expectations placed on it as de facto regional capital were at odds with the more limited size of the population upon whom it could draw local property taxes. This fact had been a frustration to the council since at least the 1880s.⁷²⁴

The 1882 municipalisation of the Manchester gallery appeared to bring it in line with Lille, but only at first glance. In fact, the role of the local and national state in Lille was significantly different to Manchester, with decisive consequences. Key to the management of the gallery in Lille was the director of the collection Édouard Reynart, who had been appointed, with three members of staff under him, in 1841.⁷²⁵ Seven years later the gallery was moved from the former convent in which it was housed to a large suite of rooms in the newly built Hotel de Ville. The increased importance accorded to the city's art collection by its politicians, already visible in the 1840s, was illustrated by a dramatic expansion of its size and scope. On Reynart's appointment in 1841, the catalogue of the museum listed 87 works: in 1875 there were 715.⁷²⁶

This expansion can be attributed to some donations from the national government, but most of all to the personal connections Reynart developed with

⁷²³ Moore, 'Urban Space and Civic Identity in Manchester 1780-1914: Piccadilly Square and the Art Gallery Question,' 117.

⁷²⁴ 'The merchants, manufacturers and general population of Manchester, and those connected with industries closely allied to the city, are to be found in an area extending beyond the limits of the city, [and] the district known to the world as 'Manchester' is much more populous than it appears in any printed returns.' From a council report quoted in Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 11.

⁷²⁵ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 147; Reynart served as conservateur until 1879.

⁷²⁶ Hervé Oursel, *Le Musée Des Beaux-Arts de Lille* (Paris: Dessain et Tolra, 1984), 7.

art collectors such as Alexandre Leleux, proprietor of the local liberal newspaper *Écho du Nord*, and Antoine Brasseur, an art dealer based in Cologne but originally from Lille. Both these men, and other wealthy local patrons, donated substantial numbers of works, and money to fund new purchases, to the city.⁷²⁷ At the same time, Reynart used money allocated to him by the municipality to buy paintings and sculptures. Though such allocations were initially made on a case-by-case basis,⁷²⁸ Reynart persistently argued for an annual budget for purchases that he could use at his own discretion, saying that he would otherwise be 'paralysed by the inflexible rigour of administrative structures' which required approval in advance for a specific work at a specific price, something which was not always possible when sales took place by auction or catalogues were not produced in advance.⁷²⁹ From 1864 onwards he was afforded a budget of six thousand francs a year to purchase new works. This figure was later increased on a number of occasions, reflecting the city's recognition of his expertise.⁷³⁰ Reynart's role and status mark an important difference between the two cities.

A further vital difference lay in the relationship between the local and national states with regard to the arts. The development of the Lille art collection was explicitly justified by Reynart as a necessary counterpart to the process of political citizen-making directed from the centre. In making this claim he employed the political language of decentralisation, exactly as Géry Legrand and others did in their advocacy of *décentralisation théâtrale*. While Reynart acknowledged that 'maintaining the centralisation of powers in the heart of the State is a way of maintaining unity in the body of the nation' he saw the '*décentralisation* of works of genius [as] indispensable to provide for all members of the society the advantages that the culture of arts and sciences produce.'⁷³¹ This argument was made in effect to advocate the continuing generosity of the French state to provincial galleries, both in the form of donated

⁷²⁷ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 148-149.

⁷²⁸ As for example in 1857 when the municipal council agreed funds to buy four works that had previously been displayed in the gallery on loan from a private collection. CML, 10th September 1857.

⁷²⁹ Jules Lengart, *Catalogue des tableaux du Musée de Lille, précédé d'une notice historique* (Lille:1893) 17; CML 29th July 1860.

⁷³⁰ Lengart, *Catalogue des tableaux du Musée de Lille*, 18.

⁷³¹ Édouard Reynart, *Notice des tableaux, bas-reliefs et statues exposés dans les galeries du musées des tableaux de Lille* (Lille: Danel, 1850), 9. Emphasis added.

works and financial support.

Just as the politics of 'decentralisation' in practice often maintained a determining role for the centre as the arbiter and (re)distributor of power, so too the 'decentralisation' of art collections in late nineteenth century France in practice entrenched the role of the state and the status of the Louvre collection as national and as the property of 'the people', in a way which would have been unfamiliar to British observers.⁷³² The Third Republic saw a concerted effort to construct 'a discursive link between the Republic and the prestige of French culture,' which was enforced by a regime of regular inspection by officials from Paris.⁷³³ On the one hand, the greater importance placed by the state on promoting art in provincial cities meant that G ry Legrand was able to fulfil a central promise of his electoral campaign and build a new *Palais des Beaux Arts*, which opened in 1892. In order to fund this project the government gave the city permission to take on extra debt, and a licence to hold a lottery to raise additional funds.⁷³⁴ Its placement opposite the Pr fecture in the Place de la R publique underlined its political importance, which lay in its capacity to speak in dialogue with the republican idea.

The state's intense interest in painting and sculpture was a double-edged sword for a city like Lille. While it provided the resources necessary for the city to build a new gallery, unlike Manchester, it curtailed the political and intellectual space for attempts to use the gallery as a way of expressing ideas about local identity or transnational connections. Hence, as discussed in the conclusion to the previous chapter, a comparison between the Manchester art gallery and the Lille opera is more appropriate than one between the two galleries.

Back in Manchester, in the face of competing claims on the council's resources, the cost of the proposed new gallery was highly controversial. Opponents could be found on both sides of the Conservative-Liberal divide. One Tory attacked 'professors who'll gladly spend thousands on marble museums for mummies but... [not] one twentieth as much on accommodation for their living

⁷³² McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 7.

⁷³³ Daniel Sherman, 'Art Museums, Inspections, and the Limits to Cultural Policy in the Early Third Republic,' *Historical Reflections / R flexions Historiques* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 338.

⁷³⁴ Hilaire, *Histoire de Lille*, 23.

descendants,' while his colleagues elsewhere in the city were enthusiastic supporters of the project.⁷³⁵ In the 1907 Rusholme byelection the usually-liberal *Manchester Guardian* endorsed the Conservative candidate because of his support for the gallery.⁷³⁶ Small business people and local ratepayers were particularly vocal opponents of the gallery, their hostility given further venom by their perception that wealthy councillors lived outside the city proper and did not themselves pay rates.⁷³⁷ With a lack of strong centralised executive power, 'a city council under attack from all sides chose the easiest solution – to make no long-term plans.'⁷³⁸

This hostility might appear to validate every claim cited above that Mancunians – beyond a few visionaries like Butterworth or Phythian – were the philistines of popular stereotype, indifferent to art and uninterested in using it as a way to connect the city with the rest of the continent. However it would be inaccurate to characterise turn of the century Manchester as divided between anti-art utilitarians and pro-art idealists. In fact, most promoters of the arts and advocates of increased spending on the art gallery made repeated references to the benefits such 'investment' would bring to Manchester industries.⁷³⁹ In doing so, they evoked a competitive 'commercial war', that pitted the products of the industrial nations against each other in a world market, while the construction of a grand new gallery in the city centre would bring new profits to hoteliers, retailers and property owners.⁷⁴⁰

Equally, opponents of the art gallery often used the language of history and civilisation, rather than profit and loss, to prioritise business. Manchester's invented tradition of itself, represented in Ford Madox Brown's murals in the

⁷³⁵ Hiram Howell, quoted 'Infirmiry Site', *MG*, 18th December 1907; Report of meeting of Allen Street Conservative Club, Newton Heath, 'Infirmiry Site,' *MG*, 6th October 1909.

⁷³⁶ For example, 'Editorial,' *MC*, 19th December 1907.

⁷³⁷ For instance, see the discussion of a public meeting held in the Town Hall on 7th May 1907 'Infirmiry Site', and 'Editorial', *MG*, 8th May 1907; Remarks of Edgar Atkins at public meeting reported in 'Art and Citizenship', *MCN*, 2nd December 1905; 'Urgency and Necessity', *MCN*, 16th April 1910; Z, 'Letter', *MCN*, 23rd April 1910.

⁷³⁸ Moore, 'Urban Space and Civic Identity in Manchester 1780-1914: Piccadilly Square and the Art Gallery Question,' 121.

⁷³⁹ These arguments were made in comparative terms, with the *MG* noting that 'throughout the German towns efforts are made to encourage the application of art to industry, to inculcate good craftsmanship as well as to give refined pleasure, to improve the standard of public taste, and to foster a love of the beautiful.' 'Art Galleries: What Other cities have done - A General Survey', *MG*, 18th December 1907.

⁷⁴⁰ 'Infirmiry Site: A New Art Gallery is Needed', *MG*, 18th April 1907.

town hall,⁷⁴¹ foregrounded industry and commerce above all. 'Base ideals are abroad,' lamented the Bolton MP George Harwood, 'and it is for Manchester to put these right and to restore business to that primacy which it held in Venice and Genoa, in Nuremberg and Augsburg, in Holland and the Netherlands.'⁷⁴² 'Should a precedent be required,' the Conservative Arthur Taylor argued, 'we have it in the case of Hamburg, where the municipal authorities, realising the importance of giving every inducement and facility for trade in their midst, have actually established and equipped an exchange for their traders.'⁷⁴³

Mancunians were not insular or parochial, as they often fondly pointed out.⁷⁴⁴ Manchester was a centre of global industry – Lille also, though to a lesser extent – and the commercial relations that this position entailed meant that business was a major place of encounter between the city and the rest of the world. These encounters and the geographical imaginations they conjured up, and upon which they rested, are the subject of the final chapter of this thesis. As such, the struggle over the proposed new gallery was not fought between one expansive and one narrow-minded vision of the city, but rather between two different visions of what it meant for Manchester to be a global city. That it deserved this label was not in dispute.

⁷⁴¹ In a series of panels Madox Brown depicted events such as the invention of the spinning jenny, the arrival of Flemish weavers in the city in the 17th century, John Dalton's scientific discoveries, the proclamation of the weights and measures act.

⁷⁴² George Harwood, 'Letter,' *MG*, 6th June 1910.

⁷⁴³ 'The Exchange Inquiry', *MG*, 20th September 1912.

⁷⁴⁴ 'After all most Londoners are notoriously provincial. The chief newspapers are remarkably afflicted with the assumption of omniscience which is the true mark of the provincial mind. My impressions of Americans leads me to conclude that they are rather smart, and of course voluble, than intelligent in the broad sense of that word. So with the Londoner, whether the three tailors of Tooley Street, or the extraordinary creatures who write for the Times, they are apt to think that 'they' are the people, and to write themselves up accordingly.' Charles Rowley, 'The Great Wen', *Odds and Ends*, 37, 1891, 189. SPLE, MCL GB127.M38/4/2/37.

Chapter Four: Capitalist cosmopolitanism: the economic roots of transnational imaginations

4.1 Introduction

His Imperial Majesty has, we know, visited celebrated cities, where he has been received with almost boundless enthusiasm; I however, beg to assure him in your name that he cannot in any part of the world be more warmly greeted than by the vast population of which Manchester is the centre. [Cheers]

Mayor of Manchester, Toast to the Shah of Persia, 20th July 1889.⁷⁴⁵

The late nineteenth century was characterised by (though not reducible to) a shift in the global economy. Increases in industrial and agricultural productivity, improvements to transport and communications, and greatly extended international investment saw global output per capita almost double between 1870 and 1913.⁷⁴⁶ Major commodities were increasingly integrated into a global market, as price differentials between global regions fell markedly.⁷⁴⁷ Capital, especially French and British capital, became very mobile: in 1914 the two countries together accounted for 62% of total foreign investment; though investment at home was largely stable and new machinery and fixed capital adopted where it was profitable to do so.⁷⁴⁸ These shifts were 'epochal', in the sense that the changes they wrought seemed to bring about a new era of history.⁷⁴⁹ By their very nature they invite the historian to think at the global scale.

⁷⁴⁵ 'Visit of the Shah', *SCN*, 20th July 1889.

⁷⁴⁶ Rosenberg, *A World Connecting, 1870 - 1945*, 625.

⁷⁴⁷ Guillaume Daudin, Matthias Morys, and Kevin H. O'Rourke, 'Globalization, 1870-1914,' in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Europe, Volume 2. 1870 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.

⁷⁴⁸ Daudin, Morys, and O'Rourke, 'Globalization, 1870-1914,' 10; Maurice Lévy-Leboyer, 'Capital Investment and Economic Growth in France, 1820—1930,' in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 231–95; C. H. Feinstein, 'Capital Formation in Great Britain,' in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, Vol 7* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 28–96.

⁷⁴⁹ Chris Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 11; Immanuel Wallerstein locates rather earlier the development of a world-wide capitalist economy and instead emphasises in the nineteenth century the creation of a 'geoculture' ('values that are very widely shared throughout the world system') that he identifies with the ideology of political, social and economic liberalism. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 275–77.

Early global histories employed a reading of industrialisation and capitalism derived from Karl Marx to posit this acceleration in global integration and industrialisation as part of the development of a 'world system' in which the capitalist system of production and exchange was immanent to the whole world, which was integrated into a single economy.⁷⁵⁰ Work on the history of specific commodities shows the global scale of the networks of production and exchange in which they circulated, but it also shows the unevenness of their distribution around the globe. The global economy of the late nineteenth century was in fact 'a rather abstract theoretical fiction': a diffuse, multi-nodal collection of connections and networks, rather than a coherent 'system' to be understood at a global scale.⁷⁵¹ For Frederick Cooper, the paradigm of globalisation, which he associates with global history more generally 'ends up glossing over the mechanisms and limitations of spatial relationships.'⁷⁵² Cooper means that the economic (and other) networks that develop during the nineteenth century were uneven or lumpy, and to examine them at a global scale obscures their diversity.

However, the argument made in this chapter is that the cultural meanings of these changes, and the responses of people to them, cannot be understood only at that scale, but must also be studied at the local level. This observation echoes previous work by Jim Tomlinson, in arguing that while globalisation meant increasing incorporation into systems that stretched across the globe, it also had very localised effects and was interpreted from local perspectives.⁷⁵³ As has been noted elsewhere, globalisation does not only lead to homogeneity, but also new forms of diversity.⁷⁵⁴

The economic changes of this era were especially significant for Manchester and Lille because they were central to the ways the cities developed in the early nineteenth century, and to their continuing role and status throughout the century. Both cities industrialised early relative to their national contexts, growing extremely quickly to become large cities on the national stage, from a

⁷⁵⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein and Terence K. Hopkins, *World Systems Analysis, Theory and Methodology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982), 11–13; Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System IV*.

⁷⁵¹ Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 724.

⁷⁵² Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 92.

⁷⁵³ Tomlinson, *Dundee and the Empire. 'Juteopolis' 1850 – 1939*.

⁷⁵⁴ Rosenberg, *A World Connecting, 1870 - 1945*, 593.

position of lesser significance in the previous century – and almost complete insignificance in the case of Manchester.⁷⁵⁵ Both were early adopters of factory production under steam (and later electric) power, and each the head city of a large and productive industrial region, linked to a national network of canals and railways.⁷⁵⁶ Both played significant roles in cotton textiles, the first industry to be fully integrated into a modern global market.⁷⁵⁷ All of these developments meant that the cities were regarded as archetypal representatives of a new kind of industrial urban life: a fact which shaped the way local people thought about the city. As I argued in the two preceding chapters, the identification of the city with industry was axiomatic: even arguments for an increased focus on opera or the art gallery were made with reference to the city's industrial character, either as a positive point of reference or as something to overcome.

The globalised nature of local economies meant that industrial production and trade was a significant way to encounter, act upon, be influenced by, and to think about, the rest of the world. It is an ideal subject for a historical project, such as this one, which brings local and transnational histories into dialogue.⁷⁵⁸ Discussions about commerce in Manchester and Lille therefore provide a useful lens through which to address the questions with which this thesis is occupied. Given the greater economic, as opposed to political or cultural, similarities between them – though also significant differences, which will be discussed in the course of the chapter – discussion of the two cities will be more closely integrated than in previous chapters. This chapter therefore examines the various ways in which local middle classes in Lille and Manchester used industry to think through their connections to the globe, often bypassing their capital cities when they did so. Though it comes at the end of the thesis the chapter is in a sense foundational for the argument of the thesis as a whole because of the centrality of the cities' economies to their identities.

⁷⁵⁵ Gerson, *The Pride of Place*, 18; Buriez-Duez, 'Le Mouvement de la Population dans le Département du Nord au XIXe siècle,' 29; Roncayolo, 'Logiques Urbaines,' 28, 54; Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain. Volume 1: Industrialisation, 1700-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 90; Alan Kidd, *Manchester*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 13–14.

⁷⁵⁶ Floud and Johnson, *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain. Volume 1: Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, 299, 305; Roger Price, *An Economic History of Modern France, 1730-1914*, Revised (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), 17, 21, 101, 105, 238; Kidd, *Manchester*, 17–18.

⁷⁵⁷ Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*.

⁷⁵⁸ Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 145.

The chapter is divided into seven sections, including this introduction. It is based primarily upon material held in the archives of the Chambers of Commerce of the two cities, but this includes material produced by many actors, not just the Chambers themselves. The Chambers are also a useful source of information because they existed in a similar form in both cities, performing similar functions and attracting a similar membership. The source base therefore reinforces the effectiveness of the comparison between the two cities.

In section 4.2 I show how local middle classes used the Chambers of Commerce to produce, collect and disseminate knowledge about the world. Chambers of Commerce were integrated into the social structures of the city, but they were also linked to transnational networks. The collection and dissemination of knowledge allowed local middle classes to develop a sense that the city was connected to global movements of people, ideas and commodities, thereby shaping their own perceptions of the city's global position. This section demonstrates that local manufacturers were knowledgeable and inquisitive about the world, based on the possibilities it offered as commercial opportunity. It also demonstrates that they did not rely upon their capital cities or on information and contacts sourced via the state in order to be global.

In the following section I explore the local cultural meanings of free trade. I use debates about tariff policy to show that local middle classes were highly aware of the globalised nature of local economies, and were apt to think in terms of local interests when confronting national government trade policies. I argue that this demonstrates the propensity of provincial middle classes to think of the city in terms of its global connections and to see its economic interests as locally, rather than nationally determined.

In section 4.4 I extend this discussion beyond tariffs to globalisation more widely, and its interaction with British and French imperialism. I argue that a local identity predicated on the city's industrial prowess provided Mancunians and Lillois with a way of associating themselves with imperialism on their own terms. Sceptical readings of the importance of empire such as Bernard Porter's *Absent Minded Imperialists* have allowed for its economic importance while

disputing its impact in the broader culture.⁷⁵⁹ I find that this distinction does not hold. Middle classes in provincial cities were acutely aware of their nations' imperial pursuits, and because of the characterisation of the city as a global workshop and the way this was entangled with empire, local identity was available as a tool with which one could think imperially. Although I limit my discussion to what could be called economic factors, I make clear that they cannot be disentangled from cultural ideas.

The following section concerns the way that the city's industrial character was a basis for ideas about its historical development. By defining the city as the inheritor of an industrial tradition, Lillois and Mancunians were able to historicise its development, making sense of the rapid changes they had undergone. I show that in Lille this approach led to an even greater focus on the region than in Manchester or Lancashire.

In the penultimate section of the chapter, I compare the significance of large transportation projects, especially the Manchester Ship Canal and the Canal du Nord. I argue that technologies of transport, and the increased global connectivity they facilitated, provided an important means through which Mancunians and Lillois imagined in concrete terms the relationship between the city and the globe.

Underpinning all of these sections are three related claims. The first is that people in both cities felt that as industrial cities they had a special relationship with, and a distinctive set of connections to, the rest of the world. This is the sense evoked in the epigraph. Industrialists in Manchester and Lille understood the world as a source of economic opportunity, engaging with its geography on this basis. As industrial cities working an imported raw material, and selling their goods around the world, they were especially globalised. Because the industrial character of the city was so intrinsic to its identity, the physical flows of commodities and capital that it entailed engendered a certain kind of imagined geography in which those global connections themselves became part of local identity.

⁷⁵⁹ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists. Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Tomlinson, *Dundee and the Empire. 'Juteopolis' 1850 - 1939*, 1.

The second claim is that the consequences of economic globalisation were not only felt by the small number of individuals that directly participated in the most globalised economic activities. One did not have to be Sam Mendel, James Platt, Eugène Motte or Julien Le Blan to realise that one's city traded in or produced a product that travelled around the world, and that one's economic life was intimately global in its very nature. An awareness of Lille and Manchester's global connectivity and an idea of what it meant was not limited to a small transnational social or economic group or groups. It was widely diffused, by structures that were built into local social life and institutions. It was also relatively deep, within the bounds of the middle and upper class section of society studied in this thesis. In an argument that owes much to Catherine Hall's study of the meanings of empire at home, I claim ideas about industry and global trade were deeply embedded in public, even popular, discourses in Manchester and Lille.⁷⁶⁰ It is therefore certainly appropriate to draw broad conclusions about the meanings of globalisation in the public culture of the local elite in the two cities, as I do in this chapter.

Finally, while present day discussions of globalisation from both the right and left of the political spectrum emphasise its tendency to erase difference, it was not experienced in our cities as wholly anti-local or homogenising. Given the identification of both cities as centres of industrial production, to participate in a global economy and global market, reinforced rather than undermined popular and long-standing ideas about local character and identity. The experience of globalisation did not displace or run counter to notions of local identity, but rather was interactive with them, remaking and reinforcing an idea of the city that responded to the challenges of an increasingly competitive global economy in the last decades of the century.

Given the above references to recently published works of global history, I wish to discuss the relationship between the field and transnational history, two core methodological paradigms around which this thesis is organised. Though I indicated in the introduction to this thesis my openness to diverse interpretations of transnational history, there are some differences with global

⁷⁶⁰ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (University of Chicago Press, 2002).

history that are important. Transnational history is 'relational', concerned with connections, interactions and circulations between 'the units that humans have set up to organise their collective life.'⁷⁶¹ Given its interest in what circulates or exists between nations, it remains bounded in some way by the nation, even as it recognises that historical processes can not be understood from a wholly national standpoint.⁷⁶²

Global history is also concerned with circulations or connections, but its scale is the global.⁷⁶³ Recent global histories have been especially concerned with the coming of 'the global' as a meaningful category for historical enquiry: in other words, with the development of globalisation. Obviously, such globalisation is in part the focus of this chapter, and as such global histories of the kind cited above are clearly relevant. However, in seeking to investigate how local middle classes understood economic globalisation, the focus of this chapter is not the global scale but ultimately the local. The chapter is therefore not a work of global history, although this probably goes without saying. Rather it depends upon the idea that globalisation does not exist only at the corresponding 'global' level, but instead that the global is everywhere, including at the local scale.⁷⁶⁴ It is the object of this chapter to show that late-nineteenth century Mancunians and Lillois shared this perspective.

⁷⁶¹ Saunier, *Transnational History*, 2-3.

⁷⁶² Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History. The Past, Present and Future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 11.

⁷⁶³ Patrick Manning, *Navigating World History. Historians Create a Global Past* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

⁷⁶⁴ Recent sociological work has coined the clumsy but evocative label of 'glocalization' to describe the process whereby global connections become embedded in local places. Victor Roudometof, 'Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization,' *Current Sociology* 53, no. 1 (January 2005): 118.

4.2 Transnational networks and the gathering of knowledge about the world

Participation in global markets required information.⁷⁶⁵ As the size, 'complexity and geographical range of world markets increased, there was a proliferation of information useful to economic activity, and a huge development in the methods of its assembly and distribution. The intensification of global trade in the late nineteenth century therefore required the increasing collection and diffusion of economic reports, statistics, prospecti, accounts and forecasts. At the same time, the greater complexity of modern business meant that such information was increasingly disseminated outside of the closed familial and diasporic networks which had characterised earlier economic globalisation.⁷⁶⁶ New geographical and scientific knowledge facilitated the development of an infrastructure to produce, categorise and evaluate economic information. Vast improvements in communications technology supported extensive networks for its distribution around the world.

Middle classes in Manchester and Lille were connected to these networks, using them to gather ideas and information that they found useful, as determined by their own needs, priorities and biases. This information was shaped by the uses to which they put it and the way they shared it. In this sense rather than collect *information*, they created *knowledge*, through a range of 'knowledge practices'.⁷⁶⁷ This knowledge was embedded with the social values and imagined geographies of the men that created it. Therefore the contents of this knowledge, and the circumstances of its creation, reveal the way that its creators understood the economic relationship between their cities and the rest of the world. In this section I show that they made numerous connections with individuals and organisations in other countries, and that they did so through the local bodies, and not through national associations or via networks located in their respective capital cities. As such their knowledge practices demonstrate that they were acutely aware of economic globalisation and its effects upon them, and that they responded to it from a local rather than national

⁷⁶⁵ Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c.1850–1914*, 7.

⁷⁶⁶ Rosenberg, *A World Connecting, 1870 - 1945*, 614.

⁷⁶⁷ Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*, Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Polity, 2012). See Part I, Knowledge Practices, especially 'Gathering Knowledges' and 'Disseminating Knowledges', 11-49, 85-108.

perspective. This continued to be the case even as the first institutions of non-governmental economic diplomacy began to be developed in the decade before the First World War.

In both Manchester and Lille the production and exchange of commercial knowledge was centred around the Chambers of Commerce and the social networks that were associated with them.⁷⁶⁸ Here 'urban oligarchies' created 'communities of interests' to direct local and regional economies; the Chamber was 'a centre of power' for the urban bourgeoisie.⁷⁶⁹ The Chambers also formalised looser solidarities of kinship, local residence, class, professional background and education by creating an institutional structure through which they could operate in the economic sphere.⁷⁷⁰ The social and economic functions of this formation were bound up together: development of knowledge practices was central to social control and the maintenance of middle-class hegemony in a changing world. This was true both in European industrial cities and in colonial systems in Africa and Asia.⁷⁷¹ Chambers enjoyed close relationships with local intellectual groups, particularly geographical societies.⁷⁷² Such relationships worked through the formal structures of these institutions, as well as the inter-penetration of their membership across the middle classes.

⁷⁶⁸ The archives of the Lille Chamber of Commerce (76 J), at the Archives du Nord, are catalogued only lightly, and somewhat inconsistently. Most material is organised into boxes (b), and dossiers (d) within those boxes. Some dossiers contain a small number of items, some contain dozens. Some of the dossiers are further divided into sub-dossiers, indicated with a letter, or annexes indicated by the word *bis*. Within the dossiers there is no further catalogue and so items can only be identified by a description, following where possible this form: Name of creator, Description of item, Date of item, Catalogue number (beginning with 76J).

⁷⁶⁹ Yves Lequin, 'Les Citadins, Les Classes et Les Luttes Sociales,' in *La Ville de L'âge Industriel: Le Cycle Haussmannien* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 491.

⁷⁷⁰ Pierre Deyon and Jean-Pierre Hirsch, 'Entreprise et Association Dans L'arrondissement de Lille 1830-1862,' *Revue du Nord* 62, no. 246 (1980): 609, 614–615; G.R Searle, *Entrepreneurial Politics in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 311; Mary Rose, *Firms, Networks and Business Values. The British and American Cotton Industries since 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 306; Robert J. Bennett, *Local Business Voice. The History of Chambers of Commerce in Britain, Ireland and Revolutionary America 1760-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 667; Roland Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' *Bulletin of The John Rylands Library* 38 (56 1955): 508.

⁷⁷¹ Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom*; Chris Bayly, *Empire and Information. Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India 1789 - 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁷⁷² T.N.L. Brown, 'The Manchester Society of Commercial Geography,' *Journal of Manchester Geographical Society*, 57, 40-45; MCC, Proceedings, 1879-1885, 679, MCL GB127.M8/2/9; John F. Laffey, 'Municipal Imperialism in Nineteenth Century France,' *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 1, no. 1 (June 1974): 90, 93.

The Chambers pursued the gathering of knowledge systematically.⁷⁷³ In this respect they should be seen in the context of the 'second age of discovery' of the nineteenth century, of which they employed many of the same methods, such as lectures, interviews, discussions, academic papers, research missions, and the collecting of samples.⁷⁷⁴ The library of the Lille chamber included published textbooks, newspaper cuttings, government reports, accounts of international exhibitions and other travels.⁷⁷⁵ The Commercial and Colonial Museum, founded in 1885 and jointly funded by the Chamber and the municipality, also had an extensive library which included: bulletins from various French Chambers of Commerce, Ministries, and colonies; French language journals on colonial subjects such as the *Revue Coloniale*, and the *Journal Officiel de L'Indo Chine*; the *Bulletin de Musée Commercial de Bruxelles*; bulletins of the Geographic Societies of Lille and Paris; the *Manchester Textile Recorder* and *Textile America* (New York); Belgian newspapers; maritime and railway timetables; published books on economics and geography on regions as diverse as Russia, South Africa, New South Wales, Algeria and Argentina.⁷⁷⁶

Personal testimony was also sought out when possible. As many as 150 people attended a lecture by Frédéric Haas, French consul at Hankou (present day Wuhan, on the Yangtze, 500 miles inland from Shanghai).⁷⁷⁷ Reports of this meeting in the local trade press meant that its contents were known more widely still. Lillois travelling abroad could also be a valuable source of

⁷⁷³ The Chamber was 'a system of information [gathering].' Luc Rojas, 'Les Chambres de Commerce, Un Organe de Renseignement Au Service Des Industriels: L'exemple de La Chambre de Commerce de Saint-Étienne (1850-1930),' *Histoire, Économie et Société* 31, no. 4 (2012): 58.

⁷⁷⁴ Bennett, *Local Business Voice*, 537, 543–548; Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*, Vol. 2, 12.

⁷⁷⁵ Reports on various subjects by Jules-Émile Scribe, *Expansion Commercial et Coloniale, Mise En Valeur Des Colonies. Rapports et Notes* (Lille: Danel, 1898); Report by Paul Herteman, a mid-level employee of the chemical manufacturer Kuhlmann, on French trade with Russia. Paul Herteman, *Du commerce extérieur de la France, la Russie commerciale, des défauts et lacunes dans l'exercice de notre commerce extérieur et des moyens d'y remédier*, 1899, ADN CCL 76J b35 d25 bis; Paul Le Blan, *Exposition de Chicago, Rapport de M Paul Le Blan, délégué de la Chambre de Commerce*, (Lille: Danel, 1894) ADN CCL, 76J 2115; After visiting Chicago, Le Blan visited cotton and linen factories in the north eastern USA, where he took careful note of the ways in which American manufacturers organised production, drawing lessons on the 'good example[s] to follow' which he found. Le Blan, *Exposition de Chicago*, 22; Meanwhile physical objects such as production samples collected on overseas journeys were placed in the Industrial or Commercial and Colonial museums, which were run under the joint sponsorship of the Chamber and the municipality.

⁷⁷⁶ Description of library holdings, *Notice Sur le Musée Commercial et Colonial de Lille* (Lille: Danel, 1898), 9-11, ADN CCL 76J b44 d5 e.

⁷⁷⁷ 'Announcement from President of CC Lille, 22nd June 1892', 76 J b 26 d 20 g); Letter from Minister to President of CC, 7th May 1892; Letter from Julien le Blan, President of CC, to Haas, n.d; Report 'Lecture de M. Haas', *L'industriel du Nord et des Ardennes*, n.d.. 76 J b26 d 20 g)

information. One young man whom the Chamber had assisted in his passage to Argentina compensated by writing letters to its Secretary, giving various pieces of commercial information and reports on the textile market.⁷⁷⁸ These letters included personal notes of greeting to those at home, with an instruction to the letter receiver to pass them on; demonstrating the entangled nature of social and commercial networks, and suggesting that the Lillois abroad felt that these networks tied him to home.



Edmond Faucheur (1839-1923), President of Lille Chamber of Commerce, 1898-1920
Source: BML Fonds Lefebvre 5, 58

As the leading centre of the world in their primary industry, Manchester industrialists were less likely than their Lille counterparts to feel pressed to travel abroad in search of new technology. Nevertheless, information gathering was an important role of the Chamber there too. When a new sub-committee for those interested in trade with Africa was formed, the collection of newspaper cuttings on business information was discussed in its first meeting.⁷⁷⁹ The personal papers of manufacturers show that they were acutely concerned with the possibility of competition from overseas, particularly during times of economic stress.⁷⁸⁰ During the post-American-Civil-War slump Henry Ashworth, former President of the Manchester Chamber, visited spinners in France, Belgium and Switzerland, noting that they were less efficient and faced higher costs for machinery, but lower costs for labour and other inputs.⁷⁸¹ Two decades later the Chamber held an inquiry into competition from India, hearing from a

⁷⁷⁸ Édouard Dournon, 'Letters from Argentina,' 1889, ADN CL 76J b26 d20 b.

⁷⁷⁹ 'Minutes of the First meeting of the Africa Sectional Committee, 1st March 1892,' Africa Sectional Committee 1892-1897, 5. MCC, MCL GB127.M8/4/1.

⁷⁸⁰ For example Mark Phillips, MP and cotton factory owner, collected numerous articles on the American Civil War and its impact on the cotton industry. Mark Phillips Papers, MCL M571/5.

⁷⁸¹ Henry Ashworth, Report 28th July 1869, MCC, Proceedings 1867-1872, 354. MCC MCL, GB127.M8/2/7.

number of local witnesses who had first hand experience of the Bombay industry.⁷⁸²

Chambers of Commerce were of course a collection of interests, individuals and firms, each of which had their own shifting priorities, but they acted as corporate bodies. As an institutional form, the Chamber of Commerce existed over most of the globe by the end of the century. Speaking or writing in an official capacity, the Chamber was recognised as the legitimate voice of business in a given city, as well as usually being the best source of up to date information.⁷⁸³ They therefore frequently made connections with each other. Manchester often received foreign correspondence asking for information about the cotton industry, which it welcomed as an opportunity to promote free trade.⁷⁸⁴ Chambers of Commerce abroad could also provide samples of industrial products, as well as contacts and personal introductions for Lillois or Mancunians hoping to do business elsewhere.⁷⁸⁵ Connections were made not only with Chambers in cities in Europe, but in other cities with which there were economic links, such as Calcutta, Montreal, Rosario and Valparaiso.⁷⁸⁶ On a few occasions the two Chambers communicated directly, for example over provisions for smoke abatement.⁷⁸⁷

By creating, assembling, retaining and diffusing economically useful knowledge, the Chambers of Commerce performed an important role for their members, the industrial and commercial middle classes of the two city-regions. Both merchants and manufacturers needed accurate, up to date information about market conditions and the demand for particular products around the world. In this sense, the geographical focuses of Chambers of Commerce were not fixed, but shifted across the period in accordance with wider economic and political

⁷⁸² This is discussed at greater length in the following section of the chapter.

⁷⁸³ Roncayolo, 'Les Citadins et La Politique,' 568.

⁷⁸⁴ For example correspondence with the Chambre de Commerce de Rouen, MCC Proceedings, 1867-1872, 64, MCC MCL, GB127.M8/2/7; Other correspondence, for example with the company of Dolfuss and Mieg, Mulhouse, can be found in Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'The Condition of the Cotton Trade of Lancashire and the Operation of the Anglo-French treaty of 1860' in *Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Collected Speeches and Papers 1862 – 1890* (Manchester: Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1890) MCL 381 M2.

⁷⁸⁵ Correspondance with Chambers of Commerce abroad, (Charleroi, Brussels, Malaga, Constantinople, Montréal, Saint Petersburg, Salonika) 1880-1915, ADN CCL 76J b46 d11, 76J b8 d12 b2.

⁷⁸⁶ Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1853-1953. A Centenary Survey* (Bengal: Bengal Chamber of Commerce, 1953), 22.

⁷⁸⁷ Elijah Helm, Letter, 20th November 1896, ADN CCL, 76J b40 d56 h.

developments, as the rise and fall of different regions in the subject index of Chamber proceedings indicates. Middle classes in the two cities perceived their relationships with other parts of the world to be highly differentiated, determined by the specific characteristics of their cities not just as industrial but also as being involved in textiles. The world was divided into producers of raw materials, customers, and competitors. Though globalisation might ultimately have had a tendency to flatten difference, the Chambers of Commerce did not appear to view it as such, regarding themselves as acting in their local interest. Crucially, though when addressing a national audience they often evoked the national interest and equated it with that of Lancashire or the Nord, the intention was to persuade others of their perspective, not to abandon the local interest.

Ad-hoc contact between individual Chambers of Commerce developed into a series of International Congresses of Chambers of Commerce held between 1905 and 1914, in which the chambers of both cities participated. These congresses aimed to agree a unified international regulatory framework. Such a framework would necessarily exist at a global scale, but as explicitly agreed at the first meeting in Liège, it would be drawn up by actors representing the interests of a particular local space, who would organise themselves with reference to their local needs.⁷⁸⁸ As such they developed an idea of internationalism based upon an extensive, diffuse federation of Chambers of Commerce, none of which would be allowed to dominate the collective. The Congress, described as 'a businessman's international' or 'a businessman's League of Nations' by an official historian of its successor body,⁷⁸⁹ was part of a wider early twentieth century movement of internationalist organisations based around particular interests or values, a connection evoked by the quoted historian. It is important to underline the central role played by Belgium in the development of such organisations, many of which were based in Belgian cities and/or instigated or led by Belgian individuals.⁷⁹⁰ The International Congress of Chambers of Commerce established itself permanently in Brussels. While it is

⁷⁸⁸ Comité Permanent des Congres Internationaux des Chambres de Commerce, Advertisement for Congres de Milan 1906, Including resolutions made at Liège 1905, ADN CCL, 76J b46 d10 a.

⁷⁸⁹ George Ridgeway, *Merchants of Peace. The History of the International Chamber of Commerce*. (Boston: Little Brown, 1938), 21–22.

⁷⁹⁰ For example see the extensive work of Daniel Laqua, especially *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880-1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss the reasons for Belgian fecundity in this area, it obviously made it easier for Lillois to become involved, both for practical reasons and because they could theorise a relationship between French Flanders and Belgium based upon their historic affinity.

Recent literature has explored the contribution of 'epistemic communities', assemblages of individuals who connect across boundaries and who 'share a number of normative convictions founded on certain principles' or concepts.⁷⁹¹ Such communities bear comparison with transatlantic networks of abolitionists and religious dissenters, which connected families in Manchester with their peers on the American east coast.⁷⁹² Crucial to the forging of such connections was the co-recognition of similarity and comparability between social structures and local institutions.⁷⁹³ The same was true of other kinds of transnational connections between cities discussed in this thesis, as in Chapter 3, when the Manchester Royal Institution made contact with the Düsseldorf Kunstverein. As was noted in that chapter, it is in studying institutions such as these that the relationship between social history, intellectual history and transnational or global history becomes clear.

This conceptual framework can be applied to the Chambers of Commerce too. Throughout the period, the chambers made transnational connections through correspondence, sending delegates overseas, receiving visiting lecturers, and collecting written information. This is important evidence of their outward-looking perspectives, especially when contrasted to a stereotypical view of insular provincial businessmen. What is even more significant however, is that they recognised themselves to belong to a knowledge community which spanned the industrialised world, but for which the terms of their participation were set locally, bypassing national institutions and even bypassing the idea of the nation itself.

⁷⁹¹ Peter M. Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Community and International Policy Coordination,' *International Organisation*, 46, 1992, 1-35; Saunier, 'Taking up the Bet on Connections: A Municipal Contribution,' 510.

⁷⁹² See for example the correspondence between the Garrison (Boston) and Kyllmann (Manchester) families, 1871-1901, Maloney Collection of McKim-Garrison Family Papers, Box 4, NYPL.

⁷⁹³ '[Municipalities believed they] belong to a shared universe of rules and values in which they can compare themselves to, or rival, others.' Saunier, 'Taking up the Bet on Connections: A Municipal Contribution,' 523.

4.3 Tariffs and free trade: Local interests and global trade

In the evening of the 1st of November 1897, a crowd of hundreds assembled in the Free Trade Hall to celebrate the centenary of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. The hall had been built to mark the abolition of the Corn Law, symbolising the success of the Anti-Corn Law League and the triumph of free trade.⁷⁹⁴ If any one individual was associated with the League, it was Richard Cobden, a cotton printer, local MP and the League's founder.

The guest of honour that night was well aware of this history. Lord Rosebery, a former Prime Minister and leader of the Liberals, was one of the most prominent 'free-traders' of his time. He took the stage after an introduction from the Chamber's secretary Elijah Helm, and quoted Cobden to his rapt audience:

Just as Jerusalem was with the origin of our faith, and just as Mecca was in the eyes of the Mahometans, so would Manchester be identified in the eyes of historians as the birthplace and the centre of the greatest moral movement since the introduction of printing.⁷⁹⁵

The crowd broke out into cheers. Upon a mention by Rosebery of the abolition of the Corn Law there was 'prolonged cheering, the whole audience rising'.⁷⁹⁶

This reaction reflected the overwhelming support of the Manchester public for free trade, in a late nineteenth century British context in which political economy was a central theme of popular mass politics. During this period free trade was perhaps 'the closest modern Britain ever came to a national ideology'.⁷⁹⁷ In this sense, though Manchester might have been unusual in the extent of its enthusiasm, it was not so in the fact of its commitment.

However, the applause for Cobden's words reflected a distinctly Mancunian approach which went beyond pragmatic support for free trade, regarding it as an intrinsic part of the city's identity. The 'free trade party [had its] headquarters

⁷⁹⁴ The 'Corn Law' was a tax on imported cereals which had the (intended) effect of protecting large British landowners (including those who held land in colonised Ireland). The struggle for its abolition was led by an alliance of manufacturers and working classes in industrial cities like Manchester, and came to symbolise a larger struggle between industrial and landed wealth in Victorian society.

⁷⁹⁵ Elijah Helm, *Chapters in the History of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce* (Manchester: Cornish, 1897) 94.

⁷⁹⁶ Helm, *Chapters in the History of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce*, 96.

⁷⁹⁷ Frank Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2 – 5.

in Manchester' as Cobden himself described it.⁷⁹⁸ The association between free trade and Manchester became an article of faith and a structure of logic that informed ways of thinking about the city's economic relationships.

The economies of both Manchester and Lille were dominated by textiles. The very development of these industries depended upon global connections.⁷⁹⁹ This was true not only of cotton, which could not be grown in Europe, but also of wool which increasingly came from herds in South America and Australasia, and to a certain extent linen flax which was imported into France from elsewhere in Europe. Furthermore, textile production, especially of cotton, was strongly orientated towards export. Even by 1910, when industrialisation elsewhere in Europe and the United States had reduced its competitive advantage, Britain (which almost exclusively meant Lancashire) accounted for 70% of world exports of cotton cloth.⁸⁰⁰ Lille was a less prodigious exporter than Manchester, but its producers were still wary of foreign competition in the home market and in French colonies, and acutely sensitive to global market conditions.⁸⁰¹

Manufacturers in both cities were therefore sensitive to the openness of markets not just at home, but anywhere in the world that they might wish to access, and the politics of trade and protection were major local political issues. 'Tariff politics are usually interest politics,' and given the regional differentiation of industrial economies in nineteenth century Europe, tariff policy therefore had particular implications at the level of the region.⁸⁰² This section of the thesis explores some of the debates around tariff politics in order to illustrate the role that international trade and the flow of commodities and manufacture goods played in the shaping of transnational imaginations in Manchester and Lille. Debates over trade agreements between Britain and France are especially useful because they give us a direct comparison between the two cities.

⁷⁹⁸ Nicholas Edsall, *Richard Cobden, Independent Radical* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 195.

⁷⁹⁹ 'The history of the establishment of the paradigm case of large scale reorganised textile production in Britain remains inseparable from mercantilism, imperialism, and connexions with the rest of Europe.' O'Brien, 'The Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration of the British Industrial Revolution as a Conjuncture in Global History,' 130.

⁸⁰⁰ Andrew Marrison, 'Indian Summer, 1870 - 1914,' in *The Lancashire Cotton Industry. A History since 1700*, ed. Mary B. Rose (Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1996), 248.

⁸⁰¹ Kuhlmann, 'Considérations Présentées a Son Excellence Monsieur Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, Du Commerce et Des Travaux Publics...' op cit.

⁸⁰² Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 10.

The politics of trade are not reducible to bloodless economic 'interests' but operated, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, at an abstracted level of ideas and emotions.⁸⁰³ For example, calls for 'fair trade', meaning protectionism, in turn of the century Britain worked in conscious (and unconscious) dialogue with fears of a stronger Germany and advocacy of firmer ties between Britain and its empire. Britain has conventionally been presented in strong contrast to a more protectionist France, an interpretive paradigm which has been subject to criticism and counter criticism.⁸⁰⁴ What is significant here, however is the local rather than the national context. As tariff policies were set in negotiations between national governments, local interests could find themselves at odds with policies pursued by the state. Debates over the tariff therefore presented a potential point of confrontation between local and national interests over the proper managing of transnational economic relationships.

January 1860 saw the signing of a commercial treaty between Britain and France, negotiated by Cobden and the French deputy Michel Chevalier. The treaty greatly reduced tariffs levied on goods traded between the two countries, and removed prohibitions on the import of certain manufactured goods, including cottons, into France.⁸⁰⁵ It was also widely received as a symbolic move in favour of free trade in general, precipitating a period in which both countries signed similar treaties with other European powers, seeming to validate the utopian hopes of free traders – such as Chevalier himself, who was the editor of a Saint-Simonian journal *Le Globe* – for an era of global peace and fraternal relations between freely trading peoples.⁸⁰⁶ This development was enthusiastically welcomed in Manchester, where the Chamber of Commerce hailed its imminent adoption in terms that hinted at their proprietary feelings

⁸⁰³ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 14. The success of Donald Trump in using 'trade' to sublimate the diverse anxieties of (mainly white) working class American voters is a depressing case in point.

⁸⁰⁴ John Vincent Nye, 'The Myth of Free-Trade Britain and Fortress France: Tariffs and Trade in the Nineteenth Century,' *The Journal of Economic History* 51, no. 1 (March 1991): 23–46; Douglas A. Irwin, 'Free Trade and Protection in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France Revisited: A Comment on Nye,' *The Journal of Economic History* 53, no. 1 (March 1993); Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 9; Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England 1846-1946* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 93; Gabrielle Cadier, 'Les Conséquences Du Traité de 1860 Sur Le Commerce Franco-Britannique,' *Histoire, Économie et Société* 7, no. 3 (1988): 355–80.

⁸⁰⁵ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 28.

⁸⁰⁶ France signed treaties with ten states/customs unions between 1860 and 1867. *Ibid.*; David Todd, 'Transnational Projects of Empire in France, c.1815-c.1870,' *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 2 (August 2015): 274.

around free trade: 'it affords the Directors much satisfaction to be enabled to congratulate the Members of the Chamber on the dawn of free-trade principles in France.'⁸⁰⁷

Just as Manchester had a tradition of support for free trade dating to the struggle for Corn Law repeal, the Nord had a similarly long history of protectionism.⁸⁰⁸ Manufacturers in Lille were hostile to the 1860 treaty, and over the following decades repeatedly advocated the protection of French spinners and weavers by increasing charges on foreign goods.⁸⁰⁹ They were not unique in this respect: cotton was the most protectionist industry in France, according to the free trader Isaac Pereire, and manufacturers in the north east and Normandy were also anxious about British competition.⁸¹⁰ Nevertheless, industrialists in the north formed a protectionist bloc that was both materially structured, and rhetorically justified, along regional lines. A case in point were the wool manufacturers of Roubaix-Tourcoing, who unlike wool producers in other French regions were hostile to free trade, a position that was rooted in the inter-family connections of northern industrialists, which meant that the Roubaix and Tourcoing bourgeoisie also held cotton interests.⁸¹¹ Such intertwining of the social order and local economic structures reinforced the identification of the regional interest with a particular industrial interest, even for those not directly involved in the industry. The same was true in Manchester where, for instance, a lawyer like John Ernest Phythian recognised that the city's economy depended upon manufacturing.

Commercial interests in Manchester pursued a form of para-state diplomacy in favour of free trade, and were connected to a network of their peers across

⁸⁰⁷ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for 1859,' in *Annual Reports of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce 1837-1864* (Manchester: Cave and Sever, 1864), 14.

⁸⁰⁸ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 34; Cadier-Rey, 'Les Chambres de Commerce Dans Le Débat Douanier a La Fin Du XIX siècle,' 279.

⁸⁰⁹ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 53; Kuhlmann, 'Considérations Présentées a Son Excellence Monsieur Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, Du Commerce et Des Travaux Publics...' op cit; Chambre de Commerce de Lille, *Rapport Adressé par la Chambre a M Le Ministre de L'Agriculture et du Commerce, en Exécution de sa Circulaire du 27 January 1873* (Lille: Danel 1873) 3 ADN CCL 76J b8 d16.

⁸¹⁰ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 129; Support for free trade in France was highly differentiated by region Charles P. Kindleberger, 'The Rise of Free Trade in Western Europe, 1820-1875,' *The Journal of Economic History* 35, no. 1 (March 1975): 38.

⁸¹¹ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 125.

several European countries.⁸¹² Directors of the Chamber of Commerce were 'particularly attentive to the details of all tariff bargaining... in which the United Kingdom was involved,' making numerous attempts to lobby the British government over negotiations both with France and other states.⁸¹³ They also attempted to influence opinion in France, particularly in the early 1870s when the Anglo-French treaty was due for renewal or revision, and the French climate was hostile to free trade. On several occasions John Slagg and Hugh Mason went to Paris on the Chamber's behalf to argue for free trade before a French inquiry. In their accounts of these experiences, they emphasised the peculiarly Mancunian character of their support for free trade, with Slagg writing that 'to convince the French manufacturers that Free Trade is the only true commercial policy, is a slightly more arduous undertaking in France than it may appear to be from Manchester.'⁸¹⁴

Free traders in Manchester kept up communications with allies in France, disputing public statements made by protectionists, preparing reports on the cotton industry in Britain, and inviting Michel Chevalier to a special reception in Manchester.⁸¹⁵ He was welcomed to the city which they presented as a natural place for him to visit, it being the place in which 'the first important step was taken towards the practical adoption of free trade.'⁸¹⁶

They used similar language in their frequent communications with French sceptics of free trade. The year after Chevalier's visit the Chamber produced and circulated an *Adresse... aux Chambres de Commerce et au Peuple*

⁸¹² Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England 1846-1946*, 120.

⁸¹³ Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' 510-511; Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 20th February 1860, 23rd February 1860, *Proceedings 1858-1867*, 131, 138-139, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/6; Manchester Chamber of Commerce, *Tables Shewing the course of trade between the united kingdom and France from 1858 to 1867* (Manchester: Heywood, 1868); Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 28th June 1865, *Proceedings 1858-1867*, 611-612, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/6.

⁸¹⁴ John Slagg, *The Cotton Trade of Lancashire and the Anglo-French Commercial Treaty of 1860, being a report of the English Evidence at the French Commercial Enquiry of 1870. Translated and with an Introduction and Appendix by John Slagg* (London: Longmans, 1870) 4.

⁸¹⁵ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'Adresse de La Chambre de Commerce de Manchester Aux Chambres de Commerce et Au Peuple Francais, 1876,' in *Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Collected Speeches and Papers 1862 – 1890, op cit.*; Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 19th June 1879, *Proceedings, 1872-1879*, 274, 805-806, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/8; Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'Statement on the Cotton Trade, for the Use of Monsieur Gavard, Secretary to the French Embassy, London, 1877,' in *Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Collected Speeches and Papers 1862 – 1890, op cit.*

⁸¹⁶ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 28th April 1875, *Proceedings, 1872-1879*, 274. op cit.

Français, which they distributed to every Chamber of Commerce across France.⁸¹⁷ 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce,' the circular read (in French), 'would remind the French people that Manchester was the centre of the movement which freed French commerce from the charges which England previously placed on French produce.'⁸¹⁸ After the Chamber of Commerce of the cotton town of Elbeuf wrote a rebuttal to this circular, Manchester's Chamber produced a further text in French – a translation of an article from *The Times*, which was presumably also circulated across the channel.⁸¹⁹

Two years later they wrote to the French ambassador in London. The range of reports, delegations, and personal relationships forged across national borders from Manchester, underline the extent to which local manufacturers were linked to a global network of commercial connections based on a shared approach to political economy. Their attempts both to lobby the British government, and influence opinion on the continent, demonstrate that they regarded the proper pursuit of international trade policy to be within their purview.

The late 1880s saw a concerted effort by a small pro-fair trade faction within the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to change the Chamber's official position by packing meetings and proposing protectionist motions.⁸²⁰ Such attempts met with a considerable show of power from the Chamber directors, who mobilised their resources to defend the free-trade consensus and delegitimise fair trade as unrepresentative of Manchester. When one fair trade resolution was narrowly passed at a meeting, the Directors organised a postal ballot of the membership that affirmed 'its unfaltering adherence to the principles of Free Trade' by 556 votes to 221.⁸²¹ The results were publicised in the local press and forwarded to the Prime Minister and Chancellor, demonstrating the importance the Chamber

⁸¹⁷ 'Adresse de la Chambre de Commerce de Manchester aux Chambres de Commerce et au Peuple Français', op cit.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ 'Leader, (French translation), *The Times*, 13th January 1877', in *Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Collected Speeches and Papers 1862 – 1890*, op cit.

⁸²⁰ Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' 531; For instance on one occasion the motion 'Having waited in vain more than forty years for other nations to follow England's Free Trade example, this Chamber thinks the time has now arrived to reconsider its position,' was defeated by 23 votes to 21. Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 1st November 1886, *Proceedings, 1885-1890*, 211, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/10.

⁸²¹ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 18th January 1889, Ibid, 679-680.

placed on its status as the voice of the home of free trade. Local support for free trade crossed the Liberal-Conservative political divide.⁸²² Indeed, upon his appearance in Manchester in 1897 the Liberal former Prime Minister Lord Rosebery was met with a vote of thanks by the cotton spinner and Conservative MP William Houldsworth.⁸²³

As Frank Trentmann argues, the extent and breadth of support for free trade in Victorian and Edwardian Britain was surprising and needs explanation.⁸²⁴ He identifies two principles which underpinned this ideological construction and gave it such force. The creation of the civic persona of 'the consumer' politicised the availability of commodities, especially foodstuffs, providing a language through which cheap food could be demanded as a civic right. The cheap loaf of bread was a characteristic image in Edwardian free trade propaganda, as well as in political campaign material more generally.⁸²⁵ This political vocabulary was mobilised to provide the idea of free trade with a set of affective associations that made it politically compelling. In addition, the idea of free trade was bound up in a form of internationalism which envisaged unbounded global trade as a vehicle for the spreading of peace between societies.

This political vernacular was enthusiastically adopted in Manchester, particularly the collocation of trade and peace, as it provided a basis on which to theorise the city's contribution to higher, universal values whose consequences were manifested on an international scale. Writing to the Chambre de Commerce of Rouen in 1867, the secretary of the Manchester Chamber hoped that their correspondence 'should have a beneficial effect in promoting unity of action... increasing the means of productive industry, [to] bring about that community of nations.'⁸²⁶ In his centenary history of the Chamber Elijah Helm, a cotton spinner, was insistent on this point noting that the great Cobden was no 'Little Englander.'⁸²⁷

⁸²² Chorley, *Manchester Made Them*, 234-235.

⁸²³ 'Whatever fears Lord Roseberry might have about other parts of the country, he might feel safe that here we are Free-traders.' Houldsworth, quoted Helm, *Chapters in the History of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce*, 108.

⁸²⁴ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 16.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid.* 88.

⁸²⁶ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 30th October 1867, *Proceedings 1867-1872*, 64, op cit.

⁸²⁷ Helm, *Chapters in the History of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce*, 86.

The rhetoric of free trade carried a populist, not to say utopian note, which informed approaches to international commerce more widely. Upon the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, which will be discussed at length later in this chapter, a local paper described it as 'the new link that is to help to bind the toilers of the world into great, glorious, heaven-inspired brotherhood.'⁸²⁸ The canal had long been rhetorically associated with images of free trade, the passage of the Manchester Ship Canal Act in 1885 being marked by local people placing effigies of navvies in front of their houses: 'One of these was seated near a table, on which were a big loaf of bread, a jug, and a glass containing ale.'⁸²⁹ The increased trade that the canal was set to promise was explicitly associated with peace and prosperity, with free trade as the outward-looking philosophy that made these possible.⁸³⁰ Free traders in France – who were not, for the most part, Lillois – employed remarkably similar rhetoric, Michel Chevalier telling an audience that the 1860 treaty meant that 'the vessel which was stationed among the reefs of prohibition [has been] set in full sail into the waters of free trade.'⁸³¹ Given the insistent, repeated association between free trade and the city of Manchester, the effect of this was to rhetorically present Manchester as a globally connected city, not only in the terms described a few paragraphs further up (Hugh Mason's visit to Paris, correspondence with Chevalier, and so on) but more fundamentally in its outlook upon the world.

The same was not true for Lille, whose manufacturers were much more wary of foreign (especially British) competition in the home market, and were therefore brought into frequent opposition to the national government until the election of a protectionist majority to the parliament in 1889.⁸³² Policies thought to threaten local producers were met with hostility, such as the proposed construction of grain silos at Dunkirk, or the abolition of tariffs between metropolitan France and

⁸²⁸ 'Opening Day, January 1st 1894', *SCN*, 1st January 1894.

⁸²⁹ *Salford Reporter*, 31st August 1885

⁸³⁰ 'You'll see great ships from distant climes / and men of every hue / lay earth's vast bounties at your feet / and take your goods in lieu / then trade will flourish all around / and peace and plenty too.' From a poem by local dialect writer Edwin Waugh, *SCG*, 13th December 1882.

⁸³¹ 'M. Michel Chevalier on the Emperor's Policy', *MG*, 6th September 1860.

⁸³² Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 38; Cadier-Rey, 'Les Chambres de Commerce Dans Le Débat Douanier a La Fin Du XIX siècle,' 286–289; See Louis Merchier, *Le lin et l'industrie linière dans le département du Nord* (Lille: 1902) 89-93, for examples of local responses to free trade in the 1860s and 1870s.

Tunisia, which the Chamber feared would be used by European manufacturers for tariff-free re-importation via the French colony.⁸³³ Discussions of these policy issues were shot through with an acute awareness of economic geography. Opposing the proposed Tunisian tariff regime they remarked in their report that in this instance 'the producers of the Nord and of the Midi have the same interests to defend.'⁸³⁴ This statement was a recognition of the fact that for southern farmers and viticulturists free trade with Tunisia was a threatening prospect, while free trade with Britain, for example, was an opportunity. Though regional interests were aligned in this instance, it serves to underline the importance placed upon them by late-nineteenth century businesspeople in France and hence the need for historians to recognise free trade as partly a problem of regional history.

The 1890s saw greater protection, first of French imperial possessions in Algeria and Indochina, and then of France itself after the moderately protectionist Méline tariff was introduced in 1892.⁸³⁵ Lille's earlier history of resistance to free trade was then cast by local writers in a heroic light, one local lawyer calling a 1869 petition 'a treatise of independence at an epoch where it was unwise to resist the desires of an authoritarian government.'⁸³⁶

However, none of this is to suggest that manufacturers in Lille were insular, or uninterested in the opportunity to export their products. They seized opportunities to learn about foreign markets, as described in the previous section of this chapter, and made an effort to adapt themselves to new tariff regimes, for instance inviting Edmond Bruwaert, the French consul to the United States, to Lille. The consul was invited by Paul Le Blan, who had met him at the International Exhibition in Chicago the previous year. After having dinner with Paul and his brother Julien, President of the Chamber, Bruwaert joined a group of industrialists at the Chamber for a discussion of recent changes in the trade arrangements with America and the opportunities they presented.⁸³⁷

⁸³³ Comice Agricole, Letter to Prefect, n.d. ADN CCL, 76J b26 d20 b. (The Comice Agricole was a committee of agricultural interests, associated with but separate to the Chambre de Commerce); Édouard Agache, Report, 29th March 1889, ADN CCL 76J 2354.

⁸³⁴ Agache, Report, op cit.

⁸³⁵ Smith, *Tariff Reform in France, 1860-1900*, 201, 9, 25.

⁸³⁶ Auguste Devaux, 'Chambre de Commerce de Lille. Politique Douanière de La Chambre de Commerce,' 1909, 16, ADN CCL 76J 1691.

⁸³⁷ 'M. Bruwaert a Lille', EDN, n.d.; 'M. Edmond Bruwaert dans le Nord', EDN, [December 1894], ADN

Chamber members even, (hypocritically perhaps), lobbied against proposals by French hemp and flax growers to tax the imported raw materials of the linen and rough sacking industry, of which Lille was the primary centre in France.

'Protection... could only be profitable to agriculture... but could manufacturers, if obliged to pay 10 francs [per 100kg] of taxes on their raw material, continue their industry?' the linen spinner Edmond Faucheur complained.⁸³⁸ Remarkably similar arguments about free trade and the relationship between industry and agriculture had been made by the Anti Corn Law League in Manchester four decades earlier.⁸³⁹

In Lille, as in Manchester, tariff policy threw into relief the tensions between a global marketplace and regional interests. Their reading of these interests led local industrialists to the rational position of hostility to free trade in most, though not all, circumstances. Nevertheless, they understood themselves to be participants in a globalised economy. In this narrow sense, we can argue that both cities were the same. In both cases, economic globalisation contained within it divergent forces, that tended to entrench regionalist ways of thinking about economic interests, even as those economic regions were increasingly connected to global networks. This structural similarity should be contrasted with the marked differences in the way that the two cities responded to the opportunities this global economy offered, and the way that they used invented traditions and imagined geographies to make sense of their place in it. We will return to these subjects in the fifth and sixth sections of this chapter.

CCL 76J b23 d5 e.

⁸³⁸ Edmond Faucheur, *Proposition de Loi Ayant pour Objet De Frapper d'un droit de douane les chanvres et lins étrangers. Rapport* (Lille: Danel, 1889), ADN CCL 76J 2351.

⁸³⁹ 'A Farmer's Son', *An address to Farmers in the Way in which Their Families Are to Be Provided For*, Anti Corn Law League, Manchester, n.d. Mark Philips Papers, MCL, GB127.M571/5.

4.4 Imperial globalisation: where the city stands

Throughout the month of July 1895, every Thursday and Friday afternoon, a young man called Alexis Vial took a seat in one of the rooms of the Chamber of Commerce in Lille, awaiting visitors. Alexis was the youngest son of Jacques Alexis François Louis Vial, a director of Villard, Castelbon and Vial, a spinner and weaver of linen and hemp with factories at Lille and Armentières.⁸⁴⁰ The Chamber had just agreed to fund his participation in a two year 'commercial mission' to China and South East Asia organised by the Chambers of Lille, Roubaix, Lyon and four other cities. As part of the bargain, he spent a month making himself available to Chamber members who spoke to him about the objects they wanted him to collect overseas, the questions they wanted answered, and the samples of local goods he should carry with him.⁸⁴¹ These connections were maintained by the continued shipping to Vial of samples during his long journey.⁸⁴² This exchange of material went both ways, objects brought back by Vial being displayed in Lille's Commercial and Colonial Museum, which was jointly funded by the Chamber and the municipality, (initial construction had been supported by a grant from the Ministry of Commerce).⁸⁴³

Vial's journey came during a time when the Lille Chamber of Commerce was taking greater interest in the French colonies than ever before, building relationships with Chambers of Commerce across the empire and collecting published reports and statistics on the opportunities available to local exporters. Jules-Émile Scrive was asked to give a number of lectures on these opportunities, which were assembled in a posthumously published collection of his writing. He was also given the task of organising correspondance with Vial, and the responsibility of ensuring that as much useful information and contacts were gathered as possible.⁸⁴⁴

Vial wrote a large number of letters and reports, at least one a fortnight for two

⁸⁴⁰ Armentières is a small town about 13 miles north west of Lille, near the Belgian border.

⁸⁴¹ Files relating to this mission held in ADN CCL, 76 J 1347 – 1349; Details of Vial's schedule in July 1895 in Handwritten MS, 29 June 1895, 76J 1347.

⁸⁴² 'Mission Commercial en Chine' handwritten MS, 19th May 1896, ADN CCL, 76J 1349.

⁸⁴³ *Notice Sur le Musée Commercial et Colonial de Lille*, (Lille: Danel, 1898), ADN CCL 76J b44 d5 e.

⁸⁴⁴ Edmond Faucheur, 'Foreword', in Jules-Émile Scrive, *Expansion Commercial et Coloniale, Mise En Valeur Des Colonies. Rapports et Notes*. (Lille: Danel, 1898), 6.

years.⁸⁴⁵ Among these is a long account of a journey taken in French Indochina with envoys from Roanne and Roubaix.⁸⁴⁶ The representatives of these three textile towns took a special interest in the possibility of exporting thread or cloth to the territories they visited, and the suitability of the land for growing cotton. In one portion of their report they described a factory in Cambodia owned by two Frenchmen, which spun thread from locally grown cotton for export to Japan. The factory worked on machines made by Platt Brothers of Manchester, at one time the largest makers of spinning frames in the world, which between 1845 and 1870 exported at least half of its output.⁸⁴⁷

The exploitation of Cambodian land and labour were directly dependent on French imperialism. Since 1884 the Cambodian king had been a French vassal, subordinate to the imperial administration in Saigon, and his territory part of a single Indochinese tariff zone.⁸⁴⁸ After this date the French imperial authorities pursued a policy of *mise en valeur* in Indochina, meaning the development of policies and infrastructure designed to maximise the economic utility of the colony.⁸⁴⁹ The title of Jules-Émile Scrive's collected essays indicate that he was thinking in the same terms.⁸⁵⁰ The factory, and the visit of Vial and his companions, are unimaginable without this colonial context. Yet, it is difficult to explain the capitalist's access to British machinery or the Japanese market, wholly through the lens of French imperialism. In the economic sphere, at the very least, imperialism cannot be disentangled from the broader processes of economic globalisation, of which the Cambodian factory was an archetypal example. These involved the development of railways, shipping and telegraph networks, the flow of migrants and capital, and the elaboration of new political structures for surplus extraction. These developments were 'intertwined' with the expansion of European empires, in a process sometimes called 'imperial

⁸⁴⁵ Not all of the letters survive, but one dated November 1896 is marked 'lettre 46'. The expedition did not return until the late summer of 1897, meaning one can reasonably assume there were at least 60, if not more.

⁸⁴⁶ Chambre de Commerce de Roubaix, *Mission Lyonnaise d'Exploration Commerciale en Chine. Groupe de MM Vial, Waeles, Riault. Compte rendu du Voyage Annam-Bas-Laos-Cambodge*, (Roubaix: Reboux, 1897), ADN CCL, 76J 1348.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid. 27-28; Daudin, Morys, and O'Rourke, 'Globalization, 1870-1914,' 17.

⁸⁴⁸ Jean Meyer et al., *Histoire de La France Coloniale, Des Origines a 1914* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1991), 631.

⁸⁴⁹ Nicola Cooper, *France in Indochina: Colonial Encounters* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), especially Chapter 2 'Building Indochina', 29-42.

⁸⁵⁰ Scrive, *Expansion Commercial et Coloniale, Mise En Valeur Des Colonies. Rapports et Notes*.

globalisation.⁸⁵¹

The institutional form and ideological content of European imperialism in the late nineteenth century were not static but underwent a period of significant change, as well as increasing domestic debate and some criticism.⁸⁵² The geographical size of the British and French empires increased, and colonised territories were subjected to greater bureaucratic political control.⁸⁵³ In this context, ideas about global space and identity were transformed: according to one historian, greater mobility of capital and mass migration to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada 'turned regional and national identities into transnational ones,' as white British-descended migrants imagined themselves to belong to a transoceanic British community.⁸⁵⁴ The concept of '*la plus grande France*' or 'greater France' was a new theory of the relationship between the metropole and colonies, that saw both as belonging to a kind of supra-national formation defined by the Third Republic and the 'burdens' of white French men's civilising mission.⁸⁵⁵ Imperialism was an every day presence in politics, popular culture, and consumption in both Britain and France.⁸⁵⁶ This was true in Lille and Manchester as it was elsewhere.

Industrialists in both cities were materially and ideologically invested in imperialism. Imperial issues continually surfaced in the annual reports and meeting minutes of the Chambers of Commerce, whose projects of knowledge

⁸⁵¹ Tomlinson, *Dundee and the Empire. 'Juteopolis' 1850 - 1939*, 2, 23; Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson, 'Empire and Globalisation: From 'High Imperialism' to Decolonisation,' *The International History Review* 36, no. 1 (2014): 160.

⁸⁵² P.J. Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism: Radicalism, New Liberalism, and Finance 1887-1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁸⁵³ This shift is sometimes characterised as move from 'informal' to 'formal' empire, but the usefulness of this distinction has been disputed and the change characterised as a shift in tactics rather than overall values or intentions. Todd, 'Transnational Projects of Empire in France, c.1815-c.1870,' 266.

⁸⁵⁴ Thomas and Thompson, 'Empire and Globalisation: From 'High Imperialism' to Decolonisation,' 161; James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁸⁵⁵ Odile Goerg, 'The French Provinces and 'Greater France,' in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 82–101.

⁸⁵⁶ John MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); Brad Beaven, *Visions of Empire: Patriotism, Popular Culture and the City, 1870–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Sandrine Lemaire and Pascal Blanchard, eds., *La Culture Coloniale 1871-1931. La France Conquise Par Son Empire* (Paris: Autrement, 2003); Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

gathering described above belonged to an intellectual culture that was strongly linked to imperialism.⁸⁵⁷ The intensification of imperialism in the late century was in part a response to the saturation of European and North American markets, both of which fell in relative importance for textile exporters in comparison to Asia, Africa, South and Central America, and Australasia.⁸⁵⁸ The resulting need for access to new markets made enthusiastic imperialists of industrialists, with 'provincial municipal centres of imperialist sentiment play[ing] the pivotal role in launching and sustaining French expansion during the nineteenth century.'⁸⁵⁹ The Manchester cotton spinner Edmund Ashworth, later the President of the Chamber of Commerce, claimed in 1863 that 'Manchester has almost the sole interest in England, with the exception of the banking interest, which is directly affected by our intercourse with India.'⁸⁶⁰

Merchants and manufacturers were forceful lobbyists for projects that would ease the passage of their goods to colonial markets. The expansion of railways in India was characterised as 'a question of bread and butter for the people of Lancashire.'⁸⁶¹ In France too, the politics of the railways were bound up with imperialist schemes. From 1879 the railway companies lobbied the new Republican government, especially the Minister of Public Works Charles de Freycinet, for state-subsidised expansion into Africa.⁸⁶² The imagined opportunities offered by railways, and the need to control new territory on which to build them, played an important role in driving imperial expansion in West Africa, Tunisia and the Congo, particularly during the two governments of Jules Ferry (September 1880 - November 1881, February 1883 – April 1885). This period came to an end with the elections of 1885, which strengthened

⁸⁵⁷ Felix Driver, *Geography Militant. Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

⁸⁵⁸ Redford, *Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade. Vol. II. 1850-1939*, 2:47, 80, 90, 100; Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' 507; Kuhlmann, 'Considérations Présentées a Son Excellence Monsieur Le Ministre de l'Agriculture, Du Commerce et Des Travaux Publics...' op cit.

⁸⁵⁹ Laffey, 'Municipal Imperialism in Nineteenth Century France,' 112.

⁸⁶⁰ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce for 1863,' in *Annual Reports of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce 1837-1864*, op cit., 24.

⁸⁶¹ Mr S. Hallett, 6th April 1889, *Proceedings*, quoted in Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' 517; See also JK Bythell, 'Railways in India: their advantages and the necessity for their extension', *Journal of Manchester Geographical Society*, 2nd March 1887.

⁸⁶² T.W. Roberts, 'Republicanism, Railway Imperialism, and the French Empire in Africa, 1879-1889,' *Historical Journal* 54, no. 2 (June 2011): 405-408.

opposition parties and discredited Ferry, who was forced out of office after a military setback in Indochina.⁸⁶³ Imperial policy of this kind was determined at the national level, but business people in Lille were already interested in African railways by 1875, when they made the first of several contributions in cash and kind to the Saint Simonian explorer Paul Soleillet, who hoped to build a railway from Dakar across the Sahara.⁸⁶⁴ Soleillet later found, then lost, the favour of the French colonial administration in Dakar during the brief period of state-financed exploration after 1879.⁸⁶⁵ While Lille's contributions do not seem to have made a significant difference to the progress of French imperial railway policy, their willingness to make them before the government itself, suggests an acute recognition of the commercial advantages of imperial expansion to the industrial city. Support for such projects was, and continued to be, based upon the city's industrial character and consequent need for new markets.⁸⁶⁶

In Manchester the Chamber of Commerce made frequent attempts to intervene in Indian affairs, about which it was 'little short of obsessed.'⁸⁶⁷ Such interventions concerned the setting of tariff regimes to the advantage of Lancashire exporters, as well as the regulation of Indian factories that increasingly competed on a global market after the introduction of steam-powered spinning frames to Bombay in 1870.⁸⁶⁸ These concerns came to a head in 1888 over the new found domination of Bombay spinners in the Chinese market. The Chamber organised an inquiry, which identified lower Indian labour costs as the primary competitive advantage.⁸⁶⁹ Together with

⁸⁶³ Ibid., 418–419.

⁸⁶⁴ Paul Soleillet, Letters, 31st July 1875, 19th September 1875, 29th October 1877, 11th January 1878, 1st June 1878 ADN CCL 76J b8 d17; President of Lyon Geography Society, Letter, 1st March 1878, ADN CCL 76J b8 d17; The characterisation of Soleillet's politics is from Meyer et al., *Histoire de La France Coloniale, Des Origines a 1914*, 562.

⁸⁶⁵ Meyer et al, op cit. 592–593.

⁸⁶⁶ 'Representing an industrial region whose needs for expansion are felt more and more, we must make every effort to contribute to the establishments of this grand line which will link the Algerian coast to the centre of our African empire.' Chambre de Commerce de Lille, *Séance du 26 Mai 1899. Question du Transsaharien* (Lille: Danel, 1899) ADN CCL 76J 2016.

⁸⁶⁷ Marrison, 'Indian Summer, 1870 - 1914,' 251–252; Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 251-252; Redford, *Manchester Merchants and Foreign Trade*; Smith, 'The Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Increasing Foreign Competition to Lancashire Cotton Textiles, 1873-1896,' 518; For responses of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Cotton Supply Association, Manchester Guardian, Manchester Commercial Association, to the Indian rebellion of 1857 see Silver, *Manchester Men and Indian Cotton 1847 – 1872*, 99-158

⁸⁶⁸ Marc Jason Gilbert, 'Lord Lansdowne and the Indian Factory Act of 1891: A Study in Indian Economic Nationalism and Proconsular Power,' *The Journal of Developing Areas* 16, no. 3 (1982): 359–62.

⁸⁶⁹ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, *Bombay and Lancashire Cotton Spinning Inquiry: Minutes of*

Lancashire MPs, both Conservative and Liberal, the Chamber began to lobby for legislation to improve Indian working conditions and increase the cost of labour relative to Lancashire.⁸⁷⁰ The Indian Factory Act passed in 1891 did not achieve Manchester's desired outcome of full parity between metropolitan and colonial factories, but it demonstrated that the city could mobilise local interests in response to a problem of colonial administration, effecting substantial change.⁸⁷¹

Some contemporary critics and early twentieth century historians drew upon incidents such as this to argue that the Manchester School was seeking to harm Indian producers, and that this was proof of its indifference or even hostility to British imperialism.⁸⁷² I argue rather that by the 1880s industrialisation in Bombay had reached a level at which it began to make sense to talk of a 'Bombay interest', in rivalry to the older and still more powerful 'Lancashire interest.' Rather as Gordon Stewart and Jim Tomlinson describe with reference to the jute mills of Dundee and Calcutta, the precocious industrial centres of the sub-continent represented for British manufacturers not an unalloyed bad called 'imperialism', but alternative nodes of capital and factional political power, that existed in a global patchwork of interests that rivalled each other within a broader imperial project.⁸⁷³ Therefore the debate over Indian factory legislation – which took place not only in Parliament but also in the Chamber of Commerce and the pages of the *Manchester Guardian* – reveals a tendency to think of Manchester existing not in a national but in an imperial space, a validation of Cooper and Stoler's assertion that the metropole and colony should be treated in 'a single analytical field.'⁸⁷⁴

Evidence and Reports.

⁸⁷⁰ 'Capital has a right to equal conditions of investment for profits in the same trade at any point of our empire...it is equally certain that the labour of women and children is entitled to the same supervision in Bombay as in Lancashire.' John Fielden, Letter Addressed to the President of the Chamber of Commerce (Manchester: Samuel Strong, 1888).

⁸⁷¹ Gilbert, 'Lord Lansdowne and the Indian Factory Act of 1891,' 360.

⁸⁷² Peter Harnetty, *Imperialism and Free Trade: Lancashire and India in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972), 2-6; The classic counter argument is John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade,' *Economic History Review*, 2, 6 (1953): 1–15.

⁸⁷³ Stewart, *Jute and Empire*; Tomlinson, *Dundee and the Empire. 'Juteopolis', 1850-1939.*

⁸⁷⁴ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda,' in *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 4.

Imperialism, of course, was much more than a way of organising economic relationships, though the interests, and source base, of this chapter have restricted the discussion to this aspect. Nevertheless, the economic base of the two cities in textiles gave them a means of identifying a direct connection between their cities – self-defined 'metropolises of textiles'⁸⁷⁵ - and the assumptions of racial and cultural hierarchy immanent to imperialism. European artistic and literary depictions of colonised people, dating back to at least the eighteenth century, emphasised their nakedness.⁸⁷⁶ This meant that supplying cloth to colonised people could be framed as participating in the mission of empire. In one local magazine Manchester was celebrated as 'the industrious Clothier of the World – that clothes the naked nations'.⁸⁷⁷

The presentation of the city as 'clothier' of the world had a long history in Manchester.⁸⁷⁸ Speaking in Manchester in 1884, the explorer Henry Morton Stanley drew cheers and laughter when he remarked that supplying just one Sunday dress to each of the inhabitants of the Congo basin would require 320 million yards of Manchester cloth.⁸⁷⁹ Characterising the people of the Congo as '40 million of naked people', he exhorted 'the cotton spinners of Manchester... to clothe them.'⁸⁸⁰ Lille also exported much of its produce outside of Europe, particularly to Algeria, and many of the branding and labels used on their products evoked exotic foreign and colonised peoples from around the world.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁵ *Exposition Internationale Du Nord de La France, Roubaix 1911, Réunion Des Industriels et Commerçants Parisiens* (Roubaix: Foconié et Leclerq, 1909), 10..

⁸⁷⁶ Philippa Levine, 'Naked Natives and Noble Savages: The Cultural Work of Nakedness in Imperial Britain,' in *The Cultural Construction of the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 17–36.

⁸⁷⁷ *Manchester Monthly*, 20th December 1893, quoted in Ian Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal Movement. Class, Work and Politics in Late-Victorian England* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994), 1.

⁸⁷⁸ 'We have clothed the millions with cheap fabrics.' James Kay-Shuttleworth, *Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Manchester School of Art, April 10th 1863* (Manchester: Cave and Sever, 1863), 7.

⁸⁷⁹ Manchester Chamber of Commerce, 'Address of Mr H.M.Stanley on England and the Congo and Manchester Trade and the work and aims of the International Association,' 12, in *Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Collected Speeches and Papers 1862 – 1890*, op cit.; That it was a Sunday dress is of course significant: 'civilising' African people by encouraging them to adopt Christianity and a British working week, was at the same time a commercial opportunity.

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁸⁸¹ There are over 1400 images of textile labels ('Fils-Étiquettes') in the digital image collection of the BML, each of which begins with the catalogue number 43662. Many depict exoticised global peoples, for example see 'Fil de la Floride', 43662-843; 'Au Syrien', 43662-1680; 'Au Mandarin', 43662-1136; 'Au Chinois', 43662-484; 'A la Tribu Arabe', 43662-1724; 'Au Mahdi', 43662-1129.

The argument of this section is not that late nineteenth century European imperialism was primarily driven by local interests within the two colonial metropolises. Rather I argue that Lillois and Mancunians, especially those associated with industry or commerce, understood their relationship to empire partly in local terms.⁸⁸² For turn of the century French and British people, Empire shaped the way they thought about the world, the way that power and wealth were distributed, the kinds of networks that existed, and the people that lived there. Manchester and Lille did not feature grand monumental buildings celebrating Empire as cities like London or Paris did.⁸⁸³ But their economies were bound up with empire, as their inhabitants were well aware. The daunting global scale of greater France or the British world demanded the creation of other, manageable frames of reference with which to understand this world. In part this was offered by race, intersecting with the contemporaneous invention of white racial identity.⁸⁸⁴ The development of extra-metropolitan identities could also be understood as a kind of enlarging of the national field. However, as this section has shown, it also energised local ideas about identity and encouraged provincial industrialists to approach imperialism with their own interests in mind.

⁸⁸² Discussion between Rochart and Werquin over the proposed merging of the Industrial Museum with a new Commercial and Colonial Museum confirmed this link, CML 12th December 1884.

⁸⁸³ Felix Driver and David Gilbert, 'Imperial Cities: Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories,' in *Imperial Cities. Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 1–20.

⁸⁸⁴ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line. White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

4.5 Time, space and the invention of tradition: historicising industrialisation

The industrial and commercial character of both cities were central to their self-images. Municipal councillors, journalists, industrialists and others repeatedly referred to these when writing or speaking on a whole range of subjects including economic development, education and art.⁸⁸⁵ Such references could be pejorative or celebratory, depending on the context and the intentions of the speaker.⁸⁸⁶ This rhetoric was frequently mobilised for political purposes as a means of building cross-class alliances against financiers or landowners, who were depicted as other to the city itself.⁸⁸⁷ Such an alliance had been most effective in the Anti-Corn Law League in the 1840s.

There were many similarities in the economies and the social structures of the two cities, as well as in the problems of poverty, housing and health associated with industrial urbanisation. Understanding these challenges through the prism of industry became the paradigmatic way of describing the city. By defining it as the inheritor of an industrial tradition, Lillois and Mancunians were able to historicise its development, making sense of the rapid changes they had undergone.

However, these processes were conducted in very different ways in the two cities, leading to different outcomes. In Lille, modern industrialisation was understood as a continuation of the city's medieval and early modern history as a mercantile city involved in the textile industry. In Manchester, there were some attempts to invent a similar mercantile tradition, but lacking a convincing historical bedrock they either aggressively embraced their novelty, or looked to import a mercantile tradition from historical examples outside Britain.

Around the turn of the century it became increasingly common to refer to Lille's

⁸⁸⁵ Catel-Béghin, CML 3rd February 1873; AGC, 24th September 1896.

⁸⁸⁶ 'Autumn Exhibition', *Manchester Weekly Times*, 4th September 1896, Nineteenth Century Press Clippings book, CMAG; In 1902 the socialist Mayor of Lille Gustave Delory organised an exhibition to celebrate industrial and commercial progress in 'our great and hard working city.' Gustave Delory, 'Letter to President of Chambre de Commerce', 19th November 1901, ADN CCL, 76J b35 d26 I.

⁸⁸⁷ Delory celebrated the 'hard-working' character of the city in his letter to the President of Chambre de Commerce op cit.; In his notes for a speech at a mass meeting to raise investment in the Manchester Ship Canal the wealthy engineer Daniel Adamson wrote 'London and large capitalists should not be asked to find the money for us- or they will get in dividends the just fruits of our labour. Let us keep the profit amongst us.' Daniel Adamson Papers, Notes for Eccles Meeting, 31st August 1885, cited in Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal Movement*, 80.

Flemish heritage as a touchstone in discussions around urban development and politics. Lille lay outside the historically Flemish-speaking sub-region of Westhoek, and the popularity of the idea of Flanders did not result in the development of links with that region, but rather in the construction of a new modernist form of French-Flemish identity.⁸⁸⁸ The Nord was discursively constructed as a culturally and historically distinct area within France that, though firmly French, had strong affinities with Belgium and the Netherlands rooted in that culture and history. Themes of mercantilism and of Flemish aesthetics, especially architectural, were popular. One councillor remarked in 1905 that 'although we are French, we have Flemish blood in our veins', arguing that the city should therefore found its own regional school of architecture to 'revive that special Flemish architecture which is disappearing.'⁸⁸⁹ The efforts at theatrical decentralisation, and the popularity of *Lydéric* discussed in Chapter 2, are examples of the same impulse to incorporate regional tropes into cosmopolitan art forms.

The evocation of the historical Flemish city especially appealed to Middle classes because of the importance within it of a powerful, socially cohesive local bourgeoisie, in which the modern bourgeois could see his own aspirations reflected. Thus being faithful to an (invented) tradition of French Flanders was construed as being entirely compatible with modern economies and societies. In this section I explore how such ideas about historical identity were articulated in regional exhibitions. I show that they were an important part of how Lillois made sense of their place in a global order.

Exhibitions were an important way of making sense of modernity and promoting the key nineteenth-century idea of 'progress'. Progress explained how people and societies could manage change for their own purposes, connecting the past to the present as its 'prehistory', and rendering the future as a knowable 'horizon of planning' over which present populations could exercise control.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁸ There were many Flemish speakers in Lille, partly because of Belgian migration: as many as a quarter of the population and surrounding suburbs spoke the language in the 1930s. However the mixture of French-Flemish, Nord, Pas de Calais, Wallon, and Picard languages and patois spoken in the city meant that 'French became the language of use, and linguistic assimilation was much more common in the urban setting [than the rural].' Baycroft, *Culture, Identity and Nationalism: French Flanders in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 30, 71.

⁸⁸⁹ Danchin, CML 16th Feb 1905.

⁸⁹⁰ Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 13-14; Koselleck, 'Concepts of Historical Time

Exhibitions remained significant into the twentieth century, recent scholarship has argued, despite a tendency to see them as diminishingly popular.⁸⁹¹ Even an exhibition such as that held in Lille in 1902 could attract as many as two million visits during the time it was open.⁸⁹²

The Lille exhibition of 1902 was relatively small, and mainly displayed items from the five or six most northerly French departments. The smaller scale may in part have been prompted by logistical difficulties or a lack of interest from exhibitors outside of the north, but officially at least it was presented as a deliberate strategy: the regulations of the exhibition stated that Chicago and Paris demonstrated that very large exhibitions were no longer helpful, and that progress could be more carefully and usefully studied at modest exhibitions in commercial and industrial centres.⁸⁹³

The regional character of the exhibition, which they associated with its focus on manufactured goods and machinery, was a prominent theme in newspaper articles on the subject. The press described the exhibition as a novel and brave departure from previous exhibitionary practice, which had aimed to be universal.⁸⁹⁴ The regional character of the exhibition was made obvious by the provenance of its exhibits, especially those of the emblematic local industrial product, textiles.⁸⁹⁵ The industrial character of the Nord, 'where ... thousands of active workers, like busy ants, prepare the latest modern marvels' meant that it was the perfect place to pursue this 'experiment in decentralisation.'⁸⁹⁶ While described as an exercise in decentralisation, which could undergird a regional entity distinct from (though contained within) the French nation, the regional exhibition encouraged greater integration within the region, drawing the region itself closer together.⁸⁹⁷

and Social History', 120.

⁸⁹¹ Alexander C. T. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁸⁹² Anon, *Les Expositions a Lille. Memoire*, Printed MS, ADN CCL 76J b35 d26 I.

⁸⁹³ 'Exposition de Lille 1902. Reglement General et Classification Generale', ADN CCL, 76J b35 d26 I.

⁸⁹⁴ 'L'Exposition de Lille', *La Dépeche du Nord*, 24th March 1902; 'L'Exposition de Lille', *PN*, 8th April 1902, ADN M 557/87.

⁸⁹⁵ 'The accent of the Flemish province [is] felt especially in the Clothing group, where cotton, wool, printed and died cloths, [and] lace form a truly local class.' 'L'Exposition de Lille', *La Dépeche du Nord*, 17th March 1902. ADN, M 557/87.

⁸⁹⁶ 'L'Exposition de Lille', *La Dépeche du Nord*, 21st March 1902, ADN, M557/87.

⁸⁹⁷ 'L'Exposition de Lille', *PN*, 18th March 1902, ADN, M 557/87.

In a report prepared after the exhibition, one of the organisers argued that any future local exhibition should further accentuate its regional character as universal exhibitions, with their attempt to be encyclopaedic, had been superseded: 'The regional exposition on the other hand responds to a need of our epoch.'⁸⁹⁸ In this respect he explained that he was influenced by the example of recent regional exhibitions in Germany such as one held in Düsseldorf: again this underlines the potency of the German example in Lille (as in Manchester) in many areas of provincial culture.

These ambitions were realised in another exhibition nine years later held in the neighbouring town of Roubaix, whose organising committee included a number of Lille industrialists.⁸⁹⁹ As in 1902, textiles and textile machinery were foregrounded. More significantly, among the various pavilions, halls and entertainments, there was a recreated 'Flemish village'.⁹⁰⁰

The buildings in this village were arranged in a horseshoe shape around an open space of grass, in which festivals were staged featuring music, dancing and traditional dress.⁹⁰¹ The inclusion in the village of a 'popular cabaret' bar selling beer and offering entertainments was part of its presentation as the historical antecedent of the contemporary popular culture of the northern working and lower middle class, while the idea of the social order of the village was employed to diffuse contemporary social tensions, so vehemently articulated by a minority of local opposition to the exhibition.⁹⁰² Milk from the village's cows was available to buy, which official material presented as a contribution to 'the solution of a great social problem [in this] epoch of all out war against infant mortality.'⁹⁰³

⁸⁹⁸ Anon, 'Les Expositions a Lille. Memoire', op cit.

⁸⁹⁹ The names of the Lille members of the organising committee are given in Edmond Faucheur, 'Letter to Mayor,' 15th May 1909, ADN CCL 76J b49 d26 bis c.

⁹⁰⁰ 'Exposition Internationale du Nord de la France, L'Agriculture l'Horticulture a L'exposition', Flyer, [1910], ADN CCL 76J b49 d26 bis c.

⁹⁰¹ Chambre de Commerce de Roubaix, 'Éxposition Internationale du Nord de la France, Album de la Chambre de Commerce,' ADN Chambre de Commerce de Roubaix, 79J 1684.

⁹⁰² 'Les Socialistes et l'Exposition', *Réveil du Nord*, 27th April 1911, details how the Socialist minority in the Roubaix council refused to participate in the opening of the Exposition in protest at the sacking of around 300 workers by the Mayor Eugène Motte, following a strike; The Socialist newspaper *La Bataille* wrote a satirical review of the Exposition describing 'the Pavilion of Torture' filled with unemployed and sick workers, and the 'Palace of Millions' including the 'Tavern of the Bandits of Capital.' 'Une Visite a l'Exposition', *La Bataille*, 29th April 1911. ADN, M 557/90.

⁹⁰³ 'Exposition Internationale du Nord de la France, L'Agriculture l'Horticulture a L'exposition', flyer, [1910] ADN CCL, 76J b49 d26 bis c.

This village was intended to be a demonstration of the traditional produce, tools and practices of the Flemish countryside. Dioramas allowed visitors to view images of how their ancestors went about artisanal textile production, underlining the fact that it was this industry that bound the present day citizen to his antecedents. This expectation was made explicit in promotional material which boasted of the 'concrete synthesis' of tradition with the industrial machines and products shown in other sections of the exhibition.⁹⁰⁴ While economic and technological development had distanced the contemporary *flamant* from his village heritage, he could at least connect with it through understanding the changes in the modes of economic production that had precipitated this distancing.

This 'tradition', of course, was consciously constructed, regional identities being no more obvious or given than national ones.⁹⁰⁵ The buildings in the Flemish village, according to promotional material, were not just generic approximations but were 'closely borrowed from Holland, the past master.'⁹⁰⁶ This is a clear example of the 'invention of tradition' previously identified by historians with reference to national cultures and identities.⁹⁰⁷ In this example the invented traditions on display at the exhibition represented an attempt to reconcile the present day condition of industrial cities in the Nord with a version of their past, and thereby overcome the dislocation between the past and present inherent to the experience of modernity.⁹⁰⁸

At the same time that the exhibition presented the modern Roubaisiens with an image of their local 'other', separated from them by temporal and technological distance, it also displayed to them the colonial other. Immediately upon entering the site by a monumental gate, visitors encountered the colonial zone, in which pavilions for West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Indochina, Algeria-Tunisia and Madagascar, constructed in imitations of vernacular architecture, were arranged in a rough circle around a pavilion representing the Metropole.⁹⁰⁹ Inside these

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid.; 'La Vie industrielle du Nord a l'exposition', [September 1910], ADN CCL, 76J b49 d26 bis c.

⁹⁰⁵ Agulhon, 'Conscience nationale et Conscience Regionale en France de 1815 a nos jours', 256.

⁹⁰⁶ 'Exposition Internationale du Nord de la France, L'Agriculture l'Horticulture a L'exposition', op cit.

⁹⁰⁷ Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*.

⁹⁰⁸ Koselleck, 'Time and History', 102; Koselleck, 'Concepts of Historical Time and Social History', 128.

⁹⁰⁹ Nord Illustré, *L'exposition Internationale de Roubaix, Avril-Octobre 1911. Guide Album* (Lille: Nord Illustré, 1911), 8.

there were objects and images of the colonised societies such as cultural artefacts, statues, carvings, and animal skeletons.⁹¹⁰

Plans and panoramic images of the exhibition site demonstrate its dualist logic.⁹¹¹ The southern half of the site, which holds the colonial pavilions, is disordered. Though the pavilions are placed around the metropole, they have no logical relationship to each other. The area is wooded, there is a lake, and the paths wind here and there. As the exhibition marketing material said, this was an 'an exotic city... [which] will spring out of the ground, faithfully recreating along the edges of the magnificent Avenue Le Notre, life in the tropics.'⁹¹² The colonial zone was thus less rational, in contrast to the northern half of the site where large, rectangular buildings organised into ordered sections, contained machinery and manufactured goods.

The colonised body was also on display, in the form of a North African 'souk', and a 'Senegalese Village', whose residents regularly paraded through the exhibition site, performing for the 14th July and various 'traditional' celebrations of their own.⁹¹³

The parallels between the Flemish and Senegalese village are too striking to ignore. The two were not presented as equivalents or as equals, but they performed related functions from the point of view of the contemporary Roubaisien (or any other *flamant*) observing them. The villages demonstrated to the modern citizen two forms of difference upon which he could secure a sense of his own superiority. On the one hand, through the progress associated with industrialisation he had achieved temporal and technological advancement, which allowed him to look back upon the Flemish village as representative of his own past. On the other hand, the Senegalese village confirmed to him his sense of racial superiority that was bound up in his imperial identity as a Frenchman.

Mancunians and Lillois shared a contemporary industrial identity, and drew

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 7-9.

⁹¹¹ Ibid, Frontispiece, 24; 'Panorama', Photograph, Album de la Chambre de Commerce de Roubaix, op cit.

⁹¹² 'Les Colonies Francaises a l'exposition de Roubaix', [September 1910] Archives du Nord, ADN CCL, 76J b49 d26 bis c.

⁹¹³ 'Fete Senegalese', Photograph, Album de la Chambre de Commerce de Roubaix, op cit; Nord Illustré, *L'exposition Internationale de Roubaix*, 24.

upon similar racist tropes in considering colonised people.⁹¹⁴ In this sense their understandings of history, progress and civilisation were very close to each other. However, Manchester did not have a pre-industrial mercantile heritage to draw upon as a means of explaining the emergence of the modern city. This marked a significant difference between the cities.

There were notable attempts to celebrate Manchester's history, for example during the Royal Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, which included a recreated 'Old Manchester and Salford', a popular and prominent feature.⁹¹⁵ As the local press noted, in this respect Manchester was following other European cities, as Old London, Old Edinburgh and Old Antwerp had been displayed in the last two years.⁹¹⁶ Like the Flemish village, Old Manchester played with temporality, inviting the viewer to compare the new and the old before his eyes, its central feature being the cathedral tower, which was visible in the present day city nearby.⁹¹⁷

While the economic ties between Manchester and its hinterland reinforced the development of a regional identity, unlike in Flanders, both city and region lacked a tradition from which modern industrialisation could be presented as a natural development. Much more compelling for local middle classes were arguments which foregrounded the city's present economic status, and presented it as the heir not to an ancient history of its own, but to mercantile urban civilisations of the past such as Florence or Venice, or the German cities such as Düsseldorf, Cologne and Hamburg, which so interested them as models for the new Manchester art gallery. These narratives did not rely on some purported unchangeable Mancunian or Lancastrian character which had only to be recovered or maintained, but rather on the transformative effect of industrialisation, which had made Manchester the representative city of a new age. This Mancunian historiography of urban culture foregrounded the city's novelty and its dynamic capacity to adapt, underpinned by its core principle of

⁹¹⁴ Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Colour Line*.

⁹¹⁵ David Wayne Thomas, *Cultivating Victorians. Liberal Culture and the Aesthetic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 147; 'Old Manchester' at the Jubilee Exhibition,' *MG*, 18th February, 1887.

⁹¹⁶ Edward N. Kaufman, 'The Architectural Museum from World's Fair to Restoration Village', *Assemblage*, No. 9 (Jun., 1989), pp. 20-39.

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

free trade.

In his notes for a series of lectures on the history of Manchester, discussed in Chapter 1, John Phythian had characterised the transformation of the city by industrialisation as a profound process of world-historical importance.⁹¹⁸ This was in keeping with his longstanding interests. On his first visit to continental Europe in 1876, his diaries record his great interest in Venice and especially in its former prosperity and mercantile history.⁹¹⁹ His reflections on the rise and fall of the city and its possible lessons for a civilisation closer to home imply that he is thinking of Manchester in the same terms.

Looking to great mercantile cities of the past for inspiration was a common rhetorical device in Manchester, one that was repeatedly used by both sides in the debate over the future of the large site in Piccadilly. While some argued for the construction of a new stock exchange to 'restore business to that primacy which it held in Venice and Genoa, in Nuremberg and Augsburg, in Holland and the Netherlands,' others countered that living up to such civilisations required using the city's wealth to support art, as the Florentines (for example) had done.⁹²⁰ In a speech at the Free Trade Hall in 1885 a representative of the Manchester Ship Canal company proclaimed that the canal would make Manchester 'married to the sea like Venice of old to the Adriatic.'⁹²¹ Upon the completion of the canal, a local satirist wrote that the city should hold an annual 'Marriage of the Sea' ceremony, with Sir John Harwood, a popular former Mayor, as the Doge.⁹²² References to Venice were a feature of Manchester's distinctive commercial architecture too, particularly in a large number of warehouses built in the 'palazzo' style.⁹²³ While such presentations of the city evoked historical examples, these were drawn from other parts of Europe:

⁹¹⁸ John Ernest Phythian, Notes for Lecture 4, Lectures Notebook, JEP MCL M270.9.28.1

⁹¹⁹ John Ernest Phythian, 'To Rome and Back', Diary. JEP MCL M270/9/20/2.

⁹²⁰ George Harwood, 'Letter', *MG*, 6th June 1910; 'The Venetians, like ourselves, had financial crises, and commerce was their life blood; but they had a proper and a noble pride in the welfare of their citizens and the aspect of their city, and they built with an eye to the future and its needs.' Stanley Withers, 'Letter', *MG*, 21st June 1910, Newspaper Clippings Book 1909-1912, CMAG.

⁹²¹ Mr Pember QC, quoted in George Moores, *The Tourists' Guide to Eastham and the Manchester Ship Canal* (Manchester: George Moores, 1890), 26.

⁹²² 'Columbus', 'Beginning of the End and the End of the Beginning', *SCN*, 1st December 1893; For a discussion of twentieth century reimaginings of such festivals see Kate Ferris, *Everyday Life in Fascist Venice, 1929-40* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 83-120.

⁹²³ Parkinson-Bailey, *Manchester; an Architectural History*, Chapter 5, 'The Architecture of Commerce', 56-95.

Manchester could not call upon its history prior to industrialisation as a way of making sense of its present. Instead it employed a series of transhistorical references that connected the city squarely to the European continent.

Like certain sections of the previous two chapters, this section has dealt only indirectly with the transnational concerns of the thesis. Nevertheless, the discussion has a bearing on the argument of the thesis as a whole in the sense that it demonstrates that at the heart of the public discourses that were constructed about Lille and Manchester was the idea that the city was industrial. This core characteristic informed every aspect of local politics and culture, as well as becoming the transformative process (in the form of *industrialisation*) with which historical change was understood.

In Lille, the industrial identity of the city could be coherently absorbed into a modernised form of Flemish identity, focusing attention on the region. In the context, already discussed earlier in this chapter, of Lillois industrialists' fear of foreign competition, the regionalist impulse made them more inclined to turn inwards, away from international economic relationships. The same was not true in Manchester, which saw a renewed drive around the turn of the century to develop new global connections through a project of new transport infrastructure, discussed in the final part of this chapter. The experiences of industrialisation and economic globalisation spurred the development of new ways of thinking about historical time and the region. The different strengths of the two cities as exporters, interpreted in the light of their cultural histories, led them in different directions. These differences become visible by examination of the local through the transnational lens.

4.6 'The actual point of contact between Lancashire and the World': Transport as the means by which the city is connected

In this chapter I have discussed the ways that local perspectives on the cities' global relationships were informed by their industrial character. This approach is especially appropriate because of the symbiotic relationship between the industrialisation of the two cities, and the economic globalisation that defined the period. Crucial to this globalisation were revolutionary developments in the technology of transport and communications.⁹²⁴ While these developments clearly made significant material contributions to the progress of global trade, they often seemed the most potent symbol of the changing world on a more abstract level, a transoceanic-liner or cable being the physical manifestation of global connectivity. In the nineteenth century, during which railways were a 'cultural metaphor,' innovative technologies frequently stood as symbols of modernity.⁹²⁵

The turn of the century saw a transformation in the way that people experienced space and time.⁹²⁶ Journey lengths were greatly reduced: by two thirds between 1840 and 1913 in the case of a North Atlantic crossing, or London to Bombay by 41% at a stroke with the opening of the Suez canal.⁹²⁷ The cost of transporting goods tumbled rapidly, making new products – such as canned meat from the Americas – available to European consumers for the first time. In the sense that these technologies had the effect of appearing to compress space, Europeans and Americans had the sensation that the global space was shrinking. This had been a common trope of early writings about the railway, which remarked upon its tendency to effectively reduce distances within the national space.⁹²⁸ By the end of the period, the same sensation was being

⁹²⁴ Simon P. Ville, 'Transport and Communications,' in *The European Economy 1750-1914. A Thematic Approach* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 184; Frances Steel, *Oceania under steam: Sea transport and the cultures of colonialism, c. 1870–1914*, Manchester UP, 2016

⁹²⁵ Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 19; Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 276.

⁹²⁶ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁹²⁷ Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 728.

⁹²⁸ 'Distances practically diminish in the exact ratio of the speed of personal locomotion', D. Lardner, 1850 quoted in Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986), 33.

articulated with reference to the globe. A journalist describing the abattoirs at Manchester docks in 1908 marvelled at the globalised economic system represented before him:

After the beasts are killed a large proportion of the skins go back to America, are tanned there by some special process, and then are shipped to England in the form of leather. One wonders if the boots they are made into go to America, after all. The world is shrinking rapidly.⁹²⁹

The journalist's vision is consistent with commonplace understandings that globalisation 'pulled different regions of the world together.'⁹³⁰ But this process should not be understood in terms of a generalised shrinking that brought the peripheries closer to the core like 'the spokes of a bicycle wheel'.⁹³¹ In fact, global connections were not radial, but networked. Changes to the experience of time-space were not uni-directional; for example, cities extended into the suburbs even as the national space 'shrank'.⁹³² Space remained relational and constructed, as 'new technologies [and] new economic systems... arranged and connected [objects] according to new criteria.'⁹³³ This qualification recalls Frederick Cooper's objections to the oversimplifications inherent in the paradigm of globalization, cited in the introduction to this chapter.⁹³⁴

In 1908, the Chambers of Commerce of several northern French cities co-operated to fund a bursary for a recent graduate of the Lille Commercial School, a young man called Druesne, to continue his studies in Liverpool.⁹³⁵ They did so because that city,

by its very frequent connections with the USA and Canada, is almost part of that new world whose place in global commerce is more and more considerable. There one feels one is in contact with America, Australia, West Africa, the Far East, at the same time as with Germany and France. There one is at the commercial centre of the world.⁹³⁶

⁹²⁹ 'Beauty and the Beasts – Lord Mayor at the Animals' Wharf and An Art Show – Opposites of Municipal Enterprise,' *Daily Dispatch*, 16th August 1906. Newspaper Clippings Book, 1906-1909, CMAG.

⁹³⁰ Thomas and Thompson, 'Empire and Globalisation: From 'High Imperialism' to Decolonisation,' 142.

⁹³¹ Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*, 17.

⁹³² Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World. The Telegraph and Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 30–31, 34-35.

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁹³⁴ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History*, 92.

⁹³⁵ 'Letter from President, Lille Chamber of Commerce, to President Valenciennes Chamber of Commerce,' 21st September 1908, ADN CCL, 76J b48 bis d25 d.

⁹³⁶ 'Letter from French Ambassador to London, to Préfect du Nord,' 29th July 1907, ADN CCL 76J b48

For this writer, the material facts of technology meant that the world was not simply shrinking, it was shrinking faster and further in certain places than in others. There was not just one big world that was getting smaller, but a web of communications and connections of many different sorts. Liverpool was somehow *more connected* to the world than other cities. Space had not been annihilated but remade. This observation returns us Reinhart Koselleck's insight that the definitive feature of modernity was the sensation of 'historical acceleration.'⁹³⁷ The role of transport technology in prompting this new semantic of time underlines the fact that modernity can only be understood in spatially differentiated ways.

By studying the discourses surrounding transport infrastructure we can investigate how turn of the century people understood globalisation and modernity in local terms, and thereby overcome some of the problems identified by Cooper. Therefore in this section I discuss two projects to build wide, deep canals; the Manchester Ship Canal, which connected the city with the Irish Sea and was completed in 1894; and the Canal du Nord, from Arleux in the northern coalfields to the canal system of Seine-Oise at Pont-l'Évêque, begun in 1908.⁹³⁸ While the Manchester canal was conceived in the spirit of free trade, the Canal du Nord was justified as a protectionist measure.

The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal was an attempt to unseat Liverpool from its status as the principal port for the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire.⁹³⁹ The Lancashire cotton market was in effect regulated by the Liverpool Cotton Brokers' Association, a closed shop members' society, which determined brokerage fees, drew up pro forma contracts and managed arbitration.⁹⁴⁰ There had been disputes between this body and the Manchester Cotton Spinners' Association since the 1860s, particularly over the latter's repeated requests that statistics be published showing volumes of cotton actually delivered, rather than the value of contracts concluded.⁹⁴¹ The last such

bis d25 d.

⁹³⁷ Koselleck, 'Time and History', 113.

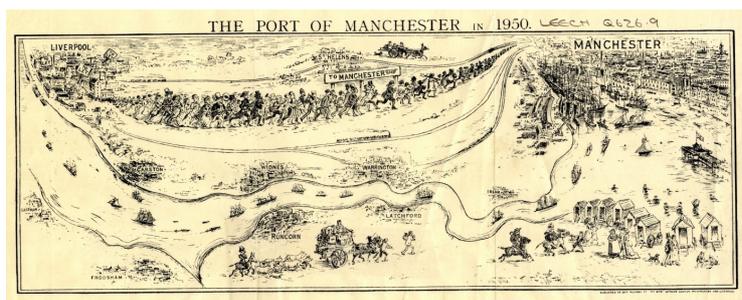
⁹³⁸ Works were well advanced when the First World War intervened. During the next four years the canal was severely damaged; the project only restarted in 1960, and was completed five years later.

⁹³⁹ Farnie, *The Manchester Ship Canal and the Rise of the Port of Manchester 1894-1975*, 158.

⁹⁴⁰ Nigel Hall, 'The Governance of the Liverpool Raw Cotton Market, c1840-1914,' *Northern History* 53, no. 1 (March 2016): 101-108.

⁹⁴¹ The Spinners hoped that the availability of more accurate information would deter speculation, but the

unsuccessful request was made in 1881. The following year the campaign for the Ship Canal began, spurred by a speech on free trade by the Home Secretary William Harcourt, and a series of letters in the Manchester press that culminated in the publication in May of a pamphlet by the well known local writer James Harvey ('Mancuniensis').⁹⁴² The following month a group of businessmen met at the Didsbury home of the engineer Daniel Adamson, where they formed the Manchester Ship Canal Company.



'The Port of Manchester in 1950'

Bosdin Leech, *History of the Manchester Ship Canal, from its inception to its completion, with personal reminiscences*, (Manchester: Sherratt & Hughes, 1907)

Source: Martin Dodge, University of Manchester⁹⁴³

Besides capital – it eventually cost an enormous £15 million to build – the canal required a lengthy battle for public opinion and parliamentary support before it could go ahead. Over the next three years, until the Manchester Ship Canal Act finally received royal assent, Adamson and others led a mass movement in favour of the canal that used the techniques of political campaigns such as the Anti-Corn Law League and Joseph Chamberlain's twentieth-century Tariff Reform League.⁹⁴⁴ Through the formation of local committees, the holding of mass public meetings and rallies, and the founding of a popular newspaper called the Ship Canal Gazette, the company persistently asserted that Manchester was being 'crippled' or 'handicapped' by the Liverpool port authority and the railway freight companies.⁹⁴⁵ Campaigners made repeated reference to

brokers, who charged a percentage, were glad to have the opportunity to make several transactions over the same physical cotton.

⁹⁴² Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal Movement*, 51; 'Mancuniensis' (James Harvey), *Facts and Figures in Favour of the Proposed Manchester Ship Canal* (Manchester: Heywood, 1882).

⁹⁴³ http://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/m.dodge/mappingmanchester/leech/Manchester_Ship_Canal.html [Accessed 2nd April 2017]

⁹⁴⁴ Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal Movement*, 11.

⁹⁴⁵ 'Cottonopolis' (Joseph Lawrence), *The Manchester Ship Canal. Why it is Wanted! And Why it will Pay!*, Heywood, Manchester 1882; Lawrence had been hired by the Company to work as a publicist and had been tasked to 'organize local Committees in every ward in Manchester and throughout the towns of Lancashire with a view to raising subscriptions and enlisting the sympathies of the people with the project.' 'Letter, Hicks to Adamson', cited in Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal*

the Corn Law, claiming that while it was an 'unjust taxation on bread', the Railways and Mersey docks levied 'taxation...on every commodity'.⁹⁴⁶

The campaign employed a populist tone that drew upon the language of free trade and presented the canal as the product of a cross-class alliance, such that the interests of the factory worker and his employer were the same: the hard-working producer, against the parasitic merchants of Liverpool.⁹⁴⁷ One hand bill distributed in the lower-middle-class neighbourhood of Patricroft identified short hours in the factory, mill closures, and low wages, as being caused by 'the Liverpool Toll-Bar'.⁹⁴⁸ Liverpool was identified with monopoly interests, and common-sense appeals made to 'fairplay'.⁹⁴⁹ Around 39,000 individuals bought shares in the company: the canal was 'no mere waterway but a symbolic declaration of economic independence by Manchester'.⁹⁵⁰ In common with the municipalisation of the Royal Manchester Institution, which was completed the same year that the Ship Canal campaign began, the Manchester corporation played a vital role. Most shareholders made small purchases, and the company would have been unable to complete the canal without two loans totalling £5m from the Manchester Corporation, for which the Corporation was given a majority of seats on the board. The same process of private failure and public rescue was visible in other large infrastructure projects, notably the Brooklyn Bridge, and reinforced an association between the municipal government and the local economy – which in itself reinforced the municipality's capacity to think and act transnationally.⁹⁵¹

Material produced both during the campaign and after the canal's completion

Movement, 22.

⁹⁴⁶ 'The Ship Canal,' *SCG*, 8th November 1882.

⁹⁴⁷ The General Secretary of the Operative Cotton Spinners' Association, a trade union, told a meeting at the Free Trade Hall (as paraphrased in the press) that 'the inhabitants of Liverpool and London did less for their living than any other two towns of similar size in the country, simply because of their position with regard to the sea. He did not see why the people of Manchester should not endeavour to place themselves in the same position.' *SCG*, 18th November 1882.

⁹⁴⁸ Harford, *Manchester and Its Ship Canal Movement*, 55.

⁹⁴⁹ 'Monopoly has vexed me long / it's done the like by you / down with the monster in the mud / and give fairplay its due.' Edwin Waugh, 'Paddle Your Own Canoe', *SCG*, 13th December 1882.

⁹⁵⁰ Farnie, *The Manchester Ship Canal and the Rise of the Port of Manchester 1894-1975*, 8.

⁹⁵¹ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, 11; This failure had been widely predicted in Liverpool. For example see 'Manchester Ship Canal and Competitive Charges', *Liverpool Journal of Commerce*, 4th September 1885, Ship Canal Newspaper Cuttings, 1884- 1887, MCL Local Studies Collection Q 386.47.MA41; Farnie, *The Manchester Ship Canal and the Rise of the Port of Manchester 1894-1975*, 29.

identified it as a dramatic intervention into the geography of the region, employing the language of wonder that was a longstanding feature of nineteenth century descriptions of technology.⁹⁵² In this vein, the canal was described as a project of world-historical importance that would have a transformative effect on the city's future, on a par with the then-current scheme of a Channel Tunnel.⁹⁵³ Thanks to the canal, the ship on the city arms would no longer be 'a prophecy' but 'the symbol of what is, the Port of Manchester, with that other feature of the City Arms, the globe, as representative of the extent of her commerce.'⁹⁵⁴ The canal was the 'link', entry-point or 'seagate' that brought the world to Manchester.⁹⁵⁵ The canal was 'the actual point of contact between Lancashire and the world.'⁹⁵⁶ This trope was a feature of company advertising throughout the twentieth century.⁹⁵⁷

The 'world' that Mancunians imagined when they thought of the canal was very different to the one with which they associated opera or the art gallery. While these traditional cultural forms were identified with a Western European cultural space, the canal was presented as a way to bring the latest technology and new industries to Manchester. As such it was associated most of all with North America, and new dock facilities were celebrated for their American characteristics. For instance, when the Company decided to build a grain elevator – a mechanical structure that drew grain from a ship directly into a warehouse, with minimal docking by hand – they felt that it was natural it should be built by an American firm.⁹⁵⁸ The American connection was celebrated, the

⁹⁵² Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945*, 2, 6.

⁹⁵³ 'They have a common object – they extend the means of intercommunication and help to knit the great family of men together.' 'Editorial', *SCG*, 2nd May 1883.

⁹⁵⁴ *SCG*, 29th November 1882.

⁹⁵⁵ 'Opening Day, January 1st, 1894', *SCN*, 1st January 1894; The canal brings ships 'practically to [our] own doors.' Charles A. Grundy, 'Round About the Docks', *Odds and Ends*, 52, 1906, SPLE MCL M38/4/2/52; 'Neptune in Manchester', *SCN*, 15th December 1893.

⁹⁵⁶ 'The Port of Manchester and Its Equipment. *MG* 28&29 September 1894.' Miscellaneous Papers on the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, MCL, F 386 M31.

⁹⁵⁷ Among countless examples in a scrap book of Manchester Ship Canal Company publicity material, MCL GB127.B10/705. Item 458, an image of the world overwritten with text 'The Ship Canal. Manchester's Waterway to the World'; Item 670, a woodcut image of the canal cutting a path directly into the centre of the city with ships sailing to the Town Hall; The same form of words was used by Jules-Émile Scrive to describe Hamburg in a report he gave to the Chambre de Commerce de Lille. Hamburg was 'the *door* through which German exportation has found its way to the markets of the whole world.' Jules-Émile Scrive, 'La Lutte pour les débouchés', *Expansion Commercial et Coloniale, Mise En Valeur Des Colonies. Rapports et Notes*, op cit. 61.

⁹⁵⁸ 'After long discussion during which the Chairman said it seemed evident that the science of elevator building was much better known in America than England and that Mr Metcalf was believed to be the cleverest elevator engineer in America, it was Resolved [to instruct him.]' MSC, Minutes, 4th June

elevator being officially opened on the 4th July 1898, when the company manager telegraphed the engineer in Chicago: 'Elevator opened on Independence-day with great satisfaction. Hail Columbia!'⁹⁵⁹

The animal docking facilities built a few years later were also associated with America, not only because they frequently received transatlantic shipments of live animals, but also because they recalled the meat packing district of Chicago, which had been depicted to controversial effect by Upton Sinclair.⁹⁶⁰

Mancunians were convinced in their thousands to make a 'ritualised gesture of faith' in the city, because of the strength of the identification between the city, industry and free trade.⁹⁶¹ As outlined above the abstract concept of 'free trade' was made concrete by reference to the freely traded commodities themselves. In this context, 'the Liverpool Toll-Bar' became a visceral symbol of the frustration of Manchester's global trading ambitions, an obstacle that the ship canal would remove at a stroke, allowing 'the produce of Lancashire looms and spindles [to flow] in a steady stream to every quarter of the globe.'⁹⁶² Press coverage of the canal's opening days and weeks paid close attention to the goods arriving in the city, and their provenance, excitably taking note of 'firsts' in cargo or port of origin.⁹⁶³ As one letter writer to the *Manchester City News* put it, 'The live cattle, loaded at Montreal, will soon be unloaded at Salford; the fresh fruit from Sicily and Malta, as prophesied ten years ago... the ripe grapes from Beyrout, and the pine apples and bananas from Florida will soon be here, fresh as roses.'⁹⁶⁴ For a Manchester audience, global connections were rendered meaningful by the arrival of these goods; the opening of the Ship Canal brought them directly to the city, and thus made the world tangibly closer at hand.

In Lille, the arrival of goods by water also stood symbolically for the city's

1897, MCL GB127.B10/1/3/7.

⁹⁵⁹ 'Shipping Intelligence: Port of Manchester', *MG*, 8th July 1898.

⁹⁶⁰ 'You must not confound the Corporation jungle with that of Chicago.' Anon, 'Art and Abattoirs – The Lord Mayor's Blended Business', n.d. [1906] Newspaper Clippings Book 1906-1909, CMAG; Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, published in 1906 and set in Chicago, was an influential portrait of the city's drama, wealth and poverty. Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930*, 86.

⁹⁶¹ D.A. Farnie, 'The Manchester Ship Canal, 1894-1913,' in Trade and Transport, Essays in Economic History in Honour of T.S. Willan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 191.

⁹⁶² John R. Galloway, *Shipping Rings and the Manchester Cotton Trade* (Manchester: Heywood, 1898).

⁹⁶³ Lees Knowles MP, Ship Canal press cuttings book, 1894, CHET, A.6.119.

⁹⁶⁴ J.M. Fletcher, 'Letter to the Editor,' *MCN*, January 6, 1894, Ibid.

connections beyond the nation. The canalised River Deûle was connected to waterways across France and Belgium, and therefore to the Netherlands and Northern Germany. Yet this connective network was perceived with much greater reticence and caution than in Manchester. Citing health concerns, in 1892 councillors urged the Prefect to install a sanitary inspection post on the Deûle at the border.⁹⁶⁵ 'The Deûle is to Lille what a port is to a maritime city' one said, 'these boats come from... ports [that] are often infected by contagious diseases; they carry merchandise coming from the Indies, from the River Plate, and from the whole world... which very often still contain the miasmas of their countries of origin.'⁹⁶⁶ This fear should be understood partly in the context of the cholera epidemic of 1892, which had been particularly devastating in Hamburg, a port which was named during councillors' discussion. But their fears were not entirely contingent on the outbreak, and were consistent with ways of thinking about transport and globalisation more generally in Lille in the 1890s.

While Manchester was building the Ship Canal, opinion in the Nord and the larger northern region, was focused not on the creation of new international transport links, but in French industry's *protection* from these.⁹⁶⁷ Spurred by the decline of French Atlantic ports against North Sea rivals like Antwerp, in 1890-1891 a public commission was appointed to look into the idea of improving the Seine so as to render Paris a sea port, with facilities to match not only the North Sea ports but the great imperial rival London.⁹⁶⁸ The project was immediately opposed by a strong protectionist bloc, that proposed instead the construction of a wide, deep 'Canal du Nord' that would link the Pas-de-Calais coalfields to the Seine-Oise system, meaning that northern goods and materials could reach the Parisian market faster and cheaper. It is important, once again, to highlight the *regional* nature of this proposal, which had the support of a large bloc composed of nineteen Chambers of Commerce in five northern Departments.⁹⁶⁹

⁹⁶⁵ CML 21st December 1892.

⁹⁶⁶ Druetz, CML 21st December 1892.

⁹⁶⁷ See folder 'Canal du Nord & Chambres de Navigation', ADN CCL 76J b26 d21 e.

⁹⁶⁸ Mathieu Martelli, 'Faire de Paris Un Port Maritime? Débats Le Long de La Seine Pendant L'enquete D'utilité Publique (1890-1891),' *Histoire*, 2013, 6–11.

⁹⁶⁹ Martelli, 'Faire de Paris Un Port Maritime?', 95; The five departments were Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Aisne, Oise: since the regional reforms of 2014 these five departments are known as the 'Hauts de France'; *Enquete du Conseil Supérieur du Commerce sur les Voies de Communication. Congrès des Chambres de Commerce de la Région du Nord de la France, Arras 10th March 1900' Procès-Verbaux des Séances* (Lille: Danel, 1900) ADN CCL 76J b26 d21 e; Construction of the Canal du Nord finally began in 1908.

Northern interests feared that 'Paris Port-de-Mer' would 'expel French coal from the Paris markets' by opening them to cheaper English and Belgian competitors.⁹⁷⁰ This fear was rational given the poor performance of northern mining firms during the period: for instance value of the Compagnie des mines de Lens on the Lille stock exchange had fallen sharply in the mid-1870s and did not recover its previous value until the very end of the century.⁹⁷¹ Northerners explicitly defined their opposition in terms of its 'protectionist' character, arguing that the Canal du Nord would be a 'patriotic' project, while Paris Port-de-Mer was 'anti-national' and would protect only English coal.⁹⁷² In the face of this opposition, as well as the scepticism of communes in the lower Seine that feared a loss of local barge trade, Paris Port-de-Mer was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies in September 1892 and was effectively dead thereafter, as the proposal became 'incompatible with the commercial politics of the country.'⁹⁷³

While the successful campaign against Paris Port-de-Mer was framed in patriotic terms it should not be taken as proof that industrial interests in the Nord deferred to an idea of the national interest. Rather the struggle over the project represented a struggle over the relationship between national and regional interests. The latter were vigorously defended. The deputy Georges Graux lamented that the 'monopoly of all public works in the hands of the State... the absolute omnipotence of the Corps des Ponts et Chaussées,'⁹⁷⁴ left 'the regional interest' as 'eternal victims of the welfare state.'⁹⁷⁵

Just as in Manchester, people in Lille identified transport as the archetypal transformative modern technology. While the Canal du Nord eventually won a critical mass of support in several northern departments sufficient to persuade the state to fund its construction, it was not the only transport infrastructure project proposed in Lille during the last third of the century. In fact, one idea to which locals returned on several occasions was the proposal to do as

⁹⁷⁰ 'La Question du canal du Nord', *EN*, 21st December 1893, ADN CCL 76J b26 d21 e.

⁹⁷¹ Petit-Konczyk, 'Gérer Son Portefeuille a La Fin Du XIXe siècle,' 376.

⁹⁷² Trannin, Deputé de Douai, 'Le Canal de Paris a la Mer', *PN*, 1st April 1890; 'Le Canal du Nord', *La Croix du Nord*, 31st January 1894, ADN CCL 76J b26 d21 e.

⁹⁷³ Martelli, 'Faire de Paris Un Port Maritime?', 104.

⁹⁷⁴ Lit. 'Corps of Bridges and Roads' i.e. public works department.

⁹⁷⁵ Georges Graux, 'Le Grand Canal du Nord', *EN*, 10th September 1890, ADN CCL 76J b26 d21 e.

Manchester had done, by digging a deep canal to the sea and making Lille itself a 'port-de-mer'.⁹⁷⁶ The expansion of the city saw municipal councillors argue for the importance of improved intra- and inter-urban communications as a means of creating an 'open city' that would have the means to grow and trade with its neighbours.⁹⁷⁷ Proper management of the flow of water in and out of the city was an important part of this perspective.⁹⁷⁸

A few years later a local writer who had previously written pamphlets on the expansion published a pamphlet stating that in this 'epoch...of great public works' Lille should make itself a port-de-mer.⁹⁷⁹ A sea canal, the writer hoped, 'would open the markets of the whole world to [Lille's] products,' by 'bringing up to its walls the boats which bring the raw materials to the manufacturers and which export their products.'⁹⁸⁰ The language used here is remarkably similar to that surrounding the Manchester Ship Canal. Lille port-de-mer was proposed as a way of overcoming a temporary period of market stagnation, by taking a bold modern step – equated in the pamphlet to the replacement of hand spinning with machines, the building of an Alpine tunnel, or the laying of transatlantic telegraph cables – and 'go[ing] outside... cross[ing] the seas to search for more distant markets.'⁹⁸¹ Pre-empting the European Economic Community by ninety years the writer even proposed that once the Zollverein became a Franco-German customs union Lille could become a major port for Rhineland manufacturers!⁹⁸²

Of course, there was no Lille port-de-mer, but the idea remained something with a degree of popular currency in the city. During a municipal council debate about ways to revive regional industry during the slump of the 1880s, one councillor interjected 'Lille port de mer!' in a manner which suggested his colleagues would at least know what he meant.⁹⁸³ The 1868 pamphlet was

⁹⁷⁶ Anon, *Lille Port de Mer, Par l'auteur de Quelques Brochures sur l'Agrandissement de Cette Ville*. 2nd edition 1902 (1868, Lefort, Lille), ADN CCL 76J b39 d52 a.

⁹⁷⁷ Ville de Lille, *Projet D'agrandissement de La Ville de Lille* (Lille: Guermonprez, 1857).

⁹⁷⁸ Ville de Lille, *Rapport de La Commission Chargée D'examiner Le Projet de Plan de Percement et D'alignement de La Ville Agrandie* (Lille: Guermonprez, 1859), 7–8.

⁹⁷⁹ Anon, *Lille Port de Mer*; 16.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 16, 5.

⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 15-17.

⁹⁸² *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁸³ Dalbertanson, CML 29th August 1884.

reprinted in 1902 during the height of the debate on the Canal du Nord. This in turn reinforces the principle argument of this section, which has been that in Lille and Manchester, the abstract business of making global connections was tangibly represented by means of transport.

The campaign for the Canal du Nord employed the same logic of regional interest and fear of competition that animated local opposition to free trade. Its use in this setting is a good illustration of how the politics of trade became a compelling meta-narrative about the health of the city and its industries, animated by vivid images of the dangers or opportunities presented by openness to the world. The Nord's desire to protect regional industries was a tradition that developed in the shadow of globalisation, just as much as Manchester's affection for free trade. Indeed, protectionism makes no sense without globalisation. Industrialists in Lille, too, saw ships as symbols of the world at their doors. Their hostility to foreign imports – when economic realities showed such fears to be rational – was not based upon an insular view of the world or a failure to understand the nature of globalisation, rather it was proof of their awareness and understanding of the same.

4.7 Conclusions

Through a focus on global economic connections, this chapter has reiterated many of this dissertation's key themes. As they encountered the world outside of their cities, middle classes in Manchester and Lille developed their own ways of thinking about the connections that developed. They were connected to circuits of knowledge production and exchange that were international in scope. They used the knowledge they gathered to inform their responses to political projects like Empire-building and the protection of markets. At the same time they attempted to understand their historical development in the light of their industrial character, allowing the answers they formulated to inform their perspectives on globalisation. These imagined geographies were developed in the shadow of national state-building, and were not wholly independent of national politics, or the increasing need to access sources of finance outside of the region. Nonetheless they were to a significant degree shaped by local concerns. While this was true in both cities, there were marked differences in the nature of those responses.

As Frank Trentmann has argued, Britons were 'uneasy globalizers' in the period around the turn of the century, increasingly subject to competition from foreign producers, both European and non-European.⁹⁸⁴ This was true in Manchester too, where new industrial rivals were cause of increasing concern.⁹⁸⁵ Yet, neither in terms of free trade nor in their approach to imperial policy did Mancunian industrialists abandon their broadly positive outlook on global trade. Rather their response was to reimagine the terms on which they would participate, focusing increasingly on markets in the anglophone world.⁹⁸⁶ Links with the United States were assiduously cultivated, especially after the opening of Trafford Park in 1896, a large planned industrial estate alongside the ship canal which attracted American firms such as the Westinghouse Corporation and the Ford Motor Company.⁹⁸⁷ Such links may be seen as the precursor to continued interest in

⁹⁸⁴ Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation*, 134–185.

⁹⁸⁵ For example, there is only one reference to Japan in the index of the proceedings of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce 1885-1890, compared to 31 in 1894-1902. *Proceedings, 1885-1890*, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/10; *Proceedings, 1894-1902*, MCC MCL GB127.M8/2/12

⁹⁸⁶ Shipping lines calling at Manchester sailed to and from ports in North America, Australasia and South Africa. Manchester Liners' first route, launched in 1899, was to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Other North American routes including New Orleans and Philadelphia were added in the next two years.

⁹⁸⁷ Farnie, *The Manchester Ship Canal and the Rise of the Port of Manchester 1894-1975*, 129–131;

the United States during the interwar period, especially on the part of city planners.⁹⁸⁸

Reflecting sceptically upon the transnational turn Heinz Gerhard Haupt observed that the field has tended to neglect fields of human activity like war, violence, exploitation and oppression, all of which might in some cases occur in a 'transnational' manner.⁹⁸⁹ Even a scholar more open to transnational histories such as Patricia Clavin has admitted that it has tended to present transnational encounters as 'consistently progressive' leaving 'the story of repulsion, rather than attraction...underplayed.'⁹⁹⁰ At times the story of globalisation resembles an exercise in teleology. The discussion of Lille in this chapter, particularly around protection and transport, is a welcome antidote to this risk. The discussions around canal works at the end of the nineteenth century are good illustrations of Clavin's observation that transnational connections were not always conceived as positive phenomena that transcend retrograde nationalism.

This is not to claim that Lillois were resistant to making global economic connections or indifferent to the opportunities they might represent. This chapter has demonstrated at numerous points the desire of industrialists in Lille to understand and where possible to influence the economic and geopolitical configuration of the world in order to best profit from it. Contingent factors related to the different pace and style of industrialisation in the two cities may partly explain the different perspectives of the two cities towards the threat of competition. Differences between Manchester and Lille may further be attributed to the latter's peripheral position in relation to an increasingly Mediterranean-focused imperial entity. A sense of isolation from this new configuration of Francophonie may have made integration into the supra-national imperial space a more important concern than Atlantic trade around the turn of the century.⁹⁹¹

'New Works at Trafford Park: Americans See the Advantages of the Canal,' *MG*, November 30, 1904; 'Development of Trafford Park: Mr M. Stevens' Visit to America,' *MG*, November 19, 1904.

⁹⁸⁸ Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939*, Chapter 1, 'Soaring Skyward': Urban Regeneration, 21–48.

⁹⁸⁹ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, 'Une Nouvelle Sensibilité : La Perspective « Transnationale », ' *Cahiers Jaurès* N° 200, no. 2 (2011): 179.

⁹⁹⁰ Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism,' 424.

⁹⁹¹ I touched upon the relationship between regionalism and imperialism in my paper 'The Metropole of

Conclusions and Further Questions

We are not the only ones to preoccupy ourselves with these new necessities which progress imposes upon us, and one can say once more that the light comes from the North; thus it is ten years since Russia founded in Moscow... a School of Arts and Crafts... Boston and Philadelphia judged indispensable a similar creation, and Belgium is founding at this moment in Liège a School on the model of that which we desire to see introduced in France, and which the city of Lille will have the honour and the good fortune to possess.

Ernest Cannissié, Conseil Municipal de Lille, 21st March 1879

It may not be convenient for all readers to go to Antwerp, but all Manchester people can go to our excellent Reference Library in King Street.

Alexander Hadden, 'With the Ancoats Brotherhood in Belgium, Easter 1895',
Odds and Ends, 1895

[Industrialisation meant] separating the work of spinning and weaving from the ownership of the instruments by whose aid the work was done... [and] the bringing together of hundreds of people under new conditions and bringing heretofore isolated districts into intimate relations with foreign lands.

R Mallard, 'English Social History,' *Odds and Ends*, 1897

This thesis has traversed over fifty years of history during a period in which Britain, France and the world underwent enormous changes. As an extensive historical literature has shown, and as I have illustrated in this thesis, these changes touched upon every area of life, including economics, politics, society and culture. Lille and Manchester too were drawn into the processes of change that connected disparate parts of a globalising world, while at the same time their local and national societies and identities were being reshaped.

The goal of this thesis has been to understand how the middle classes of the two cities understood the relationships that this reality created between their city and the rest of the globe. As I explained in the introduction, globalisation created specific, localised effects which encouraged rather than hindered the development of local identities, at the same time as it prompted the formation of new transnational connections.

Textiles: Regionalism, Nationalism and Capitalist Cosmopolitanism at the Roubaix Exhibition, 1911,' *Society for the Study of French History, Annual Conference*, Chichester, 3-5 July 2016. I hope to develop this paper for publication in future.

In Chapter One, I emphasised the importance to middle-class identities of their formation at the local scale, discursively constructed but also reinforced through social activities. This process of middle-class citizen-making, which was liberal in form, depended not upon a top-down constructed national identity, nor on a dialectic relationship between region and nation. Rather it was considerably more transnational than previously understood, both in terms of the connections and flows that it involved, and the act of transnational *imagination* involved in seeing the local middle class as actors on a global scale in the drama of industry and commerce.

In Chapter Two, I developed the first part of an extended comparison of the politics of municipal cultural institutions, which became a tool of city governments' attempts to promote cosmopolitan cultures. In Lille, the opera became a means of modelling the relationship between the city and the rest of the world, particularly the rest of Europe. This modelling process took place both through the assertion of greater managerial autonomy within France, and attempts to connect to cultural trends across Europe. In both cities, opera was encoded with ideas that associated it with certain behaviours, emotions, forms of distinction, and geographical places. Attending, listening to, watching, applauding, reading or writing about, debating or subsidising the opera were gestures towards the urban middle classes' existence in a transnational – particularly, transeuropean – network defined by shared cultural practices.

In Chapter Three, I applied a similar approach to the art gallery. As with opera, painting was a European-wide art form and the art gallery a common cultural institutional form. While it was practically difficult – though not impossible – to obtain art works from outside Britain, the municipal politicians who managed the gallery attempted to emulate continental practices in the way that it was organised. Municipal cultural policy was therefore a way of making a statement about the city's relationship to a European-wide network of cities.

These two chapters worked on what I called a 'lateral' rather than a 'direct' comparison. Although both chapters were fully comparative, with discussion of the Manchester opera and the Lille art gallery, most of the focus was on the Lille opera and the Manchester gallery. The relationship between these two institutions and the local state was highly similar, whereas direct comparison between the two operas and the two galleries shows some marked contrasts (though also, deep underlying similarities). The fundamental conclusion to draw from these two chapters is that transnationalism, in the form of cultural cosmopolitanism, became a political aspiration consciously pursued by municipal governments.

In Chapter Four, I returned once more to economics. I started from a commonplace observation made about globalisation, namely that it leads to (or effectively, consists of) a global shrinking of time-space. As I pointed out, a number of recent works of global history have countered that this 'shrinking' was not uniformly felt and did not lead to global homogenisation, but rather to new forms of spatial diversity. Proceeding from this claim I used local studies of both Manchester and Lille to examine the cultural meanings of global commerce and industry. My premise was that the meanings of globalisation to nineteenth-century people can only be understood through study at the local scale. I showed how industrialisation and commerce, together with associated political ideologies like 'Free Trade', became meta-narrative tools with which middle classes understood the city and its global relationships as a whole.

The overriding conclusion of this thesis therefore has been that the middle classes of Lille and Manchester in the second half of the long nineteenth century developed their social, political and cultural lives around the theme of the 'local.' Though rooting themselves in this identity, at the same time they were connected to global economies and aware of global events through the local press. Where expedient, they tried to intervene in global affairs, or were sometimes deeply effected by them (as the "cotton famine"

of the 1860s demonstrated). They travelled abroad as far as their means would allow them, and gathered information on other parts of the world when they could not. Through their cultivation of cultural distinction they made themselves capitalist cosmopolitans, provincial moderns. As they made these global or transnational connections, their actions were guided in part by their ideas about local identity, both the identity of the middle class, and the identity of the city. As such Manchester and Lille were not simply a British and a French city, they were *cities in the world*.

* * *

This conclusion gives rise to four questions or themes which lie outside of the scope of the thesis itself but suggest avenues for further study, both for future developments of the project contained here, and for other scholars working on different historical places or times. These themes I have called *roots, models, periodisation and which worlds?*

In this thesis I have explored the different ways in which middle classes in the two cities imagined the world. What I have addressed less explicitly however, is how and why those imaginations came to be. What were the *roots* of provincial transnationality? As I implied in the last chapter, my feeling is that these belong in the cities' economies. It was industrialisation that brought the cities into relations with the rest of the world. Indeed it was industrialisation that shaped them into their modern form, with decisive impacts on ideas of local identity. The tone and intensity of local discussions on this subject indicate that industrial production and exchange had acquired powerful symbolic meanings that were intertwined with local identity. While the cultural resonances of technological change in the nineteenth century is a subject that historians have already worked on at great length, local iterations of this effect have been comparatively neglected.

As I have concluded, middle classes in provincial cities developed rich and

complicated ideas about local identity and the relationship between the city and the world. How should we *model* these imagined geographies? The nationalist world geography encodes within it a hierarchical idea of space: from locality to nation, and thereafter to world. As Jürgen Osterhammel called it, this represents 'a size-graded hierarchy of settlements stretch[ing] up pyramid-like... from a multiplicity of villages at the bottom to a central location at the top.'⁹⁹² This clearly does not represent the imagined geographies of the people I have described in this thesis. For them, the global space was not vertically integrated, and transnational connections from their cities did not pass through, either literally or conceptually, a national capital or an idea of the nation. For them, transnational connections were horizontal, and the city existed in a network of connections in all directions, some stronger some weaker, in a global space that shrunk and stretched in uneven ways.

In the introduction when I discussed the epigraph from Alderman Jabez Foodbotham, I implied that this thesis was partly an attempt to rescue Mancunian and Lillois middle classes from the condescension of posterity by showing them to have developed a rich culture that was both locally rooted and cosmopolitan. There is a shadow of *periodisation* hanging over this effort. If these middle classes were so dedicated to the city, and so cosmopolitan, where is the evidence of these commitments in the twentieth century? Did not the middle classes, or at least their wealthiest members, abandon the city for national politics? If so, does provincial transnationalism represent a historically contingent and temporary diversion away from the development of nation-states which national historiographies have already told us so often are crucial? These questions need to be examined further in a study which traverses the exogenous shock of the First World War. My own provisional view is that while European elites eventually came to the conclusion that the social tensions and problems of resource distribution that sprung from industrial capitalism were most easily solved through the

⁹⁹² Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 262.

nation-state, forms of European transnationalism were developed at multiple scales of European societies. Though the European Economic Community was formally a creation of France, Germany and Benelux it can be identified as a project of the Rhine, Ruhr and Deûle: the expression of the hopes of the Lille pamphlet writer who dreamed of Lille as a port for the factories of the German Rhine.

Finally, as we have recognised the uneven nature of the connections that develop with globalisation, it will not do to speak of "the city and the world." *Which worlds?* This study suggests that in constructing an imagined global geography Mancunians and Lillois sorted the planet into many worlds, each defined by particular characteristics. When they thought of opera, Mancunians referred to Italy or perhaps Germany; when Lillois thought of painting their minds turned to Flanders; for Mancunians the best universities and art galleries were in Germany; Africa contained virgin markets and racial others; raw cotton came from America; it was spun in Manchester. This differentiated global geography conformed to the self-perception of the two cities: the division of the world into regions defined by their cultural or economic products mirrored the definition of the home city by its industries. This world-view was represented daily in the rubric of the local newspapers. As Jules-Émile Scrive spread the *Écho du Nord* over his breakfast table, no doubt his eye would turn to the financial pages where he would find news of the harvest in Mississippi, and the price of a bale in Manchester.

*When foreigners came to Manchester, they came to learn, not to
feed ravens and snap beefeaters.*

Anthony Burgess

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