



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

- This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
- The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
- When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**Directing the Eye: Stories of Modernity and Tradition at
the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition**

Guillaume Evrard

Volume I – Text

PhD

The University of Edinburgh

2014

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Table of contents

Abstract	7
List of illustrations	9
Acknowledgements	15
Introduction	17
I. Looking Sideways.....	43
A. Space: from the clear to the obscure.....	48
B. Performance.....	59
C. Authenticity	71
D. Conclusion.....	78
II. The British Façades in the <i>Rue des Nations</i>	83
A. An encyclopaedic vision and its negotiation	87
B. Taste and technology	97
C. Architecture as a national representation?.....	118
D. Conclusion.....	124
III. The Royal Academy of Arts and British Visual Culture	127
A. For ‘a proper representation of British Fine Art’	129
B. An ‘exceptional aid’	133
C. Famous on the Continent?	142
D. Conclusion.....	146
IV. ‘In a Railway Station How Much of Our Lives Is Centred!’: The Modernity of William Powell Frith.....	149
A. Images of railways stations	155
B. British perception of railways, 1830s-1870s	166
C. Significance of The Railway Station.....	175
D. Conclusion.....	186
V. French Criticism of the British Fine Arts Display	189
A. General attitudes to Britain in France in the 1870s	196
B. Context and methods of French art critics.....	208
C. French critics in front of British paintings in 1878	221
D. Relations between art and architectural criticism.....	234
E. Conclusion.....	241
Conclusion.....	243
Bibliography & Sources	249

Abstract

On the basis of the art and architectural displays at the 1878 *Exposition Universelle Internationale à Paris*, this thesis investigates the conflicting claims of nationalism; the late nineteenth-century tensions between tradition and modernity; and the disparities between the intentions of the organizers and the perceptions of the visitors. Creating connections between methodological and theoretical issues of interest to art history and museum studies, the argument explores further and refines our understanding of what has been constitutive of Exhibitions. This thesis takes the 1878 *Exposition Universelle Internationale à Paris* as its focus, in order to further appreciate the extent to which Exhibitions were able to influence their visitors' minds and bodies. It scrutinizes a wide range of material generated as part of the national participation of the United Kingdom to this event in specific case studies for both breadth and depth of understanding.

The examination of material published in 1878 newspapers provides evidence of a critical gaze within the Exhibition boundaries. International and universal Exhibitions have been significant events in producing and conveying various messages about diverse topics to unprecedentedly large audiences. Their rich content entailed the production and consumption of diverse experiences and meanings beyond attempt of controlling bodies and behaviours.

The study of the British participation in the 1878 International Street or *Rue des nations* uncovers the tensions between symbols, taste and technology in architecture.

Original research in the archives of the Royal Academy of Arts, London, gives a particular insight in the role of a key institution in the preparation of a national visual arts exhibition in the 1878 Paris *Exposition*.

The examination of the reception of a particular artwork provides a useful counterpoint to these first institutionally-oriented analyses. Focusing on W. P. Frith's *The Railway Station* (1862) offers a different perspective to understand the way a vast array of contemporary meanings could impact the reception of a particular work.

The investigation of the critical reception of British paintings in 1878 France emphasizes the strength of cultural narratives beyond the specific vision for the Exhibition.

List of illustrations

- Figure 1: 'The Forthcoming International Exhibition at Paris - Bird's-eye View of the City, Showing the Exhibition Buildings', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 431, Saturday 2 March 1878, p. 213
- Figure 2: 'Under the Central Dome', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 447, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 616
- Figure 3: 'A Peep at the World of Wonders Through the Railings', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 600
- Figure 4: 'A Sketch in the Park', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 512
- Figure 5: 'Ascent to the 7th Floor of the Hotel. View of Paris Won Nereby', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, [p. 105]
- Figure 6: 'The Trocadéro Building', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7
- Figure 7: 'Opening of The Paris Exhibition – The Presidential Declaration From The Balcony', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 441, Saturday 11 May 1878, pp. 460-1
- Figure 8: 'Under the Cascade of the Trocadéro (Imitation is the Sincerest Flattery)', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156
- Figure 9: 'On the Way to the Champ de Mars', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May, p. 516
- Figure 10: 'On the Road to the Exposition. View From the Interior of No. 3838 Voiture de remise à deux places', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156
- Figure 11: 'Outside the Exhibition - Where to Buy Tickets', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 549

Figure 12: ‘Doubtful Identity of The Suspicious Card’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, [p. 129]

Figure 13: ‘In the Aquarium on the Trocadéro’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 549

Figure 14: ‘All Amongst the Fishes’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156

Figure 15: ‘One of the Paradises of the Champs Elysées’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, [p. 105]

Figure 16: ‘The Pursuit of Knowledge’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, [p. 129]

Figure 17: ‘The Tramways at the Trocadéro’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 436

Figure 18: ‘How Some People See the Exhibition’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June, p. 584

Figure 19: ‘Victims of the Conscription Enjoying Their Last Moments of Freedom’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 584

Figure 20: “‘Where is Your Authority?’”, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 584

Figure 21 : ‘Costumes populaires du Pays-Bas; Madame Tussaud’s à l’hollandaise; In Flagrante Delicto’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 459, Saturday 14 September 1878, p. 277

Figure 22: ‘Chinese Workmen Painting Cases in the Building’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7

Figure 23: “‘Fraternity’ - Under the Same Umbrella’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 436

Figure 24: ‘The Japanese Farm on the Trocadéro’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 584

Figure 25: ‘The Algerian Court’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 448, Saturday 29 June 1878, p. 641

- Figure 26: 'The Oriental Bazaar', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 516
- Figure 27: 'A Dutchman's Draught', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 205
- Figure 28: 'Hath Music Then No Charms', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 205
- Figure 29: 'An Open-air Concert at The Hungarian Café', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 540
- Figure 30: 'A la russe', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 205
- Figure 31: 'A Nautch in the Café de Maroc', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 205
- Figure 32: 'Décoration de la Galerie des Beaux-Arts (sections étrangères), Exposition Universelle de 1878 : Angleterre,' *L'Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée, suite de L'Exposition universelle illustrée de 1867, publication internationale autorisée par la Commission* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1879), No. 79, Février 1877, p. 187
- Figure 33: 'Paris Universal Exhibition - The Jury House built entirely of concrete bricks by W. H. Lascelles; R. Norman Shaw R.A., architect,' *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 14 June 1878, p. 596
- Figure 34: 'Paris Universal Exhibition - Offices and Apartments for the Royal British Commission; Gilbert R. Redgrave, architect,' *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, 22 March 1878, p. 290
- Figure 35: 'Paris Universal Exhibition - Façade erected in terra-cotta by Messrs Doulton & Co.; Messrs Tarring and Wilkinson, architects,' *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 17 May 1878, pp. 487-8
- Figure 36: 'Paris Exhibition 1878 - House erected by Messrs Cubitt & Co.; Gilbert R. Redgrave, architect,' *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 28 June 1878, p. 648

Figure 37: 'Paris Exhibition 1878 - House erected by Messrs Collinson & Lock; T. E. Colcutt, architect,' *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 10 May 1878, p. 468

Figure 38: *Paddington Station, London, ground floor plan*, 1854 (Source: Steven Brindle, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), p. 35)

Figure 39: *Paddington Station, London*, watercolour, c 1840, National Railway Museum/Science and Society Picture Library (Source: Steven Brindle, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), p. 22)

Figure 40: *Paddington Station, London*, lithograph, 1843, City of Westminster Archives Centre (Source: Steven Brindle, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), p. 13)

Figure 41: *Opening of Rouen Station, France*, lithograph, 1843 (Source: ARTstor)

Figure 42: *Paddington station, London, ground floor plan*, 1845 (Source: Steven Brindle, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), p. 20)

Figure 43: A. F. Tait, 'Victoria Station, Manchester', *Views of the Manchester and Leeds Railway* (Liverpool, 1845), lithograph (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 236)

Figure 44: J. C. Bourne, 'Bristol Station', *The History and Description of the Great Western Railway* (London, 1846), lithograph (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 77)

Figure 45: 'Break of Gauge at Gloucester Station', *Illustrated London News*, lithograph, 1846 (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 63)

Figure 46: A. F. Tait, 'Liverpool Edge Hill', lithograph, 1848 (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 25)

- Figure 47: Lewis Cubitt's *Front of King's Cross Station*, London, 1851-2 (Source: ARTstor)
- Figure 48: John Gordon Thomson, *King's Cross Station*, London, 1852, pencil, pen and ink drawing (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 22)
- Figure 49: *Railway Station*, Potter's of Darwen woodblock wallpaper, 53.5 x 53 cm, c 1853 (Source: ARTstor)
- Figure 50: 'The Great Western Railway Terminus, London', *Illustrated London News*, 1854, lithograph (Source: Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 77)
- Figure 51: William Powell Frith, *The Railway Station*, pen and ink sketch, 1861, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Elton Collection (Source: Mark Bills and Vivien Knight, eds., *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 82)
- Figure 52: William Powell Frith, *The Railway Station*, oil study, 1862, Private collection (Source: Mark Bills and Vivien Knight, eds., *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 83)
- Figure 53: William Powell Frith, *The Railway Station*, oil on canvas, 1862, Royal Holloway College, University of London
- Figure 54: 2007, Paddington station (author photograph)
- Figure 55: William Holman Hunt, *The Light of the World*, oil on canvas on wood, 125 x 60 cm, 1853-54, Keble College, Oxford
- Figure 56: William Holman Hunt, *Our English Coasts, 1852 ('Strayed Sheep')*, oil on canvas, 43.2 x 58.4 cm, 1852, Tate, London
- Figure 57: John Everett Millais, *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*, oil on canvas, 87.6 x 54.6 cm, 1851, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
- Figure 58: John Everett Millais, *The Order of Release*, oil on canvas, 102.9 x 73.7 cm, 1853, Tate, London
- Figure 59: John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 111.8 cm, 1851-2, Tate, London

- Figure 60: Edward Burne-Jones, *The Beguiling of Merlin*, oil on canvas, 186 x 111 cm, 1872-7, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
- Figure 61: Hubert von Herkomer, *The Last Muster*, oil on canvas, 214.5 x 159 cm, 1875, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight
- Figure 62 : George D. Leslie, *Pot-pourri*, oil on canvas, 99 x 99 cm, 1874
- Figure 63: Ernest Crofts, *The Morning of the Battle*, oil on canvas, 99.3 x 177.8 cm, 1876, Museums Sheffield
- Figure 64: Edward J. Poynter, *The Catapult*, oil on canvas, 155.5 x 183.8 cm, 1868-72, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Figure 65: Edward J. Poynter, *Israel in Egypt*, oil on canvas, 137 x 317 cm, 1867, Guildhall Art Gallery, London
- Figure 66: Frederick Walker, *The Old Gate*, oil on canvas, 134.6 x 168.3 cm, 1869, Tate, London
- Figure 67: Edward J. Gregory, *Dawn*, oil on canvas, 146 x 115 cm, 1876, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro
- Figure 68: Thomas Sidney Cooper, *On a Dairy Farm, Minster Marshes, East Kent*, oil on canvas, 122.4 x 214.3 cm, 1877, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Figure 69: Frederic Leighton, *The Music Lesson*, oil on canvas, 104 x 101 cm, 1877, Guildhall Art Gallery, London
- Figure 70: John Everett Millais, *A Yeoman of the Guard*, oil on canvas, 139.7 x 111.8 cm, 1876, Tate, London

Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that I would like to thank those people who help me along the way in the preparation of this thesis. I received crucial encouragement and stimulation from my principal supervisor, Professor Richard Williams, and invaluable insight from my second supervisor, Professor Iain Boyd Whyte, and Professor Richard Thomson, who acted as my supervisor at various moments according to professional and personal circumstances. Professor Helen Rees Leahy and Professor Andrew Patrizio's examination of this thesis has been most useful to make it better.

I therefore also would like to acknowledge the importance of the many students I have had the opportunity to tutor at undergraduate level in History of Art, and also with the Office of Lifelong Learning. I wish to thank all the staff of History of Art at the University of Edinburgh who has helped me through the years in one way or another, for the research as for the teaching.

In the various institutions I have relied upon to collect my data, the help of local staff has been irreplaceable: in Edinburgh, at the University of Edinburgh Library, and the National Library of Scotland; in London, at the Victoria & Albert Museum, at the Royal Academy of Art, at the Royal Society; in Paris, at the Bibliothèque administrative and the Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris, at the Documentation of the Musée d'Orsay, at the Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, at the Bibliothèque nationale de France; in Montreal, at the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

I am grateful to the College of Humanities and Social Science for awarding me a College Scholarship and several postgraduate research expenses grants for one-off research trips and to take part in conferences in the UK and further afield. Conference organizers who welcomed my papers and audience who listened to them

and generously gave feedback on them were a significant and enriching addition to the whole thesis experience.

During my various research trips, I was lucky to receive the friendly support and assistance of Professor Hollis Clayson, James Darby and Patrick Bova, Laurie Carver-Estes, Tim Lowe, and Chris Morton in Chicago; Stéphane Turgeon in Montréal; Didier Maes in Paris; Laura Brooks and Jenny Triggs at the proof-reading stage back in Edinburgh.

I would especially like to thank my parents for their support and their tolerance of the distance between us, Cameron Murdoch, Naomi Smith, for their patience and good humour, and address a particular thank you to Simon Bailey for respecting my late evenings.

Introduction

On the basis of the art and architectural displays at the 1878 *Exposition Universelle Internationale à Paris*, this thesis investigates the conflicting claims of nationalism; the late nineteenth-century tensions between tradition and modernity; and the disparities between the intentions of the organizers and the perceptions of the visitors. The 1878 Paris Exhibition has been under-researched and the evidence available provides the case studies developed in the following chapters, looking in turn at the visitor experience of the Exhibition as represented in the contemporary press, the use of architecture and institutional responsibility in meaning-making, the pictorial representation of architecture and contemporary responses to it, and the critical approach to one display of paintings.

The five case studies developed in as many chapters of this thesis are by nature diverse. While Exhibitions intended to bring together a comprehensive and organised vision of the world on their grounds, they also could not prevent an impression of disjunction. If the links between the five chapters feel rather tenuous, this diversity might thereby reflect the reality of the exhibitionary phenomenon: fragmentation is the first image coming to mind in the physical and intellectual immensity of the event. Strolling down an alley, immersed in a particular gallery, looking at the passing crowd, experiencing the exotic displays; visitors struggled to appreciate and comprehend the Exhibition in one single move. Despite the best intentions of French organizers, the Exhibition naturally brought together irreconcilable material. The second image coming to mind is one of ruin. Although the Exhibition was an imposing event in physical size and cultural significance, we are left only with scattered ruins of the evidence and the varied content of the five case studies is also a reflection of this diversity of the remaining vestiges which have to be analysed closely to reconstruct a sense of the original experience.

As the five chapters encounter and analyse various points of view and representation of the Exhibition and its purpose, they also have in common, more than anything else, themes of modernity and tradition. Throughout the different discussions of the material detailed below, at one point or another, individuals or

groups have had to reflect on, and negotiate, the place and function of modernity and tradition, on their own terms and also in relation to one another. This observation is not ground-breaking in itself, but the originality of the material dealt with in these case studies brings additional evidence to support it and shows the complexity of this phenomenon, for the organizers of the Exhibition as much as for its audience: the sheer modernity of the experience of the Exhibition itself; the modernity of new architectural technologies and tradition in architectural styles; modernity and tradition in the preparation of the British display of fine arts; the representations of modernity, which the speed of railways could allow, in a traditional art form; modernity and tradition in the visual material and its critical reception in the fine arts galleries as organised in national sections; and, lastly, the overall modernity and tradition of the exhibitionary phenomenon itself, since its first occurrence in 1851 and 1855 on either side of the Channel.

The choice of the 1878 *Exposition Universelle Internationale* makes sense in relation to trends of general history before and after the event. Asa Briggs and Patricia Clavin refer both to 1870-1871 and to 1878 as significant milestones in the history of Modern Europe between 1789 and 1989, for independent reasons.¹ 1870 saw the defeat of France by Prussia and other German sovereign armies coalesced into a single force, which was to become the first stage of the unification drive under Bismarck's Prussian leadership. This European situation, with a defeated France, a powerful Britain and an increasingly dominant Germany forms the backdrop for long-distance causes for WWI.² 1878 was an important step towards the satisfaction of regional nationalisms with the recognition of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro and the subsequent amputation of the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878) alongside the Berlin Congress which was convened during June and July 1878, after the Turkish defeat by Russian troops entering the Balkans to solve the Eastern Question.

Michael Rapport also singles out the end of the 1870s in his account of nineteenth-century Europe, with 1879 notably seeing the resignation of French

¹ Asa Briggs and Patricia Clavin, *Modern Europe 1789-1989* (London and New York: Longman, 1997).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 141-144.

Marshal President MacMahon when the republicans secured the Senate after having won the general elections the year before. Rapport sees the late 1870s as a turning point between an indecisive period – ‘a new era?’ – and a period running until 1914 which sees ‘the emergence of mass politics’.³ Briggs and Clavin describe a ‘sharp national contrast during the middle years of the century – the sharpest of all the national cultural contrasts in Europe – between the British and the French’, giving as example the reception of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* by the London’s *Saturday Review* in 1857, or the fate inflicted on Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal*, versus the travel accounts given by Hippolyte Taine: crossing national gazes contrast French ‘decadence’ with British ‘chastity’ and ‘modesty’.⁴ The early and mid-1870s were a period of unrest for France after the fall of the Second Empire, the defeat against Prussia and its German allies, the civil conflagration of the Commune in Paris immediately thereafter and the difficult strengthening of the Republic and its new order.

By contrast, the *Exposition Universelle* was a landmark, a signpost in national and international public life to demonstrate the growing prosperity of France, ‘confident about her destinies thanks to the formation of a regular government, [focusing] all her energy and hope towards labour’.⁵ The new regime created immediately after the fall of the Second Empire and amidst the turmoil of the German occupation of the French territory was to remain ‘*la République du provisoire*’ for about five years, until the National Assembly voted in the first months of 1875 through three constitutional laws for the regime to become truly functional and efficient.⁶

³ Michael Rapport, *Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 221.

⁴ Briggs and Clavin 1997, p. 204.

⁵ Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d’organisation de l’Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1, Rapport au Président de la République, published in the *Journal Officiel*, 15 April 1876: ‘rassurée sur ses destinées par la constitution d’un gouvernement régulier, tourne toute son activité et dirige toutes ses espérances vers le travail’.

⁶ Odile Rudelle, *La République absolue, 1870-1889, Aux origines de l’instabilité constitutionnelle de la France républicaine* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1982), pp. 13-39. The President was elected for seven years, the Constitution could be modified by resolutions approved separately then jointly by both parliamentary chambers, the Senators would be elected partly by the deputies for life-terms and partly by indirect ballot.

The political instability was none the less perceptible and felt across the Channel: British manufacturers liaised with the Royal Commission to express their fears about the occurrence of the coming Exhibition. 1875 was indeed not the start of a general political stability in France as it was still possible to wonder ‘which Republic’ would really blossom from the constitutional texts and their political practice.⁷ When the presidential decree was published in April 1876, the National Assembly had been freshly elected (on 20 February and 5 March) in the same electoral run as for the senatorial elections.⁸ Dufaure had been nominated as the first *Président du Conseil* by a decree published on 10 March 1876 only to juggle for less than nine months with the contradictory forces operating against the Presidency, in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. As a consequence, both Director for Foreign Sections Georges Berger and General Commissioner Jean-Baptiste Krantz had to contact the Royal Commission on that specific matter, with Berger explaining that ‘beyond the Ministries which have lately succeeded one another in power; beyond our Government itself; there has always been France, in whose name the foreign nations have been invited, and she would never have failed to keep engagements of honour entered into by her.’⁹

In the last few decades a post-modernist stance looking at power relations in contemporary societies has specifically stimulated analyses and interpretations of the economy and politics of visibility in the nineteenth century, in particular within the boundaries of international and universal Exhibitions. These critical approaches have emerged at the same time as circumstances have challenged the very existence of, and justification for, Exhibitions.¹⁰ Two world wars, at least partly inspired by narratives of scientific modernity and national identity, have shattered watertight confidence and hope in technological progress, while the opening-up of education

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-64, ch. II, ‘Mars 1875, Janvier 1879 : Quelle République ?’.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

⁹ ‘The International Exhibition at Paris in 1878’, *The British Architect*, Vol. 8, No. 25, 21 December 1877, p. 310.

¹⁰ For instance, in 2000, Florence Pinot de Villechenon contributed opening Pandora’s box with asking the ‘what for?’ question to prompt her argument on international exhibitions, in *Fêtes géantes : Les expositions universelles, pour quoi faire ?* (Paris: Autrement, 2000).

and increasingly accessible information in developed countries may have made these events less urgent as moments and spaces for education and edification.¹¹

Simultaneously, the literature engaging with the wide and diverse material produced as a result of the organisation and experience of Exhibitions has grown significantly. In 2000, Rydell, Findling, and Pelle underlined the diversity of this academic output with some perplexity.¹² Their attempt to create a typology of this literature was useful in making sense of this growing body of knowledge and theoretical elaboration on the available data which regularly develops with the occurrence of new Exhibitions throughout the world and the anniversaries of earlier ones. This research also helps in giving conceptual references in this specific field of research in order to situate the present research which offers an approach from the point of view of, and with relation to the concerns of, art history.

French scholarship has been much oriented towards a documentary approach which thrived on the archives collected after the occurrence of each *Exposition Universelle Internationale* held in Paris from 1855 to 1937.¹³ Since French authorities have always been keen on making an architectural statement on the occasion of each exhibition and because of their repetition within the Parisian urban fabric, it is only natural that French scholarship would focus in particular on the built programmes achieved for the successive events.¹⁴ In a different context, exhibitions organised in Europe between 1851 and 1913 have been called upon collectively on the basis of their original organizers' intentions to epitomize and prefigure a museum

¹¹ Corie Lok, 'Technology as Hope: At a Time of Despair, the 1930s World's Fairs Glorified Technology as the Way of the Future', *Technology Review*, Vol. 108, No. 4, April 2005, p. 88.

¹² Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), p. 7: 'So how should world's fairs be understood? Clearly, no consensus exists among scholars, but they seem to be moving toward a view that stresses the complex and often contradictory nature of fairs.'

¹³ The latest to date is the catalogue for an exhibition held at the Archives nationales in Paris, under the direction of Christiane Demeulenaere-Douyère, *Exotiques expositions : Les expositions universelles et les cultures extra-européennes. France 1855-1937* (Paris: Somogy, Archives nationales, 2010).

¹⁴ In the last decade, Paris saw at least two temporary exhibitions and accompanying exhibition catalogues on the subject: Myriam Bacha, dir., *Les Expositions universelles de Paris de 1855 à 1937* (Paris: Action artistique de la Ville de Paris, 2005); Coll., *Paris et ses expositions universelles : architectures, 1855-1937* (Paris: Editions du Patrimoine, 2008).

of Europe centred on three key ideas: the ‘religion of progress,’ the ‘messianic character of the universal,’ and ‘beauty in action’.¹⁵

Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus and Anne Rasmussen published a survey of universal and international Exhibitions as the 1992 Seville Exhibition was underway, with standardized numerical and factual information for easier comparisons and contrasts. This study mentions the most significant features of each event, notably in terms of technology and architecture: the contribution of the public is not its main or even an additional concern but only summed up in visitor figures.¹⁶ Focusing on the numerous musical activities which the 1889 Paris *Exposition Universelle* prompted, Annegret Fauser analysed the ways contemporaries encountered music throughout the whole Exhibition in various locations, and how the display and performance of music gave the organizers an opportunity to define the French national musical identity, by contrast with all other foreign pieces.¹⁷

An anthropological approach has favoured an examination of international Exhibitions in terms of commodities, property and possessions. The work of Burton Benedict epitomizes this trend, in specific relation to the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and will be discussed further on.¹⁸ Whereas this approach offers to analyse Exhibitions as systems of symbols, meanings, and values from an external view point, another jointly researched source proposes by contrast to tackle the question of ‘people in positions of relative powerlessness in American society, including American women,... able to challenge dominant stereotypes affixed to them.’¹⁹

American Exhibitions have been more significant than their European counterparts in their ability to discriminate between core exhibits and entertainment areas, with the creation of ethnological exhibits which differentiated Western culture and people from others. Lester G. Moses revisited the understanding of Wild West

¹⁵ Anonymous, *La Belle Europe. Le temps des expositions universelles, 1851-1913* (Brussels: Tempora, 2001), p. 21.

¹⁶ Brigitte Schroeder-Gudehus and Anne Rasmussen, *Les Fastes du progrès : le guide des expositions universelles, 1851-1992* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992).

¹⁷ Annegret Fauser, *Musical encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Burton Benedict, ed., *The Anthropology of World's Fairs San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1983).

¹⁹ Rydell, Findling and Pelle 2000, p. 6.

Shows which involved Native Americans to argue that the latter, known as ‘Show Indians,’ were not exploited within racist displays but were able to make a living by showing to the world elements of their history and culture.²⁰ As already suggested, questions of power and power relations are crucial in the analysis of Exhibitions.

Scholarship on the positioning and role of women in international Exhibitions has flourished and nourished the ‘audience-centred arguments’ of this ‘counter-hegemony school’ defined by Rydell, Findling and Pelle.²¹ Tracey Jean Boisseau widened the field of exploration on this specific theme beyond the canonically accepted largest world’s fairs to consider women’s role despite their absence in exhibitions’ organization and management committees – aside from the exceptional 1893 Chicago Exposition – and focus instead on a set of ‘miniature world’s fairs’ held from 1925 to 1928, unique of their kind. Boisseau’s interest lies in the ways women used world’s fairs to control the representation of themselves, ‘the character of women’s visioning of themselves’ torn apart between women’s own ideals and men’s idealizations of women.²² This approach pays scant attention to the environmental and spatial dimension of international Exhibitions as it focuses on a significant part of their audience.

While this thesis acknowledges the diversity of discourses and claims unfolding as Exhibitions were designed and took place, it also explores the extent to which these discourses were rooted in their context, the environment of the Exhibitions which offered specific spatial conditions. This is important because these discourses were not elaborated in isolation from immediate circumstances; furthermore they might have been phrased in direct response to the original contexts laid out when an Exhibition took place. The various case studies in the following

²⁰ Lester G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

²¹ Rydell, Findling and Pelle 2000, p. 6.

²² Tracey Jean Boisseau, ‘Once Again in Chicago: Revisioning Women as Workers at the Chicago Woman’s World’s Fairs of 1925-1928’, *Women’s History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2, April 2009, pp. 265-91 (p. 269).

chapters give opportunities to ‘investigate the conditions of their emergence and operation’ of these contexts.²³

In her article about children’s literature written by women and exhibited in the Chicago Columbian Exposition, Anne Lundin noticed that ‘designers made the White City a visual statement of peace, progress, and prosperity, a Utopia with messianic possibilities.’²⁴ As Lundin does to explore children’s literature, it is possible to analyse the Exhibition ‘as a social text’,²⁵ in order to determine the relations between various stakeholders involved in the preparation of presentations and representations gathered throughout the Exhibition with progressive, universalising and aesthetic goals.

This emphasis on counter-hegemonic ventures within Exhibitions can also be seen in arguments contrasting central government and local authorities’ initiatives. Thus Philip Whalen enquired about the representation of Burgundy within the 1937 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* to understand to what extent local vintners and leaders were willing and able to divulge their practices, in a dedicated exhibition in order to market their products, as part of a wider commercial strategy. The reconstruction of local traditional wine cellars to shelter both exhibits and pseudo-traditional celebrations was a key element in the unfolding of a regionally-themed representation.²⁶

Scholarship dealing with Exhibitions often emphasizes the performative nature of the experience for visitors to events which took place in essentially constrained and administered settings. Controlling the visitor’s gaze, they made fairgoers interiorize the order that political and economic powers represented.²⁷ Michel Foucault has inspired interpretations of the visitors’ experiences of

²³ Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 73.

²⁴ Anne Lundin, ‘Little Pilgrims’ Progress: Literary Horizons for Children’s Literature’, *Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Winter 2006, pp. 133-152 (p. 134).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Philip Whalen, “‘Insofar as the Ruby Wine Seduces Them’: Cultural Strategies for Selling Wine in Inter-war Burgundy”, *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2009, pp. 67-98.

²⁷ Ann Folino White, ‘Performing the Promise of Plenty in the USDA’s 1933-34 World’s Fair exhibits’, *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 22-43; Guillaume Evrard, ‘Producing and Consuming Agricultural Capital: The Aesthetics and Cultural Politics of Grain Elevators at the 1937 Paris International Exposition’, in *Culture, Capital and Representation*, ed. by Robert J. Balfour (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), pp. 148-168.

international Exhibitions with his analysis of the history of prison institutions in France. Hinged on the transformation of the gaze of society towards itself, the progressive concealment and eventual disappearance of the death penalty from public visual scrutiny matched a simultaneous social change in which the central state propagated its authority and control through the whole society.²⁸

Focusing on the 1851 Great Exhibition, Tony Bennett suggested in 1988 in his characterization of the concept of the ‘exhibitionary complex’ that the state used the event in order to communicate to visitors the idea of its legitimate controlling power. In turn, visitors interiorized and performed this controlling power on the Exhibition grounds.²⁹ Looking at primary sources about the 1857 Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition, Helen Rees Leahy focused on the relation between the public and the organizers’ conscious or less clearly formulated intentions, in an attempt to ‘repopulate’ our understanding of the event. The behaviour of visitors was a subject of interest in a space and moment which commanded both attempts to control and the yearning for freedom.³⁰

Most recently, Volker Barth questioned ‘to what extent the exhibition’s public understood, accepted and incorporated the vision [of human mastery and control of the world]’ which the Paris Exhibition of 1867 was meant to convey.³¹ Barth acknowledges the diversity of the crowd passing through the gates of the Exhibition and concludes that ‘each visitor saw an exhibition unique to him or her, and fostered its uniqueness through his or her own interpretation.’³² It is the intention of this thesis to elaborate on this individualistic assertion concentrating on material relevant to art history.

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

²⁹ Tony Bennett, ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, *New Formations*, No. 4, Spring 1988, pp. 73-102; reproduced in Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 59-88; Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds, *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 58-80; David Boswell, and Jessica Evans, eds, *Representing the Nation: A Reader: Histories, Heritage and Museums* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 332-62.

³⁰ Helen Rees Leahy, ‘Walking for Pleasure? Bodies of Display at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition in 1857’, *Art History*, Vol. 30, No. 4, September 2007, pp. 545-65 (p. 548).

³¹ Volker Barth, ‘The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867’, *Museum and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, March 2008, pp. 22-37 (p. 23).

³² Barth 2008, p. 30.

In 1995, Bennett focused on the institutional aspects of international Exhibitions in his insightful enquiry into the *Birth of the Museum*.³³ He related the 19th-century conceptualization of the museum and its 20th-century transformations with the contemporary development of the displays presented in international and universal Exhibitions, themselves deriving some of their features from the fairground. Thanks to connections drawn between the three types of public places and Michel Foucault's characterization of the concept of 'heterotopia', Exhibitions were placed in a key nodal position from which they have been able to negotiate most of the apparent contradictions between fairs and museums: the transformation of the private cabinet of curiosities into a public space, the passage from a display motivated by 'popular showmanship' to one relying on 'scientific pretensions'.³⁴

Relying on Foucault's conceptualization of the prison idea points to the criticism of this very idea.³⁵ C. Fred Alford argues that 'Foucault is mistaken about more than the details of prison life. He has systematically mistaken an ideology for a practice. This affects not just his view of prison, but of power.'³⁶ This mistake of intention and ambition for the actual practice and proceedings might be found too, in interpretations such as the 'exhibitionary complex.' This thesis grounds its argument in evidence of various practices in the 1878 Exhibition, thereby looking beyond 'the temptation to read museums [and Exhibitions] as the sites of a unified discourse, fashioned by a singular authorial subject within a singular time.'³⁷

An example – maybe the most striking one – is the regime of the body and its 'surveillance, categorization and classification' and the crucial role of the boundary between inside and outside, the world of the Exhibition and the wider world, the microcosm and the macrocosm. The pervading gaze of the Exhibition authorities might not have been so strongly effective nor was there any need for visitors to interiorize it 'if you control the entrances and exits, you do not have to look. Prison

³³ Bennett 1995.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁵ C. Fred Alford, 'What Would It Matter If Everything Foucault Said about Prison Were Wrong? *Discipline and Punish* after Twenty Years', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1, February 2000, pp. 125-46.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³⁷ Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 117.

authorities don't look because they don't have to. If you have to look, you have already ceded a measure of power, the power not to look and not to care.'³⁸

From this effort of characterization arise several closed and open questions which can be applied more specifically for the purpose of this thesis to international Exhibitions and to material pertaining in particular to the field of art history and visual culture: what was the 'intended message' conveyed? Was it a single unified message? What 'cultural meanings and values' were embodied and communicated? Who was responsible for their production? Who 'calculated' the manner in which the artefacts and/or persons were put on display? What was the end, or the objective of any 'intended message'? Were the ways devised to regulate the conduct of their visitors fully effective?

A focus on the discourse of Exhibitions' advocates and managers underlines the prescriptive dimensions of these events, to some extent thought of in the 19th century as 'machines for progress.'³⁹ The consideration of 'the different ways in which those representations were organized as performative resources which programmed visitors' behaviour as well as their cognitive horizons' – which Bennett dedicated the third part of his book to – leaves an impression of visitors being empty vessels to be filled with information and values and thereby controlled from a greater or lesser distance.⁴⁰ There does not seem to be any acknowledgement that visitors could enter the exhibition with prior knowledge and any kind of critical awareness. If there is no denying that,

the communication and learning theory on which 19th-century museums were premised positioned the visitor/learner as passive, understood knowledge to be objective and information-based, and saw authoritative linear communication as one of the main purposes of museums',⁴¹

then there is similarly no insurmountable limitation imposed on today's scholar to shift the paradigm in the analytical approach of the Exhibition visitor and adopt a contrasting theory to deepen our understanding of the visitor experience.

³⁸ Alford 2000, p. 127.

³⁹ Bennett 1995, p. 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of visual culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. xi.

This thesis therefore proposes to look specifically into ‘the degree to which the plans and projections of those in power – the advocates, designers, directors and managers’ – were and are successful in organizing and framing the experience of the visitor or, in contrast, the degree to which such planned effects are evaded, side-stepped or simply not noticed’.⁴² This objective does not exclusively allow a gap to be filled, as it enables to understand in the second half of the nineteenth century how important were certain key issues that contemporary cultural institutions such as Expositions, galleries and museums had to address in relation to their social, political and cultural environment: the diversity of stakeholders and their objectives; the actualisation of the institutions’ educational role with the recognition of visitors’ individual experience; and intentions and the simultaneous consequent development of more open-ended, less prescriptive displays.

At the same time as Burton Benedict explains Exhibitions as ‘a phenomenon of industrial capitalism’, he also acknowledges the diversity of stakeholders with a variety of terminologies for different characters: ‘mass producers’, ‘potential customers’, ‘the members of the new middle class’ visiting the events, ‘the manufacturers’, ‘exhibitors.’⁴³ In his thought-provoking introductory chapter, Benedict approaches international Exhibitions specifically through an anthropological analytical grid. The idea of ritual is the first reading he proposes with particular reference to the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. Inspired by Abner Cohen’s 1974 *Two Dimensional Man*, Benedict suggests applying the idea of ritual to help understand the meaning and significance of international Exhibitions: ‘A ritual is a symbolic statement, and the symbols used can be “objects, acts, concepts or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings.”’⁴⁴ This statement is of particular interest here.

Bennett pointed out the accumulation of information and values within an ‘intended message’ as conceived by Exhibitions’ managers at large. The idea of ritual that Benedict associated with international Exhibitions crucially complements Bennett’s claim as it points towards ideas of multiplicity and ambiguity. Not only

⁴² Bennett 1995, p. 11.

⁴³ Burton Benedict, ‘The Anthropology of World’s Fairs’, in Benedict 1983, pp. 1-65 (p. 2).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

were the stakeholders involved in Exhibitions numerous and diverse, as mentioned earlier, but the meanings they tried to convey were also varied, and not necessarily aimed explicitly at the same objectives, thus creating ‘all sorts of power relations, both existing and wished for’.⁴⁵ Benedict very clearly and usefully asserts the ideological engineering at work within Exhibitions: ‘It is a contest in which the contestants are jockeying for advantage in the worlds of both commerce and politics. In this contest all sorts of symbol are employed, and there are blatant efforts to manufacture tradition, to impose legitimacy.’⁴⁶

Furthering his anthropological approach to Exhibitions, and referring to the French anthropologist’s classical study on *The Gift: Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, first published in French in 1896, Benedict proposes that ‘a world’s fair is an almost perfect example of what Marcel Mauss calls a total prestation. It is a collective representation that symbolizes an entire community in a massive display of prestige vis-à-vis other communities’.⁴⁷ Beyond that compelling reference, questioning the parallel Benedict drew between World’s Fairs and ‘the potlatch of the Indians of the northwest coast of North America’ is nonetheless tempting.⁴⁸ Indeed, if tribal communities were able and willing to get together in harmony to commit their strength towards the delivery of a unique common message and values in front of other communities, this appears at odds with the ritual dimension of International Exhibitions Benedict identified earlier on, which entails ‘multiplicity’ and diversity. This apparent contradiction thus prompts a question this thesis tries to answer: to what extent and in what ways were national countries able and willing to display in international Exhibitions a collective representation that symbolizes an entire community?

International Exhibitions have been known, from 1851 onwards, as a synthetic expression of the modern world, especially of the world seen through the Western lens: the so-called scientific classification followed French rationalism, while the growing division of the displays according to their nationalities opened the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 6-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

door for a strikingly nationalist meaning, alongside imperialist significations, with many exotic colonial displays that were halfway between science and entertainment. These Exhibitions were political and economic showcases, exactly at the same moment as nationalist ideology has been identified as the most prosperous and the most powerful. As Gellner put it:

The nineteenth century was the age of nationalism. It was also the age in which the great secular ideologies emerged, and it was the period during which the social sciences came into being. The three events are not unrelated. The turbulence and instability which were undermining the old order naturally led some men to try to understand what was happening, to investigate the very foundations of society, to grasp the principles of the new social forms which were emerging. It led others to try to change the world, or specify the directions in which it should change.⁴⁹

National displays for international Expositions precisely illustrated the main process of national construction. Every nation was ‘diffuse’ and did not intend to show any ‘internal differentiation’.⁵⁰

This thesis acknowledges nationalism as both ideology and discourse. Gellner defined it as ‘a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state – a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation – should not separate the power-holders from the rest.’⁵¹ In other words, nationalism is a construct; cultural, artificially administered. Gellner remembers the core ideas developed by Ernest Renan in *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation ?* (1882). Common memories and a shared past are central to the nation, as well as ‘a shared amnesia, a collective forgetfulness’.⁵² Renan even emphasizes the ‘historical mistakes’ needed to build the national community.

Herein lies the problem that has to be dealt with in the exhibit: if displaying generally entails consciously choosing what is to be displayed, it also implies that the choice is inclusive in order to comprehensively cover a specific topic. During

⁴⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. vii.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵¹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London: Blackwell, 1983), p. 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

international Expositions, displays setup by different countries were consciously partial, hiding in particular everything that could have questioned or challenged the expression of the image of national unity. This concern was to influence every type of display: industrial, demographic, sociological, technological, aesthetic. Because nationalism uses images and words to propagate its message, national visual arts – paintings notably – are particularly interesting to look at.

If ‘from their inception in 1851, World’s Fairs have mirrored the rise of the modern industrial nation-states and reflected their specific national imperial policies’,⁵³ especially through architectural representation, this thesis wishes to argue and demonstrate that there may also have been, at times, different meanings conveyed simultaneously, and sometimes in contradiction to one another. This is an obvious point when these messages were produced by distinct countries, but there was also a certain amount of diversity within national ensembles of meaning which were assumed to be coherent. Nation-building processes and imperial narratives were certainly not the only and exclusive discourses in operation in 19th-century World’s Fairs. By engaging with messages circulated within Exhibitions through architecture and visual arts, this research aims to widen our understanding of international and universal Exhibitions, by drawing from an historiography usually keen on the ‘international’ side and slightly more cautious on the ‘universal’ viewpoint. This work will have achieved its objective if it contributes to a more comprehensive and consistent understanding of the ‘exhibitionary culture’ developed in the 19th century.⁵⁴

Carol Duncan built upon the concept of ‘ritual’ to analyse art collections and museums. At the crossroads of Benedict’s and Bennett’s conceptualization of international Exhibitions and museums, Duncan uses this concept to uncover how art museums and collections communicate messages, ‘values and beliefs – about social, sexual and political identity – in the form of vivid and direct experience.’⁵⁵ According to the author, rituals of various sorts do provide a structure for museum

⁵³ Rydell, Findling and Pelle 2000, pp. 131-132.

⁵⁴ Robert W. Rydell, *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

organizations to arrange the meaning they intend to convey to their visitors. Importantly, through the examination of different collections in Europe and America, Duncan acknowledges the performative dimension of the identified rituals and the fact that ‘in reality, people continually “misread” or scramble or resist the museum’s cues to some extent; or they actively invent, consciously or unconsciously, their own programs according to all the historical and psychological accidents of who they are.’⁵⁶

More recently, Andrew McClellan refers to both Bennett’s and Duncan’s contributions as part of ‘the historical account of museums as sites of moral improvement, ideological acculturation, and social distinction’ and wonders if 21st-century ‘museums are still the engines of bourgeois assimilation they once were.’⁵⁷ If this metaphor is to be drawn out, this thesis will question the original power of these presumed engines, specifically in the case of international Exhibitions. At least since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, engines have included straps and belts, and the thesis shall analyse the way these straps and belts – the original meanings and messages invested in Exhibitions – were actually conveyed and transmitted to their intended audience. In other words, the engine/Exhibition may have produced energy/power but there is a possibility that what was manufactured did not come out as originally planned.

This analysis of the encounter between a system of rituals and the public it is aimed at was also taken up by Michel de Certeau in *The practice of everyday life* (1988). Michel de Certeau’s scrutiny of everyday life may be mostly summarized as follows: we are all involved in a general process of production and consumption. De Certeau calls these both ‘operational combinations’ (*‘les combinatoires d’opération’*) and identifies them as the components of a ‘culture’.⁵⁸ This process is about ideas and artefacts, all of them being commodified in this overall process. De Certeau identifies the main productive flows as originating from financial, political and intellectual elites. Masses are involved in consumption: window shopping, travelling,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁷ Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2008), p. 7.

⁵⁸ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. xi.

watching the television, cooking. De Certeau equates these two steps of production and consumption with writing and reading.⁵⁹ However, this process does not end up with consumption, since de Certeau thinks of consumption as a new opportunity for production. He also relates production and consumption respectively with concepts of strategy and tactics, in an analytical grid that obeys power relations. He explains: ‘strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose [...], whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert [...]’.⁶⁰

One of the assumptions this thesis relies on is that the national discourses put on show during international Expositions are not completely materialised through official goals and objectives, because the national organizers are only responsible for the selection of items and not for the items themselves. Here is where de Certeau’s analysis happens to help us to understand the process. National organizers, commissioners, and governments might have tried to implement strategies in order to convey a single message towards an international audience but several case studies in the following chapters will provide evidence that these attempts were not necessarily crowned with success and that there may have been no intention of having a consistent strategy in the first place.

The format chosen for the elucidation of the various questions posed above is one of a selection of diverse case studies engaging with a range of different materials. The choice of this research method of multiple case studies is intended to profit from the intensive study of single cases ‘to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population)’ and answer the questions formulated earlier.⁶¹ This choice is particularly appropriate as the critical analysis of earlier theories developed above needs to be tested; the different case studies also help generate and test further hypotheses. The diversity of the material under scrutiny in each and every case study as detailed below aims at offering both breadth and depth in making sense of the complexity of international and universal Exhibitions.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁶¹ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 20.

Narrative or literary sources and social documents are key elements in informing and understanding universal and international Exhibitions. Narrative sources may have been widely published in daily and weekly broadsheets or journals, as well as in various publications only set up for the duration of the Exhibition, or only circulated in private through correspondence. They offer a wide range of information about the preparation of the events, persons involved, and events happening over the duration of an Exhibition and beyond its closing date. They also suggest various view points on the Exhibitions: they can be neutral, elegiac or dismissive, supportive or critical, and are often motivated by political factors. Pieces of art criticism are part of the literary sources. Diplomatic materials, ‘which document an existing legal situation or create a new one,’ give precious information on the proceedings of an Exhibition’s administrative preparation, with official decrees and regulations.⁶² Social documents, ‘products of record-keeping by bureaucracies,’ can take the form of official administrative reports to legislative and governmental bodies, or inventories.

Chapter 1 focuses on material available in newspapers at the time of the 1878 Paris Exhibition and takes as a case study a couple of series published in the London illustrated weekly *The Graphic*. Thanks to the written and visual content these articles contain, they give a unique opportunity to obtain a sense of how meanings and messages could be communicated and understood in various ways, from the official organizers to the media in general to the public at large; ‘the democracy of print’ they contributed to.⁶³ This chapter engages with the key questions set out earlier on in this introduction, in particular in relation to the concept of the ‘exhibitionary complex’. It also builds on a scholarship dedicated in particular to the study of periodical publications. Responding to B. E. Maidment’s ‘plea for a general recognition of periodicals as discourse rather than evidence’, this chapter

⁶² Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 21.

⁶³ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 1.

acknowledges the intrinsic value of this material by using it on its own terms to help answer the key questions of this thesis.⁶⁴

In a 2008 *Victorian Studies* article, Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge advocated the value of paying more careful attention to figures in illustrated serial novels ‘as constitutive of plot per se.’⁶⁵ This is a quest which art history is especially well equipped to pursue, not ‘see[ing] illustrations through the lenses of authorial intention or chronology of artistic creation, and hence as secondary or supplemental material created after the written text’, but giving equal merit and significance to both word and image, by contrast with traditional methods of all other disciplines.⁶⁶ Although the first series is unquestionably not fictional, reporting factual details about the Exposition as communicated by the official organization, the second series under scrutiny fits within the novel genre since the characters are not identified with real people but their adventures take place in or around the 1878 Exhibition and the protagonists experience various places and situations within its boundaries. Interestingly, written content and images complement each other as an abundance of pictures give numerous opportunities to convey visually far more detail than the text could reasonably contain, while conversely, the narrative itself includes ideas and feelings which images could not even suggest.

This set of illustrated newspapers’ factual and fictional accounts is a reflection of the fact that ‘periodicals informed, instructed, and amused virtually all of the people in the many segments of Victorian life’ and that ‘nineteenth-century Britain was uniquely the age of the periodical’, exactly at the same time as international Exhibitions gained significantly in size and impact.⁶⁷ *The Graphic* is a case in point of this ability of newspapers to reach out to a diverse audience, not only male, but also female and familial, specifically here propagating information about an event meant to engage as large a public as possible. The two series are extremely

⁶⁴ B. E. Maidment, ‘Victorian Periodicals and Academic Research’, in *Investigating Victorian Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Aled Jones and Lionel Madden (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 143-154, quoted in Peter W. Sinnema, *Dynamics of the Pictured Image: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 1.

⁶⁵ Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge, ‘The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction in the 1860s’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Autumn 2008, pp. 65-101.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

⁶⁷ J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, eds., *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), pp. 3 and 7.

interesting in the way they communicate differently about the Exhibition at various levels of understanding and symbolism. In a way, they seem to act a bit like the scientific illustration of 18th-century publications, which feature both diagrammatic and realistic representations of their objects.⁶⁸

Ultimately, beyond the various discourses and narratives elaborated as a consequence and as a result of international Exhibitions, these particular events provided their audience with unique leisure and entertainment opportunities, a reality which collides with the theorization according to which Exhibitions would be the space and moment for the controlling power to infuse a defined zeitgeist into the masses. Indeed, by contrast with this argument, as should become clear by the end of the last chapter, Exhibitions belonged to this ensemble of 19th-century leisure practices which ‘represented a new and relatively unstructured area in the life-space where social distinctions were particularly vulnerable.’⁶⁹ However contrived and controlled the organisation and proceedings of international Exhibitions might have been, they also took place at a time of ‘new mobility and independence of the urban crowd’.⁷⁰ This crowd may not be reducible to ‘manipulated and reified culture cattle’ and this is what the first chapter especially helps illuminate by relying on a particularly ‘bottom-up perspective’ alongside the other chapters, which focus more on various sources of influence and power.⁷¹

Chapter 2 addresses the British contribution to the International Street or *Rue des Nations* at the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*. The United Kingdom featured in the Street of Nations, a specific area of the Palace built on the Champ de Mars to show pieces of architecture with characteristic details of the respective countries they stood for. Visitors could examine in detail various façades representing Russia, the United States, Japan, Spain, Switzerland, Morocco, Egypt, or Annam. This chapter is another case study employed to understand how the original vision expressed by any Exposition organisation was negotiated, and therefore diminished in its consistency

⁶⁸ Francis D. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968), p. 74.

⁶⁹ Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 17.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷¹ Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 17 quoted in McClellan 2008, p. 8.

and reach, by guest exhibitors. However clearly or loosely this vision might have been stated in the first place, there was no other way for both hosting authorities and visiting officials to compromise on the content of the display, especially in regard to accommodating the financial constraints felt on all sides.

As a consequence of the particularity of the setting offered by the International Street, this chapter also explores the specificity of several late-19th-century British entrepreneurs and architects who were drawn into the development of the British answer to the question of how to display typically national façades on the Champ de Mars. Issues of history, taste, technology and professional success are involved in this particular project, with the simultaneous display of various styles like Queen Anne, Jacobethan and William and Mary, and the concurrent use of terracotta, reinforced concrete and half-timber construction. Essentially, and beyond these various questions, is the issue of national identity as expressed through architecture, an issue which had prompted the original vision of International Street and which ultimately needs to be examined past its interpretation by solely British participants.

The original vision for the project was of one of an encyclopaedic nature, along the lines of the classificatory system for the whole Exhibition, by establishing a model of national architecture to match the galleries of the palace containing displays by each and every single participating sovereign country. These models were therefore meant to emphasize and signpost the division of the galleries between the various countries in an ornamental fashion. The way the British Commission and participants interpreted this original concept accentuated even further the impression given by the eventual façades that they stood as flags for their home country. As Sophia Cross has suggested for turn-of-the-19th-century Ulster country houses, ‘both the [...] house and the flag [...] fulfil an aesthetic function, but, with an understanding of the culture from which they were created, they are [also] potent symbols of the cultural values that they are intended to represent.’⁷² Questions for analysis are the extent to which these façades stood as aesthetic symbols of national

⁷² Sophia Cross, ‘The Country House is Just Like a Flag’, in *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, ed. by Dana Arnold (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 53-66 (pp. 53-4).

cultural values, the extent to which this symbolic investment and representation was intentional, and the sources of these intentions.

Chapter 3 explores the role of a key institution of British artistic life throughout the 19th century, namely the Royal Academy of Arts, in the preparation of the British contribution to the Fine Arts section for the 1878 *Exposition Universelle Internationale* in Paris. Based on original archival research and built against the historiography of the RA and its history throughout the decades from its creation in 1768, this chapter therefore hopes to make a contribution to both the history of the Royal Academy and the conceptualization of international Exhibitions, particularly at the stage of their initial preparation.

This specific case study, despite its limitations, is none the less instructive on the matter of the creation of a national narrative by the various institutions and people involved in the preparation of the event, as some authors mentioned earlier would have it, although more often than not at a macro-historical level, rather remote from the factual evidence still available. By contrast with idea of consistency, control and calculation of the arrangement of displays and their contained messages, the process which saw the Royal Academy taking part in the organisation of the British representation in the fine arts section rather suggests a sequence of random, haphazard, and chaotic development.

Importantly, the Royal Academy was interested in the promotion of British art and the products of its own members. In the Parisian artistic environment, the main concern was more or less explicitly formulated in terms of the impact on art critics and the general public, to develop both knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of British paintings abroad in competition with other national schools of painting. Before attempting to be imposing and controlling within the boundaries of the Exhibition, the narrative attached to this project is one of the development of a foreign awareness about British art, by contrast with and alongside the fine arts products put on display by various other countries and which were similarly competing for visitors' attention and interest.

Chapter 4 has William Powell Frith's (1819-1909) painting known as *The Railway Station* or *Life at a Railway Station* (1862) as its central focus. The chapter is concerned above all with the representation of the built environment in fine arts,

and its reception by contemporaries within the special context of the 1878 Exhibition, and more widely during the 19th century. The discrepancy between the visual significance of the railway station in the painted image – without even mentioning the work's title itself – and the focus of the critical reception throughout the years prompts questions about the relation of contemporaries to their environment and the meaning they might have associated with it – or not. From a broader point of view, it also provokes questions about industrial modernity and the way contemporaries negotiated its meaning and also how the art historical narrative can situate modernity in a deeper perspective which allows more room for a diversity of different 'modernities'.

Selecting Frith's painting might seem a flawed focal point for analysis as it has been widely reproduced and commented, as alluded to later on. On the contrary, it is the very recurrence and familiarity of the picture to the general public and to the art historical discourse on Victorian art which gives legitimacy to such a focus. This chapter aims at reassessing the work internally by shifting our gaze away from the narrative and human ground of the composition in order to bring the powerful architectural background to the fore. It also locates the painting into a genealogy of visual representations of train stations from an art historical point of view by evaluating how much Frith might have innovated when he created his artwork. Besides, the exploration of earlier and contemporary literature on railways, and stations in particular, allows the adding of another layer of meaning to our understanding of the modern environment depicted on the canvas.

The nature of the engagement with architecture and displays and its associated meanings is a theme which ties this case study to the others, as does a concluding speculation about the links between conceptualisation of architecture through the visual arts and narratives which have created associations between buildings and the national ideal. The potency of this kind of narrative is as obvious when it pertains to railways as when it applies to universal Exhibitions. The conundrum lies in their combination within the boundaries of a unique setting. Established discourses might not have been as effective because of their contradictory nature, even before their audience entered into an interpretative process.

Chapter 5 examines the critical reception in French-speaking publications and periodicals of the display of British paintings in the 1878 Paris Exposition. By scrutinizing the writings of both distinguished and less well-known critics as Charles Blanc, Louis Enault, Tullo Massarani, Victor Cherbuliez, Ernest Chesneau, Edmond Duranty, Clovis Lamarre and Léon Pajot, and Marius Vachon, this chapter provides an opportunity to elucidate the sources for a nationalist understanding of the fine arts displays within a universal Exhibition. Beyond a sample from the vast body of criticism any Exhibition prompted in every area of knowledge, this chapter also looks at the general attitudes to Britain in France, and also at art criticism generated before the 1878 Exposition, to put the central body of material in perspective and assess the extent to which art criticism in 1878 mapped on to general stereotypes about the British people – or, conversely, did not.

Contemporary commentators of Exhibitions methodically dealt with fine art displays according to a national grid of analysis. They thus followed the national classification enforced by the organizers. The question arises however of the strength of the assumed logic of this relation between the national approach of the criticism and the national arrangement of the displays. Was the national approach to the exhibits an immediate consequence of the organization of the galleries or did it also reflect longer-term practices of art criticism? This chapter provides evidence of the fact that commentaries about contemporary fine arts were comforted by previously-established canons of art historical methodology and the historiography of the discipline.

With the method and the type of discourse endorsed by the critical material about British painting in the 1878 Exhibition, comes the broader issue of the relation between visual arts and the national idea. The realities of Victorian artistic life with the persistence of national identities within the kingdom, and, most importantly, the cultivation of regional identities around prosperous industrial centres, create a tension with theorizations of visual arts as representations of a national identity. The way some pieces of criticism have struggled, or conflicted with one another, in trying to make sense of the body of paintings on display with ideas such as an assumed ‘national genius’ or ‘national spirit’ is an indication that visual arts might not have

been such ‘crucial vehicles of cultural nationalism’ but were rather an object on which such ideas and conceptualisation of nationality were projected.⁷³

Beyond these issues of narratives to and upon which art criticism contributed and elaborated, the content of these narratives meets the meta-narrative of the universal Exhibition. In a similar way as in the other chapters, the creation of the critical material on the paintings display begs the question of the control of power, meanings and symbols accumulated in the Exhibition. The diversity of approaches the different critics adopted to deal with British paintings and the fine arts in general calls into question the understanding of Exhibitions as a regulating environment. Where would art critics stand in a context? Did art criticism perform a narrative instigated by the regulating elite, or did it by contrast ‘evade, side-step or simply not notice’ the narrative intended by Exhibition’s organizers?⁷⁴

⁷³ Athena S. Leoussi, ‘The Ethno-Cultural Roots of National Art’, *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 10. Nos. 1/2, 2004, pp. 143-59 (p. 144).

⁷⁴ Bennett 1995, p. 11.

I. Looking Sideways

This chapter examines visual and written material published in the weekly London newspaper *The Graphic* and investigates the reception of a wide array of messages produced over the duration of the 1878 Paris *Exposition Universelle Internationale*.¹ It addresses the dynamics of reception of the numerous messages conveyed throughout the Exhibition and involves a particular attention toward the behaviour of visitors and the meaning they possibly created out of the displays: how did visitors look at the exhibits? How did visitors make sense of messages contained in the Exhibition? What use did they make of the exhibition space? Where did the periodical newspaper stand in this communication process as a medium?

Overall, this chapter postulates an open-ended experience of the Exhibition. There may have been physical and symbolic constraints in the discovery of the event, but messages produced by the various organizers were at some point or another appropriated and transformed by the media so that the power of control of the original message producers was rather limited if not non-existent. Furthermore, while visitors may have enjoyed the Exhibition naively, they may also have been able to bear a critical gaze on displays. The freedom from the official message of the Exhibition organizers might also show in relations between images and texts. Pictures may be

analeptic, referring back to a scene in the written text; repetitive, representing different scenes with similar elements; iterative, representing repeated action; extradiegetic, representing scenes that do

¹ Portions of this chapter were presented at the RX Futures Network: Art, Architecture and Design Histories for the Twenty-First Century, in Kingston University, Kingston upon Thames, on 1 March 2006; at DisPlacement: Postgraduate Symposium in History of Art, at the University of Glasgow, on 31 May 2008; at 'Century's End': Re-Evaluating Literature and the Arts at the Fin de Siècle, at Queen's University, Belfast, on 13 September 2008; at the Société française des études victoriennes et édouardiennes' International Annual Conference, « Culture savante, culture populaire », at the Université de Strasbourg, on 17 January 2009; and at the University of Edinburgh's History of Art Research Seminar, on 22 January 2009.

not appear in the verbal text; or even inter pictorial, referring to other well-known images or modes of visual representation.²

The basis to investigate these questions and propositions is a couple of case studies made of several pieces of visual and literary material published in Britain in 1878 in the illustrated newspaper *The Graphic*. In seven issues published between August 3 and October 5, 1878, *The Graphic* gave its readership a serialized account of the contemporary *Exposition Universelle* under the title ‘All the World at Paris’. It is meant to be written by an English teenage girl called Lolly, who visits the *Exposition* with her parents, younger sister Lilly and brother Charlie.³ Visually, the series is particularly rich; the illustrations are always accorded a full plate. All six episodes come within the columns of the newspaper.⁴ Every view contains some words, either as internal caption or as superimposed title quoted from the narrative.

This fictional account follows a publishing template well-known from contemporary novels, which were often first published in serial form before their release as books. To be read every week, this account was to ‘favour frequent “incidents”, “climax and curtain” part-endings, and’, to a lesser extent, ‘the mechanics of enigma and suspense.’⁵ It may have been designed to capture the readership in the middle of the summer, with the plate of six illustrations of the first couple of episodes featuring on the front page of the weekly issue in August 1878. The family setting was characteristic of *The Graphic*, known for its appeal to a family audience, targeting in particular female and younger readers.⁶ Both the appearance of an account, possibly sent to the newspaper by a reader, and the anonymity of the text were in line with earlier practice of serialized fiction and a tradition of encouragement of real readers’ contributions to the content of their

² Mary Elizabeth Leighton, and Lisa Surridge, ‘The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction in the 1860s’, *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Autumn 2008, pp. 65-101 (p. 67).

³ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, p. 122.

⁴ The six episodes count from as little as 590 words (II) to just above 1020 words (VI).

⁵ Graham Law, *Indexes to Fiction in The Illustrated London News (1842-1901) and The Graphic (1869-1901)* ([Brisbane]: Victorian Fiction Research Unit, The University of Queensland, 2001), p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8: ‘In general, *The Graphic*’s directors seem to have been rather more conscious of appealing to a family audience and thus more prone to Grundyism.’

newspapers.⁷ The choice of a female narrator gives an indication of the targeted readership, while it brings a different point of view on the event, since general Exhibition literature was often aimed at an adult male audience.

The series is full of humour, which makes the account even more appealing to a wide family readership. It modulates the utilitarian facet of the series, while it nonetheless does not prevent giving useful insights of an Exhibition visit to readers who might fall in similar situations if they went to Paris. Parents could grasp precious tips between the lines of narrative and illustrations, while children laugh about the misfortunes of the British family. Although the true author of the narrative remained – and still remains – unknown to readers, most illustrations are signed by Sydney Prior Hall (1842-1922), one of the principal artists working for *The Graphic*. At the time of the 1878 Exposition, he had already been noticed for his work in Paris during the Prussian siege in 1870 and for his drawings during the trip of the Prince of Wales to India in 1875-6.⁸ Hall had therefore a sense of first-hand reportage, a very special knowledge of Paris, and the ability to depict human behaviour in various situations.

The London illustrated newspaper was interested in making the most of the Exhibition in editorial and commercial terms. Thus, ‘All the World at Paris’ came after a first series of prints and accounts which had been published in the first semester of 1878, from 2 March to 29 June, on an irregular basis, when newsrooms would be flooded with releases from the official *Exposition’s* press office.⁹ It is made of more than 40 illustrations either full-page or as little vignettes, or more rarely across the gutter over two pages. Although accompanying texts are anonymous, most illustrations are signed by different wood engravers. Probably wary of tiring its readership, the newspaper carefully alternated issues with a single illustration and issues with several pictures together or distributed along the pages with attached

⁷ Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 46-8.

⁸ Mark Pottle, ‘Hall, Sydney Prior (1842-1922)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52024> (Accessed on 19 September 2008).

⁹ On Saturday 15 December 1877, the series had a seen a preamble with the publication of a couple of images representing the façades of both palace on the Champ de Mars and the Trocadéro (*The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVI, No. 420, Saturday 15 December 1877, p. 558; plate on pp. 560-1).

explanations. The theme of the pictures also shows a good mix of topics throughout time, with colonial exhibits interspersed with Western themes and views of spaces and situations within and around the Exhibition. This forms the second half of the case study.

The significance of both series beyond their publication in *The Graphic* might be better understood once they have been placed side by side with French illustrated newspapers and books. Indeed, numerous pictures of the first series published by *The Graphic* also appeared in French publications. For instance 'On the way to the Champ de Mars' was printed in the 25 May issue of *The Graphic* and reproduced following the same dimensions, half-page, in the 22 June issue of *L'Exposition de Paris*, as 'Le Paris de l'Exposition. L'avenue de la Motte-Picquet',¹⁰ and 'Outside the Exhibition - Where to Buy Tickets,' printed in *The Graphic* at the beginning of June, was reproduced in *L'Exposition de Paris* at the beginning of July, and also in *Les merveilles de l'exposition de 1878*.¹¹ French publications occasionally acknowledged this reliance on British visual material, by necessity with the signatures of artists and engravers appearing in picture frames, and even with clear references, as in *L'Exposition de Paris* which details about a specific engraving 'gravure du journal anglais le Graphic'.¹²

A basic theory of communication which would posit a three-term relation between a sender, a message, and a receiver, is highly challenged in the situation created by International Exhibitions. With the analysis of the gaze which develops visually and textually in 'All the World at Paris' and the first series of *The Graphic* about the 1878 Exhibition, this chapter aims at delving into the theoretical take on Exhibitions in general which sees visitors as not being completely dependent upon, and influenced by, a constructed discourse. In doing so, it challenges a reading which considers Exhibitions as constraining and manipulative setting which guides the

¹⁰ 'On the Way to the Champ de Mars', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May, p. 516; Adolphe Bitard, *L'Exposition de Paris (1878) rédigée par A. Bitard, avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux. Journal hebdomadaire* (Paris: Librairie illustrée and Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878), No. 12, 22 juin 1878, p. 96.

¹¹ 'Outside the Exhibition - Where to Buy Tickets', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 549 ; *Les merveilles de l'exposition de 1878 : histoire, construction, inauguration, description détaillée des palais, des annexes et des parcs, les chefs-d'œuvre de l'art de tous les pays...* (Paris: Librairie illustrée et Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878), p. 25.

¹² Bitard 1878, Supplément au No. 13.

visitors' gaze and makes them internalise the order of things imposed by political and economic powers. Stimulated by Michel de Certeau's, Volker Barth's and Carol Duncan's ideas, this chapter argues instead that visitors may have engaged with Exhibitions in multiple ways.¹³

For the reason that art museums, history and natural history museums, dioramas and panoramas, national and international exhibitions, arcades and department stores, all order and articulate power and knowledge relations, Bennett acknowledged the intellectual and structural relations between such institutions. They are all part of an 'exhibitionary complex' whose purpose is 'the development and circulation of new disciplines (history, biology, art history, anthropology) and their discursive formations (the past, evolution, aesthetics, man) as well as [...] the development of new technologies of vision.'¹⁴ He draws a parallel between the development of the exhibitionary complex and the formation of the 'carceral archipelago' which Michel Foucault characterized in *Discipline and Punish*.¹⁵ The development of the carceral archipelago entailed the physical displacement of the spectacle of punishment on the scaffold from the public square toward the concealed space of the penitentiary. The visible became invisible. The public became private. The display of power controlling the bodies of the condemned on the scaffold was withdrawn from the public gaze.¹⁶ Foucault argued that the disciplinary techniques used in the carceral archipelago spread out of it into society, with a shift from the eighteenth-century public spectacle to a nineteenth-century hidden surveillance.

In the meantime, the development of the exhibitionary complex would conversely involve 'the transfer of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains [...] into progressively more open and public arenas where [...] they formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power [...] throughout society.'¹⁷ The exhibitionary complex includes technologies of surveillance, because

¹³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Volker Barth, 'The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867', *Museum and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, March 2008, pp. 22-37; Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁴ Bennett 1995, p. 59.

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

¹⁶ Bennett 1995, pp. 59-60.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.

it is a response to the problem of order in cultural terms, ‘a question of winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies’, ‘a set of cultural technologies concerned to organize a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry’.¹⁸ Vision is central in both the exhibitionary complex and the carceral archipelago because it is the core sense involved in social regulation, and the transformation of the behaviour, either of the convicted or of the crowd of visitors.

Although Tony Bennett only introduces the idea to consider playgrounds and fairs, and Volker Barth altogether does not include it into his line of argument, this chapter is structured around the concept of ‘ritual’, as Carol Duncan grasped it, to analyse art museums and collections. In her demonstration, Duncan takes exhibition arrangements like museums as ‘environments structured around specific ritual scenarios’.¹⁹ By introducing the concept to understand museums and their exhibitions, Duncan points out the specificity of their space, the reflexive moment they give to their visitors, set apart from everyday life, the performance this space gives a setting for, and the ‘transformative’ potential ultimately projected within this ritual. Space, performance and outcome of the Exhibition will be the three key ideas through which the couple of illustrated series introduced above will be read.

A. Space: from the clear to the obscure

In setting the spatial organization and circumstances of the Exhibition, both illustrated series provide a wide array of illustrations, ranging from the most transparent to the most opaque. Self-evidently, the sense of vision plays a crucial role in the creation of this physical environment peculiar to the Exhibition. Key factors impacting on the meaning of these pictures are the point of view from which every picture originates, the quality of the perception, and the immediate conditions of the representation.

¹⁸ Bennett 1995, pp. 62-3.

¹⁹ Duncan 1995, p. 2.

1. Power of the aerial view

By its very nature, the first picture under scrutiny might be seen as fitting somewhat ambiguously within the theoretical discourses interested in the messages and values at stake in International Exhibitions.²⁰ A ‘Bird’s eye view of the city’, it might be considered as embodying the panoptical potential offered by the setting of the Exhibition, with both the natural physical geography and human-made ephemeral and permanent buildings creating opportunities for broad viewpoints across the Exhibition’s grounds (Figure 1).²¹ However here, the actual scale of the representation seems to contradict any controlling ambition since details of individuals strolling within the boundaries of the Exhibition are invisible. The physical presence of pedestrians and terrestrial vehicles is merely perceptible thanks to the random spread of irregular dots along avenues and alleys. This first view might stand as an opportunity for the illustrated newspaper to set the scene and denote specific physical characteristics of the new Exhibition, even before its official opening on 1 May 1878.

Instead of an occasion for control and surveillance, the picture gives an overall view of the event within the wider urban fabric, and as such provides the reader with further elements of understanding and knowledge of the physical setting. The overcast weather, the vapours of the steamboats on the river Seine make the view, picturesque. The observer is looking down pinpointing axes of circulation and communication, bridges, avenues, and main buildings, comprehensively, strategically: there is also something of the geographic survey, a ‘totalizing eye’.²² The bird’s-eye view empowers the Exhibition visitor by providing both ‘perspective

²⁰ It is not exactly the first picture of the series published in the first half of 1878, as a representation of the two palaces had featured in one of the December 1877 issues, as mentioned above.

²¹ ‘The Forthcoming International Exhibition at Paris - Bird’s-eye View of the City, Showing the Exhibition Buildings’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 431, Saturday 2 March 1878, p. 213.

²² de Certeau 1988, p. 92.

vision and prospective vision' and may therefore become an instrument which allows the transition 'from the concept of the city to urban practices'.²³ The start of the series is the time of the discovery and the acquaintance, in advance of the event's opening. The visual content aims at accuracy, and instruction, as do the texts. Descriptions are exhaustive, references to well-known clichés and to the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition back up this new information.

This theme of the bird's eye view reappears several weeks later, although in a different way, inserted in the commentary for a picture titled 'Under the central dome' (Figure 2).²⁴ Since this spot might not have been very conspicuous in the immensity of the Exhibition, instead of representing the ultimate outlook from the top of the ascent, the panoramic view towards the Seine and the Trocadéro palace, the picture focuses on the route visitors have to follow to reach that viewpoint, 'the little staircase by which the central dome of the building on the Champ de Mars is ascended to the little terrace'.²⁵ In the symmetrical stairwell across the façade in the distance, there is a sense of procession climbing up the stairs. The actual object of interest of the people depicted in the scene is not very clear: the actual viewpoint, fellow visitors, the building. The very shape of the built structure creates a diversity of viewpoints which the picture itself prompts to enjoy. As visitors wander alone or in pairs above the grounds in more limited number than in other areas, a feeling of exclusivity might arise from the situation.

By contrast with this possible sense of exclusivity within the boundaries of the Exhibition, the illustrated newspaper also features views of the event which do not usually feature in media coverage of the event, like 'a peep at the world of wonders'.²⁶ It provides the representation of a point of view from outside the Exhibition. Moreover, the scene is not only from the outside, but also the point of view of outsiders, as the range of hats demonstrates with denoting the social status of their owners. There is a physical distinction created between inside and outside with

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁴ 'Under the Central Dome', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 447, Saturday 22 June 1878, pp. 610 and 616.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 610.

²⁶ 'A Peep at the World of Wonders Through the Railings', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 600.

the railings, between ‘the World of Wonders’ and people who seem to demonstrate or crave ‘the marvels contained in one of the corners of the Trocadéro.’²⁷ Whereas the bird’s eye view included the Exhibition within the urban fabric of the capital city, this scene on the contrary emphasizes the idea of a clear distinction between two ‘worlds’ on either side of the enclosure.

Without relying on the official communication of the Exhibition and displacing the gaze on the event, the picture might have provoked some embarrassment for the editors as, to them, ‘this sketch almost explains itself’.²⁸ From the comments accompanying the pictures, it is possible to understand that the illustrations were prepared first, and the texts written as the result of their reception by the editors. Instead of discussing at length the unusual spatial disruption between the space of the city streets and the secluded alleys past the entrance gates, and rather than delving into a displaced view which emphasizes the special character of the Exhibition environment, the editors prefer to move on inside the secured space of the Exhibition within the railings to describe the different pavilions that the Exhibition visitor and *Graphic*’s reader might experience in reality.

Far from the foreign and hazardous character of the world beyond the railings, ‘a sketch in the park’ offers a different take on the Exhibition than the one generally developed in illustrations about the event (Figure 4).²⁹ Instead of an accurate and detailed visual description of a building or the systematic representation of an exhibit brought to the attention of the reader, this view deals with the environment of the former and the latter, with the somewhat weak focus of an ‘exquisite miniature water scenery’. Not unlike in the view ‘under the central dome’, there is a sense of remoteness from the bustle of the Exhibition and the many visitors walking in the alleys, beyond the water feature, although the actual location of the view is also very central, between the Seine and the northern front of the palace on the Champ de Mars. Like the previous pictures above, this one contributes with building a sense of place in the reader’s mind, while it also gives a tip for ‘the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ ‘A Sketch in the Park’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, pp. 511 and 512.

wearied visitor, who [is] tired out with tramping about the buildings and the grounds'.³⁰

2. A critique of technical modernity

The contrast between the bird's-eye view of the entire Exhibition grounds of the first series and the view of the roof tops from the 7th floor of a Parisian hotel of the second series gives an indication of the availability of a diversity of points of view and experience of the Exhibition; a diversity both series illustrate in various ways already touched upon above (Figure 5).³¹ Newspaper readers and exhibition visitors could easily be what de Certeau called 'ordinary practitioners', who are 'walkers [...] whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it.'³² The bird's eye view could empower the reader at the beginning of their discovery of the Exhibition with making obvious the contours of the event, its landmarks, and relative situation in the city, except from an insubstantial vantage point. The view of the rooftops is a radically different result, one of the physical understanding and its difficulty, of the practical experience, on the field.

Foreign visitors have to negotiate the tension between the dense urban fabric still very much part of the everyday experience of the Paris of the last quarter of the 19th century, and the preconceived ideas they might have had of a capital whose aspect had been significantly redefined by Haussmann's grand boulevards and subsequent vistas. Despite their ascent to the seventh floor, and surrounded by the silhouette of the structures born from Haussmann's systematic building elevation template, the clients of the hotel are not able 'to read' the urban environment from the potential point of view the height might have provided. Feelings of irony and disappointment compete when the 'view of Paris won thereby' comes down to not even a sea of roofs until the horizon line, but the ghostly silhouette of 'a stack of

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³¹ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, [p. 105].

³² de Certeau 1988, p. 93.

chimney pots' arising at the vertical of a partition wall between a vast expanse of roof and tired-looking, shuttered dormer windows.³³

From these visual representations of the space of the Exhibition and its urban environment already emerges a diversity of interpretations of reality which grand narratives surrounding International Exhibitions do not necessarily convey. While official press releases, which organizers widely dispatched to the media, selected specific elements of information for communication, newspapers like *The Graphic* and their readership would take the freedom to interpret facts and make them more personal and relevant. This is something both series demonstrate to various degrees. Immediately before and after the opening of the event, the media had to rely more intensely on facts and figures organizers provided. As time went by, reporters were able to collect information by themselves and account for their own and visitors' experience. In any case, these newspapers were not unanimously docile in becoming the unequivocal transmitter of intended messages.

The different ways of engaging with the spatial dimension of the Exhibition during 1878 give more than an opportunity for the newspaper to keep the attention of its readership while dealing with the same topic. With the periodical publication conveying the information available from the Exhibition organization itself, but not limiting itself to that source and to its take on the events, it seems that the idea of authority of the institutions and stakeholders involved in the conception and presentation of various messages throughout the Exhibition finds itself eroded. Since the media would not loyally nor exclusively replicate the official messages circulated by various Exhibition authorities, the potential of the event for projecting the intended idea might be questioned.

In the first illustrated series of *The Graphic*, additional panoramic views at ground level complement the bird's eye view of the Exhibition, with the Trocadéro palace, ornamental gardens and cascades on the slope of the hill, and exhibitions for Persia, China, Japan and Algeria (Figure 6).³⁴ This kind of representation fits within

³³ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, p. 122. Italics in the text.

³⁴ 'The Trocadéro Building', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7.

one singular moment still relevant for narrative and descriptive accounts of the Exhibition grounds: what is the subject matter? Where is it located? What are the most important facts about the building or the exhibits? In this descriptive ambition, the perspective of the panorama is slightly distorted to fit in as many elements as possible. The report is very informative, and conveys a feeling of authenticity by providing a first-hand experience of the Exhibition and underlining the distant origin of the exotic artefacts and people gathered together in the Exhibition.

This progressive setting of the environment of the Exhibition from the bird's eye view to the ground level is not only rhetorical or purely descriptive but is also useful for readers who might become actual visitors, and also for staging reports about some events which took place in the first days of the opening of the event. The description of the surroundings and exhibits goes on, for instance with the Pont d'Iéna, 'covered by a broad level viaduct, some three times the width of the original bridge' and the Indian section, potentially 'the gem of the Exhibition, containing as it does so unique and sumptuous a collection of Indian products and manufactures'.³⁵ A week after the opening, there is much to report on and illustrate. Official ceremonies have taken place throughout the Exhibition, with heads of states, ambassadors and ministers visiting in procession behind Marshal MacMahon or on their own to inspect national participations. The coverage of the celebrations includes traditional types of images such as the 'Presentation of the British Commission to Marshal MacMahon at the Prince of Wales's Pavilion', and 'The Presidential Declaration from the Balcony' of the Trocadéro Palace (Figure 7).

In a similar way as the displacement seen earlier with the view on the rooftops in lieu of a bird's eye view, the second illustrated series about the Exhibition is able, later in the year, to build upon the spatial elements positioned in the first series, although from a different angle. 'Under The Cascade of The Trocadéro' (Figure 8), the British family wanders in the tunnel opened to the public under the balcony of the palace.³⁶ Falling down in the fountain basin, the water cascade creates

³⁵ 'The Paris Exhibition of 1878', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 431.

³⁶ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156.

this desirable characteristic see-through screen effect, but it also splashes into the gallery where visitors walk. The position of the argument of the picture – ‘Imitation is The Sincerest Flattery’ – may not be fortuitous as this is where the family stands, the girls frankly turning their back to the viewer, their faces turned towards their left hand side. This is also where the tunnel opens via a wide lowered arch toward the falling water itself.

In the illustrated newspaper, the balcony of the Trocadéro Palace and its cascade grow to be a pretext for criticism about key concepts of the event.³⁷ Represented earlier on to illustrate the Exhibition opening ceremony, both balcony and cascade are essential components of the landscaped gardens on the hill. According to the *Cook's Guide to Paris*, ‘the Grand Cascade of the Trocadéro [...] must be acknowledged as a masterpiece of tasteful art.’³⁸ For our narrator Lilly and her family, it becomes a matter of exploration as a subterranean world. By contrast with the neutral factual description which accompanied the general view, the account relating the experience of the family is written from a displaced point of view and voices a critique of the Exhibition’s grandeur in terms of excess, and expresses also some disillusion about progress and modernity:

A capital idea to imitate the Falls of the Giesbach here! But Art cannot supply the scenery of Nature. In place of the Swiss rocks and fir-trees, we see now only the Café Espagnol Bottega, with its flag-poles, through the glaze of water. Art can make the stones overhead watertight, but cannot keep out the spray, which makes mamma, who is wearing her waterfall-fringe bonnet, put up her umbrella, and the Cuirassier yonder pull off his

³⁷ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 155: ‘On the way there we turned asides and walked under the Cascade... Art can make the stones overhead watertight, but cannot keep out the spray, which makes mamma, who is wearing her waterfall-fringe bonnet, put up her umbrella, and the Cuirassier yonder pull off his helmet. We were taking this pray in at the pores while we philosophised about Art and Nature, when Charlie descried two Chinamen, whose pigtails suggested an irresistible comparison with our plaits. (This boy’s mission seems to be simply and solely to chaff, as he calls it, his sisters). I grant you that the plait is horrible. Why should a pretty girl’s face end in the unsightly tail of a skate? Besides, it doesn’t suit me. I am obliged to wear it because it suits Lilly, and mamma wishes us to be uniform. Still to be compared with Chinamen, and to have it suggested by a copy-book text that the Chinaman accepts as a compliment our following his fashion of fan and pigtail, is very trying to sisterly affection.’

³⁸ It started ‘from under the centre of the Palace or Rotunda which commands the Trocadéro heights,’ before ‘descend[ing], step by step, into the vast basin at the foot of the slope.’ Charles Moonen, *Cook's Guide to Paris and its Exhibition, 1878* (London: Thomas Cook & Son, Simpkin, Marshall, [1878?]), p. 86.

helmet. We were taking this spray in at the pores while we philosophised about Art and Nature [...]³⁹

Expressed from underneath the once official balcony, almost from underground, this comment has a seditious depth to it, uncovering to the largest audience the flaws of Universal Exhibitions – their contrived nature. If they are famous for conveying specific messages, these are about modernity, progress, technological innovation and confidence in such a progress. Here, this lofty rhetoric finds itself ridiculed with a clear description of structural defects of the construction and a comical account of the consequences for visitors.

This critique of the artificial cascade builds upon contemporary descriptions of the Falls of the Giesbach such as *Roamings abroad, bring recollections of a run through parts of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Vaterland* by John Trotandot, published precisely in 1878. This author too touches upon the relation between nature and artifice in his description of the site:

the Falls of Giessback,[...] were to be “illuminated” that very evening! – The Falls of Giessback. Illuminated!! The wonders of Nature – the works of the Creator made a peepshow of to gratify the cockney tastes of Tourists. Illuminated! – Giessback au naturel. Wishing to see the Falls by daylight, I next morning made another voyage to them – this time in the steamer. I found that they consist of a series of huge steps from the top of the mountain, with hollows behind and bridges at various heights, upon which, I presume, the coloured fires for the illumination were placed. I walked through a kind of gallery behind one of the falls, and the effect of looking through the curtain of water in front was something marvellous. It was Niagara on a small scale, and I should almost think a model for the artificial waterfalls and rockery in the Bois de Boulogne at Paris.⁴⁰

The reference to the largest park of the French capital, fairly recently redesigned in an irregular picturesque ensemble, within the description of a Swiss natural cascade interestingly closes a research loop which started in the 1878 Paris Exhibition. The explanation of the Swiss site also mirrors exactly the account given of the fake

³⁹ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 155.

⁴⁰ John Trotandot, *Roamings Abroad, Bring Recollections of a Run through Parts of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Vaterland* ([Crewkerne?]: Pulman’s Weekly News Office, 1878), pp. 63-7.

cascade on the Trocadéro, with the visitor in both sites entering subterranean ways on the hills in order to look through the falling water toward the exterior.

3. A critique of ocularocentrism

The bird's eye view discussed earlier is not the only illustration of the first series that visually creates a spatial connection between the Exhibition grounds and their urban surroundings. Indeed, later on in the series, a half-page picture represents the view 'On the way to the Champ de Mars', probably from a hansom cab (Figure 9).⁴¹ Although the purpose of the illustration seems unspecific and mundane, it nonetheless emphasizes the importance of the sense of sight in the experience of the city and the Exhibition it welcomes. Opened before and extended as part of the works supervised by the Baron Haussmann, the avenue de la Motte-Picquet was an important artery on the left bank, especially to reach the Exhibition on its south-east side, across the *Ecole militaire*, whose prominent silhouette appears in the distance.

The comment accompanying the picture focuses on the diversity of vehicles running along the avenue, rather than the built environment. Visually, the composition matches a typical representation of Paris in the last quarter of the 19th century, with the wide and large vistas framed by plane trees and façades of tenement buildings. In its particular way, it complements the bird's eye view by providing the reader with an impression at ground level, an instant moment of Parisian life and traffic in the vicinity of the Exhibition. In a similar way as the bird's eye view, the message associated with this picture is not partial, but mostly descriptive, thereby contributing to empowering and enticing the reader and potential visitor. It finds an exact counterpart in the second illustrated series with a 'View from the interior of No. 3838 *voiture de remise à deux places*' (Figure 10).⁴²

⁴¹ 'On the Way to the Champ de Mars', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 516.

⁴² 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156.

With a view unquestionably not available in official or even mainstream publications about the Exhibition, this image resolutely displaces the traditional gaze on the event. The vignette places the reader physically and intellectually ‘On the Road to the Exposition’.⁴³ According to the narrative, this picture is meant to be an actual “*wibbly-wobbly*” drawing by Lilly.⁴⁴ The displacement of the vision lies in the oddity of the view. Blurred by scratches of rain, the silhouette of the cabman is seen from behind sitting high to lead the cab, framed by the mudguards and half-cut out by the bodywork of the vehicle. While it undoubtedly echoes the cab drawing of the first series, it also introduces challenging circumstances which hamper a full visual experience of the space: no more panoramic view of the urban environment here, but the confined viewpoint from a cab in the rain.

‘I can’t see anything in it. But the spectator must imagine himself in it, and then let his imagination supply the rest.’⁴⁵ Beyond the very nature of the narrative, meant to tell the actual experience of an English family in Paris for the Exhibition, it could be argued that this kind of representation and reasoning conveyed to readers partakes of a critic of modernity as it has been characterised in its French occurrence, and particularly its Parisian occurrence: the idling of the *flâneur* in the streets of the capital city, the primacy given to the sense of vision, the success of panoramas, planted promenades and boulevards developed since the 18th century and more specifically in the decades before the Exhibition: the Paris of the Baron Haussmann and Napoléon III. With such an advice given to the spectator or the reader comes the suggestion that a feeling of incompleteness might arise from a purely visual engagement with reality. The newspaper suggests an experience of the Exhibition which clearly breaks away from the ocularocentrism traditionally associated with this type of event.

This critical gaze directed towards the clarity of Parisian modernity actually comes into play right from the first week of publication of ‘All the World at Paris’. The introduction of the narrative summons firstly two lines from Laurence Sterne’s *Sentimental Journal through France and Italy* (1768): “Earth no such Folks! no

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Folks e'er such a town / As Paris is! Sing Derry, derry down.” Possibly in order to lift up the spirits of readers and stimulate them further into the reading of the series, the next chapter following immediately afterwards begins with a Latin verse from Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* (Book I, verse 99): ‘Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsi’ (They come to see, they come so that they may be seen.). Right from the outset, this quotation suggests the centrality of vision in the Exhibition experience.⁴⁶ Gazes are to operate in every possible direction, reflexive and outward looking, as much towards exhibits as towards visitors. It also seems to ring like a warning to the attention of readers with putting a certain emphasis on the theatrical dimension, the space of representation, of performance that the Exhibition provides, and vanity that comes along with it.

B. Performance

Within the space constructed for, and inside the boundaries of, the Exhibition, various participants are to become involved in diverse situations prompting a multiplicity of behaviours, practices and movements which can be grouped under the concept of ‘performance’: ‘Ritual also involves an element of performance. A ritual site of any kind is a place programmed for the enactment of something. It is a place designed for some kind of performance.’⁴⁷ The most important question in that area of the interpretation of the Exhibition as a ritual in relation with the questions proposed earlier is the assessment of the level of freedom participants could enjoy. The presentation of spatial features of the event was an opportunity to describe them in a neutral tone, or conversely to adopt an inquisitive and critical take on the setting and underlying discourses. To what extent does this alternative develop when the performance is the focus for the messages conveyed by the newspaper?

⁴⁶ This quote is one of several inserted in the narrative, in particular to introduce every weekly episode, taken from as various authors as Plato, Horatio, Thales, Moore, Voltaire, Coleridge and Sterne.

⁴⁷ Duncan 1995, p. 12.

1. Crossing the boundary

With the representation of the space of the Exhibition, the presence of the boundaries felt visually, in different ways, in varied intensity from the outside, from the inside, from the sky and from the ground, in every case from a distance. The view ‘through the railings’ was very telling about spatial distinction, but also very striking with representing a kind of performance that the Exhibition’s inner stakeholders – organizers, exhibitors, visitors – would rather ignore, if not deny completely (Figure 3). Indeed, at the same time the exhibits would encourage comparisons between one another in the collective halls and create exotic settings in specific areas, the very staging of the Exhibition would entail a strict discrimination between what is accepted for entrance and what is rejected, and an absence of comparison between the former and the latter. This situation is part of the making of an Exhibition and the ritual it involves. The Exhibition creates a replica of the world, it engulfs its essence: any comparison with the outside becomes therefore irrelevant.⁴⁸

As the limits get closer to the spectator, the clearing and crossing of the entrance gates is the first practice imposed upon hopeful visitors. Beyond the primacy of this first stage in the immediate physical experience of the Exhibition, this procedure also involves a pure rapport of authority between staff members of the Exhibition in charge of the control of any relevant document which might become involved in the process. For instance, for the 1867 *Exposition* at least, special identity cards with an individual portrait photograph had been created as a *laissez-passer* for exhibitors. This point in the journey of all visitors duly features in the first series under scrutiny here, although not in the earliest dispatches, perhaps to gain the readers’ interest beforehand and convince them that the actual purchase of tickets is worth it.

⁴⁸ Barth 2008, p. 25.

In addition to the erection of a physical barrier between what belongs to the Exhibition and what does not, the creation of specific practices contributes to making the space of the event even more special, in line with the concept of ritual. Thus, the exchange of money to purchase tickets does not take place at the gates of the Exhibition. All visitors could buy their 'tickets' in the city, 'outside the Exhibition', 'at every tobacconist throughout Paris.' With having in mind the theoretical juxtapositions between Universal Exhibitions and entertainment fairs mentioned above, it may be possible to understand that this physical distancing of the ticket sales away from the grounds of the Exhibition might have been a conscious decision taken to clearly position the event as distinct by nature from usual fairs.

The case of this picture provides a good example to understand the illustrated newspaper as a utilitarian, didactic device to the attention of its readership (Figure 11). It gives textual advice on the 'ritual' to follow to gain access to the Exhibition without worrisome troubles, and provides visual evidence of the typical local '*kiosques*' located on the streets of the capital, in the vicinity of the Exhibition's entrances. In that regard, it might be argued that the newspaper somewhat assists not only potential visitors in its readership to enjoy their journey, but also the Exhibition organizers, who have decided to set up ticket sales in such a way. However, the publication also conveys an original piece of information which is remote from the official communication by reporting on the contemporary French argument over the choice of the English word 'ticket' instead of '*billet d'entrée*'.

This phase of the passage from the outside to the inside of the Exhibition is deemed of enough importance to be dealt with in the second series too, at the beginning of the first full day of the English family in Paris, as the father, who is the exhibitor of a boot-cleaning machine, wants to clear the entrance (Figure 12). The particular circumstances of the family give an opportunity to present the reader with a different situation than in the first series. The father does not have to buy a ticket, but to show 'his ticket with the photograph at the back.' There is also a slight progression in a virtual storyline running between both series: from the moment of the purchase of tickets at the *kiosque* in the first series, the second series brings readers to the next stage in the visit of the Exhibition, with the actual clearing of the entrance gates.

The narrator can ridicule the vanity of her father and fellow exhibitors who, ‘when [they] were all requested to send two portraits of themselves to Paris [...], imagined that one would go to form a vast album of exhibitors, itself to be exhibited; while the other would probably be given to Marshal MacMahon.’⁴⁹ Beyond this mockery of the Englishmen themselves, the account also targets the wardens of the Exhibition who need to be ‘four or five’ to identify the person in the photograph with its bearer: this might be a small point but probably one the organizers would have rather not had been pointed out in a foreign publication or, indeed, any publication.

The visit to the aquarium specially developed in the side of the hill at the foot of the Trocadéro palace gives an opportunity for crossing another kind of boundary, from above the ground to the underground, from the terrestrial to the subaquatic. The first series underlines the originality of the structure which features artificial rock formations around the water tanks to create a feeling of a natural cavernous environment alike to a seabed (Figure 13). Alongside this innovative wrapping of the installation, the possibility for visitors to enjoy the contents of the tanks both from above and from the sides catches the attention of the reporter. In describing this, an itinerary unfolds, first at ground level, with ‘the visitor first wend[ing] his way, crossing waterfalls and rivulets by means of rustic bridges’. The tour goes on, as ‘a flight of steps is descended, and the visitor finds himself in a tortuous series of subterranean grottoes’. Overall, although the surroundings might be slightly unsettling by their original character, the visit can be entirely appropriate, as the picture evidences, with a diverse selection of visitor shadows strolling in the ‘grotto’.⁵⁰

The visual representation of the same aquarium ‘all amongst the fishes’ in ‘All the World at Paris’ displaces again the gaze by comparison with a previous interpretation given in the first series (Figure 14): it also shows visitors but only seen in the grottoes through a light-hole from ground level.⁵¹ Through ‘another precious

⁴⁹ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, p. 147.

⁵⁰ ‘In the Aquarium’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 538.

⁵¹ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, p. 156.

sketch', a detail never mentioned elsewhere is drawn to the reader's attention on an impertinent tone: 'as you look down [...], fish and men are so mixed up that you can't tell which is which.' Rocks frame the view; fishes come to the surface, with human silhouettes distinguishable beyond, 'ghostly figures of odd fish, Johnny Dorries and Anne Chovies, sail silent past the window.'⁵² Humorously, the narrative points out the blurring of the boundary between exhibits and visitors with transforming fish names into individuals' names, or perhaps the opposite.

These choices of images and related commentaries make one appreciate the variety of ways messages and information can travel from their creator to their intended audience. From either end of the communicative process, this situation makes the acquisition of knowledge or the control of the crowds even more difficult. This feeling of complexity might be the idea referred to by one of the multiple literary references which highlight most episodes of 'All the World at Paris'. Thus, on the first full day the family spends in Paris, the day after their arrival from Britain, the second episode starts with a quotation from Chapter 21 of Voltaire's *Candide* when 'Candide and Martin, while thus reasoning with each other, draw near to the coast of France'. Literary references are not selected at random; both were chosen for their relevant content but also for the context in their original publication. The exact quotation is as follows, in French in the text: '« Mais, Monsieur Martin, avez vous vu Paris? » « Oui, j'ai vu Paris ; c'est un chaos, c'est une presse dans laquelle tout le monde cherche le plaisir. »'⁵³

A view of 'one of the paradises of the Champs-Élysées' might precisely develop in the Paris of 1878 the spirit of Monsieur Martin's comments (Figure 15). After the journey to Paris, a first stroll leads the family to the Champs Élysées, between the *Café Dansant* and the *Cirque d'Été*. This is not surprising as the 1878 *Cook's Guide*, for instance, would rate the Champs Élysées 'the finest promenade in Europe', 'present[ing] a panorama of the greatest gaiety.'⁵⁴ The head of the family is full of morality and cannot reasonably draw his wife and children to the *Café*

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵³ Voltaire, *Candide or the Optimist* (London: George Routledge, 1888), p. 77: "But pray, Mr Martin, were you ever in Paris?" "Yes, sir, I have been in that city, [...]. It is a chaos, a confused multitude, where everyone seeks for pleasure [...]"

⁵⁴ Moonen [1878?], p. 33.

Dansant, described as ‘one of the paradises of the Champs Elysées’, but definitely a gendered paradise as shown by the audience depicted, mostly made of men of all ranks, distinguishable thanks to their hats – soldiers, officers, gentlemen, labourers – while the stage in the distance only displays a female performer. By contrast, the *Cirque d’Eté* was a more respectable show.

Ignoring the transformations the urban fabric of Paris has been through since the time of Voltaire, and any attempt to distinguish the space of the city and the space of the Exhibition, the literary reference introduces quite clearly a critical dimension right from the start of recounting the event. In the same way as Candide and Martin travel with the knowledge and clichés accumulated from previous experience, hearsay and information accumulated before their journey inform visitors’ behaviour in the city and the *Exposition*. Whereas the organizers of the latter are motivated by scientific ambitions, the overall quest for entertainment in the urban environment comes in the way of visitors who want to engage with the original Exhibition’s purposes, in the pursuit of knowledge.

2. The pursuit of knowledge

With a view of our family at ‘The Pursuit of Knowledge’, the third picture for the second episode of ‘All the World at Paris’ is very striking in representing a group performing conventional attitudes of visitors within the Exhibition (Figure 16). Uniquely, in this image, all the family appears together. Connecting the series with utilitarianism, the image’s title might have been inspired by the book of G. L. Craik (1799-1866), *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, illustrated by Anecdotes*,⁵⁵ which aimed at promoting and celebrating ‘self-taught heroes’ who

⁵⁵ George Lillie Craik’s *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, illustrated by Anecdotes* (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1881) had first been published in 1830-31 by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and again in 1858 and 1865.

would inspire the reader.⁵⁶ Similarly, with the series of *The Graphic*, readers were implicitly invited to identify with or follow the different characters in their adventure.⁵⁷

The sense of vision is fundamental. Gazes and gestures create connections between the group and its invisible surroundings and illustrate alternatives in the way to engage with the Exhibition. The vicious look towards Lolly of the contrived draughtsman pulling the armchair might suggest the difficulties of the pursuit of knowledge. This could apply especially for women with the possibility of various dangers along the route, in the wider urban environment, and even within the secluded grounds of the Exhibition itself.⁵⁸ At the other end of the image, ignorant of these, Charlie points up towards the rear of the procession, suspended to the edge of the cab. Sitting in the latter, maybe disorientated, his father seems the only one busy with giving a reasonable direction to the group. However, his signs are somewhat contradictory, with his left arm and finger towards the left, and the right hand holding his cane pointing toward the fore and the right of the group. Charlie and his father look directly at their environment, and their movements seem inspired by irrationality and passions.

By contrast with the physicality of the masculine experience as illustrated here, female characters have a mediated practice of the Exhibition, keeping socially appropriate female manners and attitudes. Lolly stands on the ground in the forefront, head tilted and both hands holding some reading material, featuring a headline 'Guide' on the left page. In contrast to the rest of the family, walking along the cab, focused on her reading, she seems pensive, somewhat isolated. Her sister Lilly is seated at the front of the cab, facing their father, back to the viewer, holding her sketchbook in her left hand, and looking up towards the rear left of the group. While she graphically interprets her observations in her sketchbook and Lolly relies

⁵⁶ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 242: 'Craik's volumes were designed to be to the early machine age what collections of saints' legends had been to the Middle Ages: a vehicle of consolation, guidance, and inspiration, though couched in secular and primarily materialistic terms.'

⁵⁷ The complete absence of geographic information as to the origin of the family was an incentive to do so.

⁵⁸ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, p. 147.

on contextual information provided by a printed guide, their mother walks along the left side of the cab, looking straight towards the distance with her pince-nez, as lost in her thoughts, apparently in complete ignorance of the rest of the family.

This single image gives a polymorphous impression of how a wider diversity of visitors may carry out the pursuit of knowledge and the exploration of the grounds. There may be only one cab tracing the way ahead, but there are also side paths, and the observation is not restricted by the Exhibition itself, as the group appears on a blank background, without any overwhelming limitation or constraints but the disharmony of their individual attitudes. Although marked by a gender divide in their position on the Exhibition grounds, all members of the family show characteristics of the *flâneur/flâneuse*, who ‘was not a figure of either/or exclusions (masculine or feminine, public or private), but embodied precisely the undecided, the uncertain, in bourgeois experience of the city.’⁵⁹ The diversity of characters and the movement of the cab suggest there is no unique viewpoint.

Moreover, the surroundings are not only indiscriminate, invisible; they also give multiple occasions of engagement, numerous points of entry. Undecided, seemingly aimless, our family reproduces a behaviour the *flâneur* could experience outside the Exhibition’s boundaries on the newly developed Parisian boulevards of the *Quartier de l’Europe* and the *Opera*, and the teenage girls – reading, writing, drawing – take part in the adventure as much as the male characters do: ‘The *flâneur* is the person who strolls aimlessly in the modern city, observing people and events, perhaps (if the *flâneur* happens also to be a writer or an artist) with a view to recording these observations in word or image.’⁶⁰ The reader’s imagination is stimulated by the diversity of options prompted by their various gestures, which seem everything but disciplined.

Because of its emphasis on the movement of the visitors and the means of transport to go through the grounds, this family scene might be a sort of sequel of a

⁵⁹ Aruna D’Souza and Tom McDonough, eds, *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 9.

⁶⁰ Janet Wolff, ‘Gender and the Haunting of Cities (or, Retirement of the Flâneur)’, in D’Souza and McDonough 2006, pp. 18-31 (p. 18).

view of the first series titled ‘The Tramways at the Trocadéro’ (Figure 17).⁶¹ There was indeed a range of options to choose from to go all over the Exhibition, the ‘*fauteuil roulant*’ being one example, alongside the tramways. The main concern driving this wide offer of vehicles was the physical comfort of visitors, inevitably falling victim of so-called ‘exhibition fatigue,’ and the time saved allowed by avoiding long walks from one end of the Exhibition to another. Saving visitors both fatigue and time might have given organizers greater opportunities to ‘discipline’ their experience of it.

If it is true that the first series provides a rather neutral account of the Exhibition, it also gives its readers some spicy pictures to lighten up the overall informative tone of the series. Indeed, even more strikingly than the image of the tramways, ‘The Pursuit of Knowledge’ might have been the sequel of another picture of the first series precisely focused on the behaviour of visitors and their ways of engaging with the exhibits. Its title is ‘How some see the exhibition’ while the title of its description is ‘how to enjoy the exhibition’ (Figure 18).⁶² As far as can be seen from the rather low viewpoint of the picture, six visitors, probably two women and four men (if it can be inferred from the hats) in different parties, are seated on one of the round sofas at avail in the Exhibition.

Seated almost facing the viewer, the most striking of these characters is a man with a wide beard wearing a clear hard hat and trousers with a dark jacket, a walking stick on his right side. Arms crossed, his face can barely be seen, with his head tilted forward and the edge of the hat acting as a blind as the man seems to have a snooze. This is just one example of seemingly observed behaviours in the Exhibition. On his right hand side, further around the sofa, another man wearing a bowler hat is busy reading a broadsheet publication whose interior page features a full-page human silhouette, presumably without any relation with the Exhibition itself. On the other side, the only clearly visible woman holds a wicker basket on her lap on an apron, and might be in the process of having her own pique-nique.

⁶¹ ‘The Tramways at the Trocadéro’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 436.

⁶² ‘How to Enjoy the Exhibition’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, pp. 583-4.

In line with the mostly informative and descriptive editorial line of the first series, the accompanying text makes the reader aware of the possibility of ‘tiring out’ and also of the scarcity of sofas throughout the Exhibition. The slight transformation between the title of the illustration and the title of the text involves a significant modification of meaning, from a descriptive clause, with the image (‘how some people see’), to a prescriptive clause, with the text (‘how to enjoy’). Alongside the visual depiction of some behaviours actually taking place, the text complements the picture by advising the reader: ‘you can enjoy a very pleasant hour watching the ceaseless tide of people flowing past – a crowd composed of all classes and of all nations, from the humble *bonne* and her basket to the Chinese mandarin.’⁶³ The theoretical transposition of panoptic and panoramic visions as technologies of discipline in the field of the Exhibitions, which supposedly

allow the people to know and then to regulate themselves; to become, in seeing themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation.⁶⁴

With particular focus on the first illustrated series, this chapter has shown so far the role played by newspapers in the official communication of the Exhibition. Several examples have also demonstrated newspapers’ ability to emancipate themselves and take their distance from this more or less coherent and consistent ensemble of messages, notably to provide readers with different material and information from their competition. In doing so, the practices illustrated and commented were either compliant, or in contradiction, with the organizers’ vision, but always within the general purpose of the visit. ‘Victims of the conscription enjoying their last moments of freedom’ goes further in the level of physical disruption with taking an example of intentionally disruptive behaviour going on in the city and past the railings within the Exhibition (Figure 19).⁶⁵ Challenging further

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

⁶⁴ Bennett 1995, p. 63.

⁶⁵ ‘Victims of the Conscription Enjoying Their Last Moments of Freedom’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 584.

any attempt to discipline the public, new conscripts who have been unlucky in the draw 'are consequently spending their last few hours of freedom in seeing as many sights as they can in the shortest possible time' and 'they are making the best of the time that remains to them by indulging in the most noisy, and frequently the most reckless, jollity.'⁶⁶ The picture includes a couple of '*sergents-de-ville*' watching the eccentric behaviour but there is no explicit encounter between them and the conscript.

3. Visitors and authority

By contrast, the next type or the next level of representation of practices and behaviour performed in the Exhibition precisely involves the confrontation between authors of a disruptive behaviour and figures bearing the authority within the boundaries of the event. This kind of situation is not represented very often, and this is what makes this type of illustration particularly meaningful and valuable in the examination of the circulation of messages and the level of freedom enjoyed by visitors and information alike in the Exhibition. Both series under scrutiny in this chapter present one occurrence each of this encounter between a visitor's practice and keepers of the rule, and both examples revolve around the execution of drawings after objects put on display in the Exhibition.

In the first series, the title of the illustration is a quotation of the words pronounced by a warden in the Exhibition to the attention of a well-dressed gentleman who, in an unusual professional self-portrait, has a notepad and a pencil out somewhere on the grounds (Figure 20). The commentary explains that the artist has been 'arrested' and denounces 'a curious red-tapeism [...] as regards sketching'.⁶⁷ There has been indeed a long history of paranoia surrounding the looting of industrial knowledge during Exhibitions where innovative articles are put

⁶⁶ 'The Last Moments of Freedom', *Ibid.*, p. 583.

⁶⁷ 'Our Artist Arrested', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583.

on display to an international audience. Here, the newspaper also complains about the devolution of power given to every national commission for granting authorizations, which makes the process even more cumbersome. The periodical develops an ironic tone: in the visual representation, the ‘artist’ does not seem to draw anything specific in particular detail which would breach any patent or copyright. In the writing, the tone becomes sarcastic when the commentary makes obvious the fact that even informative questions, for instance ‘of the Dutch policeman as to what fuel a certain hearth in the Dutch house was intended to burn,’ the writer ‘was asked for his “permission” before he could obtain the required information.’⁶⁸

The same situation of censorship takes place in the second series, contributing exceptionally to a perception of control of the visitors in the Exhibition grounds (Figure 21). The father drags the family to admire the ‘*Costumes populaires du Pays Bas*’, an exhibit of dressed wax mannequins, and a popular one ‘for a great and excited crowd were squeezing past the dummies’.⁶⁹ Visitor silhouettes suggest the exhibit was very appealing to a lower-middle class, prompting Lilly to ‘take out her book to sketch the faces of the unaesthetic crowd.’ The mannequins reproduce pairs of characters in everyday situations, in separated bays beyond a railing. On the right, a warder catches Lilly ‘*in flagrante delicto*’ drawing in her sketchbook. This dramatized encounter with the Exposition authority entails an idea of gaze control. However, this control does not work in terms of guidance, of containment and orientation of the visitors’ gaze. At stake here, like in the first series, is the dissemination of the content of the Exhibition, whereas Lolly’s and Lilly’s interest lies in visitors, as a subject for amusement and distraction. In both cases, the power of the Exhibition’s organization is ridiculed by the situation which does not do it a favour, rather proves its pointless character.

The performative dimension of the Exhibition as illustrated in illustrated newspapers emphasizes the distinctive environment which the event creates within its boundaries, although very much included in the urban fabric of the capital. This

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 459, Saturday 14 September 1878, p. 270.

physical proximity also found an echo in the process of visit of the Exhibition, which involved long and at times tiresome strolls throughout the grounds, among the immensity of the international halls and the diversity of national and exotic pavilions. The distinctiveness of the place might have also come with specific figures of authority enforcing the regulations set for the appropriate running of the Exhibition, but visitors might also have been in a position to make up their own mind about the exhibits, without having to be contained in too tight a general control.

C. Authenticity

Eventually, in a space with unique specificities as examined earlier, a ritual entails particular ends, an outcome resulting from the performance of which the previous section gave some examples. Inevitably, in order to understand more fully the circulation of meanings in the Exhibition, thoughts have to focus on the nature of this outcome. If one is to adopt a view of Exhibitions as a space for controlling the people, the outcome of the rituals they involve would be the internalization of this controlling spirit pervading through the organization of the event. From the period publications, it is possible to understand that one of the strongest impressions and most important elements of knowledge that visitors must go with as they leave the Exhibition is a sense of authentic experience, that they have been enabled to see the world and its industrial and artistic creativity as a result of the gathering of articles shipped from all the corners of the world. As seen earlier on, the appreciation of the idea and staging of progress is not unambiguous and safe from criticism. What, then, about the experience of authenticity?

1. Authenticity as a key element of the Exposition

Even more so than in the specification of the Exhibition's space and the performance it sheltered, the two illustrated series under scrutiny give a contrasted understanding of the notion of authenticity throughout the event. As mentioned earlier, the first series was chronologically and semantically closer to the messages included in the official Exhibition communication, and this translates particularly in messages pertaining to the idea of authenticity. By contrast, alongside the critic of progress and modernity touched upon earlier in spatial terms, the family of the second illustrated series seems geared towards a comprehensive unveiling of the deceitful character of numerous exhibits and entertaining amusements.

The first series focuses on a wide diversity of exhibits. Images and commentaries dealing with foreign presentations or topics related to exotic regions and crafts are remarkably numerous, interspersed within different issues among pictures about Western exhibits. Thus, in one of the first issues of the series, readers can learn about 'Chinese workmen painting cases' (Figure 22), and 'Fraternity - Under the same umbrella' (Figure 23) arising between Western and Eastern workers gathered together to prepare the Exhibition ready for the opening day.⁷⁰ Later on the series leads readers toward 'the Japanese gate',⁷¹ 'the oriental bazaar',⁷² 'the Japanese farm',⁷³ and 'a cooling stream from Japan' (Figure 24 and Figure 26).⁷⁴

The last moments of the preparatory works might not have been the elements the Exhibition's organizers would have preferred to see illustrated. Their representation none the less supports their efforts with conveying to the readership ideas of good harmony among peoples and originality of the gathering of exhibits their authentic yet exotic provenance allows. Thus, the reporter for *The Graphic*

⁷⁰ "'Fraternity' - Under the Same Umbrella', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7.

⁷¹ 'The Japanese Section', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 511.

⁷² 'The Oriental Bazaar', *Ibid.*, pp. 511-4.

⁷³ 'The Japanese Farm', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583.

⁷⁴ 'A Japanese Fountain', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 447, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 610.

describes Chinese workmen ‘who [...] retain their national costume, arrived early in January, and have certainly worked hard and successfully at their building, which is of taste and workmanship.’⁷⁵ Around the same period, in a rarely depicted scene, the report captures the good spirit governing the relations between workers on the building site of the Exhibition, (Figure 23) ‘when Jacques Bonhomme and John Chinaman [...] are going home under the same umbrella, which, by the way, manifestly belongs to the latter.’⁷⁶

Several comments may leave the reader with few doubts on the authenticity of the experience offered to visitors. The reporter notices the ‘orthodox Japanese fashion’ of the Japanese farm’s interior fittings, ‘in the grounds of the Trocadéro’ (Figure 24).⁷⁷ In the Algerian court, the commentary delights in the description of the surroundings, ‘one of the handsomest structures of the Exhibition’, whose ‘chief entrance [...] is copied from the well-known Mosque of Sidi-bou-Medina, while the side entrances are taken from the Mosque of Medersa.’ The attention is also directed towards the ensemble of exhibits gathered within, ‘an exceedingly good one, and comprises all the products and manufactures of Algeria, from alimentary exhibits to carpets’ (Figure 25).⁷⁸ Similarly, in the oriental bazaar, buildings, items on show, and fashion the staff wears, give the whole experience an exotic feel. However, in the same way as in the previous example, this commentary does not tell anything about the actual origin of the people responsible for the special spot of the Exhibition (Figure 26).

This focus on the physical inanimate environment created by the various pavilions and other structures scattered across the grounds is not surprising, since this construction of an amazing ephemeral space plays a large role in the overall entertaining and edifying significance of the Exhibition. This is what the event’s organizers would want visitors to keep in mind. This is what visitors would be interested in and would remember once they cleared the exits of the event, and what

⁷⁵ ‘The Paris Exhibition of 1878’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 431.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ ‘The Japanese Farm’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583.

⁷⁸ ‘The Algerian Court’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 448, Saturday 29 June 1878, p. 634.

readers would want to know about, thanks to the role of proxy the illustrated newspapers played for many of them. The role of authenticity is as crucial for the success of the Exhibition as it has been earlier on in European cabinets of curiosities. In this descriptive process, the aesthetic, and, hence the sense of vision, are crucial. Authenticity can be found in the unique character of original items or with the display of objects loyally replicating vernacular forms, as in the Algerian court.

2. Authenticity as an object of visitor enquiry

This focus on the tangible inanimate content of the Exhibition contrasts with the critical approach the second illustrated series favours in sharing the specific character of the Exhibition experience. Indeed, as seen earlier on, the emphasis on the visible which the first series contains seems balanced by an emphasis on more physical types of experience in ‘All the World At Paris’, in particular eating and drinking, as shall be examined now. This relates to the impression of a critic of ocularocentrism which some images seem to support. In terms of outcome, the second series distances itself from the narrative of authenticity, apparently in order to stimulate genuine proactive curiosity and an inquisitive mind-set in the reader’s attitude, in line with the utilitarian values touched upon at the beginning.

The first stop of this multi-sensorial experience is in a ‘café hollandais’ located on the south-western side of the palace on the Champ de Mars, towards the avenue de Suffren, in an outdoor landscaped area on the same side of the palace as the hall spaces allocated to foreign countries.⁷⁹ Very close to the avenue de la Motte-Picquet, this is a place that visitors entering the Exhibition through this area would encounter very quickly as the narrator does in the illustrated series. The second stop is at the Hungarian café nearby, then at the ‘buffet russe,’ and eventually the family crossed the Seine to visit the ‘café du Maroc’ at the foot of the Trocadéro. In addition to the visual appreciation of the singular surroundings, visitors can experience

⁷⁹ X. Rambler, ‘Impressions d’un flâneur à l’Exposition’, in Bitard 1878, p. 274.

traditional drinks and music to agreeably complement their experience of the foreign galleries.

‘It was unwise (mamma said so at the time) to begin with liqueurs at the Dutch Café at eleven o’clock in the morning.’⁸⁰ The second picture transports the reader into a European setting for ‘A Dutchman’s Draught’ (Figure 27). In the foreground, walking out of the picture towards the viewer, a waitress in a traditional Dutch dress carries a small serving dish with a sherry glass on it. On the right, a well-dressed man wearing a boater sits alone with his arms folded, with a vicious side glance at the waitress. Behind him, a couple of shelves bring on display an ensemble of indiscriminate jars and bottles. The visit account gives out details about this environment, via the admiring comments voiced by Lilly, who ‘was in ecstasies.’⁸¹ This stall was noticed in contemporary accounts for the completely authentic experience it allowed, with even the waitresses coming from Flanders. In the context of the narrative and the newspaper’s communication of the Exhibition’s content, this provided a backdrop to less genuine situations.

In the Hungarian café, a band of four musicians sitting on a nicely ornamented plinth adds the musical stimulus to the intake of strong alcohols (Figure 28). The emptiness of the scene, with some plain tables, an old bearded and moustached waiter, only dissimulates the excesses of our family dealing with a bottle of Tokay. The title of the picture gives the overall impression of the setting: ‘Hath Music Then No Charms’. The visual inspection is still satisfied with an encounter with real local people, although this is not a nice encounter as they ‘shot glances [...] which were simply *fiendish*.’⁸² Although this sequence supports the idea of authenticity, it also introduces some unease into the intended harmony of the Exhibition project. Within the newspaper, this is odds with the mention of the same location in the first series (Figure 29). Then, sixteen ‘*Tzigane* musicians’ were ‘certainly worthy of their popularity, for their execution of their wild and weird

⁸⁰ ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 202.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 203.

national airs and Strauss' waltzes is perfectly marvellous, and attracts a veritable crowd of all nations every day.'⁸³

Moving on to the Russian counter, further along the south-western façade of the palace on the Champ de Mars, visitors notice the foreign origin of the waitresses (Figure 30). The edge of a stand counter says 'Liqueurs russes', 'Kvassé', and 'B[ois]sons Ra[fr]aîchissan[tes]' for a moment 'A la russe.' Russian liquors and the divide between female salespersons and male customers imply a sensuous atmosphere. This contrasts with the assumed naivety of the teenage girl narrator, but it may be consistent with *The Graphic's* objectives of targeting a family audience: this kind of scene might have been of interest to masculine readers, and it could also been used as a lesson in morality for the girls. Morality is not too endangered anyway, at least visually: our family is kept away from the scene. There is a distance from what happens as if the family had not taken part, whereas the text makes the opposite clear.

The lesson in civics given by the exhibitionary complex is not meant to happen and make sense within a single society but to function according to a colonial framework.⁸⁴ One can understand that power imposes physical or semantic mutilations – corresponding to the modern period's death sentences – on objects belonging to 'the other' in a position of submission, in order to strengthen its own domination and its own construction of meaning, indeed, its own vision. Bennett argues that, then, the power's gaze over the order of things has replaced the public's vision of the sentenced bodies.⁸⁵ International Exhibitions are opportunities to create a coherent narrative of knowledge, which connects Western culture with the rest of the world in a hierarchical relation.

⁸³ 'The Czarda, or Hungarian Café', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, pp. 535-8.

⁸⁴ Bennett 1995, p. 67: 'The power marked out the distinction between the subjects and the objects of power not within the national body but, as organized by the many rhetorics of imperialism, between that body and other, "non-civilized" peoples upon whose bodies the effects of power were unleashed with as much force and theatricality as had been manifested on the scaffold.'

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69: 'the crowd comes to commune with and regulate itself through interiorizing the ideal and ordered view of itself as seen from the controlling vision of power'. The move – noticeable in the history of international Exhibitions – from a rational classification of objects according to scientific criteria, towards a national and imperialist arrangement, in which objects and products are gathered together according to their producers and owners' origins, supports his point.

Lolly's diary indeed provides relatively many examples of this connection with the non-Western 'other.' Still – but for the last pavilion with the Moorish girls, who are 'not shams' – most occasions are fake spectacles which do not deceive. She denounces the staging and artificiality of the exotic experience: 'Scratch away, Lilly, in your sketch-book: you will soon find your model not a Tartar, but a Frenchwoman *à la Russe*. Alas, then, are all the costumes we see merely make-ups? Nearly all.'⁸⁶ The relations of meaning between narrative and illustrations reproduce for the reader the experience visitors lived in the attractions. The pictures account for the first impression of a genuinely exotic experience with indigenous people transported to the Exposition with their traditional customs and costumes. By contrast, the text provides evidence of a second stage of the experience when the deceitful nature of the live exhibit becomes obvious.

On the other side of the river, Morocco stands out from the rest of the colonial exhibits with a coffee house that visitors can enter for 1 franc, where 'Moresque music' of diverse tambourines can be heard while coffee is served '*à l'orientale*, that goes without saying'.⁸⁷ Beyond, the top hats of Western visitors sitting at traditional octagonal gueridons contrast with the turban and soft hats of the four Moroccan musicians. A young woman dressed in traditional Moroccan costume and bare feet is dancing in the centre with the music, tilting her head while agitating her light gauze (Figure 31). However, the girls uncover the 'accent [of a] thoroughbred Parisian' and Lilly gets the whole family into trouble because she starts 'to sketch, of course, and the girl quickly discovered it. She said the portrait of her papa was not nice enough.'⁸⁸

⁸⁶ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 203.

⁸⁷ 'V. Le parc du Trocadéro', in *Les merveilles de l'exposition de 1878* 1878, pp. 58-75 (p. 70).

⁸⁸ 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, p. 203.

D. Conclusion

One cannot dispute that the Great Exhibition in 1851 in the Crystal Palace ‘brought together an ensemble of disciplines and techniques of display’. Multiple disciplines were illustrated by various exhibits – which made the Universal Exhibitions universal. Techniques of display were as various as there were States and corporate exhibitors. However, that the Great Exhibition and its followers were ‘simultaneously ordering objects for public inspection and ordering the public that inspected’ may be questionable.⁸⁹ The ordering of things and the subsequent ordering of knowledge are not to be contested. The ordering of the public, though, however theoretically seductive, is less obvious in the Crystal Palace and in following Exhibitions. Paxton’s structure and subsequent thematic buildings were essentially designed to fit in every product and object brought there from every corner of the world, in a way that could allow for easy comparisons and contrasts between competing designs and manufacturers. Lolly’s diary and her sister’s drawings, and the first series seen above to a lesser extent, provide evidence that the Exhibitions’ audience was barely regimented, for instance when it comes to enjoy musical and culinary pleasures.

The exhibitionary complex would enable ‘the provision of object lessons in power’ which ‘allow the people [...] to know rather than to be known, to become the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge.’⁹⁰ Visitors are meant to play an active role in these lessons. Since the panoptical technologies of vision in use in the institutions of confinement imply a unidirectional gaze, Bennett does not conceive of the Crystal Palace as the exact reverse of the panopticon. Instead, the exhibitionary complex combines principles of panopticism and principles of the panorama; the Exhibition does not aim at dispersing the crowd, but only at regulating it ‘by rendering the crowd visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle.’⁹¹ This point might be illustrated by the episode of the table d’hôte at the Chatham, where a couple of female French guests seem to stare intensely at our

⁸⁹ Bennett 1995, p. 61.

⁹⁰ Bennett 1995, p. 63.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

family who had formed ‘a little oasis of chat by [them]selves.’⁹² Although this incident happens outside of the Exposition, it shows that gazes circulate in multiple directions.

From the analysis of both illustrated series, visitors seem to have detailed the exhibits as much as they have looked at one another. Images and comments give indications about the nature of this reciprocal gaze of visitors, which seems to have been motivated more by the search for entertainment than by an interest in control. The international nature of the audience and the entertaining nature of a visit may have prevented the surge and spread of a self-controlling gaze, in favour of a gaze more attracted to everything picturesque and exotic. The reference to Foucault’s carceral archipelago suggests a society sharing a coherent and consistent set of traditions and regulations, performed publicly or enforced secretly, and simultaneously propagated in the entire social body. However, beyond the rules set by organizers, the components of the exhibitionary complex precisely lack this set of common traditions and regulations. The diversity of visitors prevents the realization of the panoptic dimension of the exhibitionary complex because the visitors’ gaze has interiorized different cultural backgrounds and refers to various systems of enforcement and behavioural conventions.

Besides, the focus on a top/down process may be the result of uneven archival and printed resources. In the process of history writing as well, the power/knowledge relations created in the past have an impact nowadays on our understanding and analysis of any given period and phenomenon: States and institutions have left behind material that the everyday fairgoer and Exhibition visitor may not have. Power/knowledge relations were disseminated within any Exhibition boundaries, alongside one another, competing to catch visitors’ attention. Understanding the exhibitionary complex as the site for the setting of coherent colonial relations between Western culture and ‘the others’ would also make sense, though this is, in the details, atomized in every country’s narrative, which is driven by different political and cultural agendas, and prevented by the incomplete staging of ‘the other’ with Western personnel. However, defining the Exhibition as an instrument of

⁹² ‘All the World at Paris’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, p. 147.

discipline and self-regulation of the crowd may be misleading. The exhibitionary complex only accounts for a part of Exhibitions, the part of power, which might be called, along the lines of de Certeau's conceptualization, *strategy*, 'that seeks to create places in conformity with abstract models,' 'able to produce, tabulate, and impose the space.'⁹³

It could be argued that the visitors to, and even the companies and sovereign states taking part in the Exhibitions have their own *tactics*, which 'do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it',⁹⁴ which 'can only use, manipulate, and divert the spaces' of the Exhibitions,⁹⁵ since, as de Certeau points out, 'the space of a tactic is the space of the other'⁹⁶ and, 'in short, a tactic is an art of the weak.' When Bennett draws upon Foucault's carceral archipelago theory and includes Exhibition visitors into, and also renders them an instrument of, the power's gaze, he gives his own explanation of how the hegemony develops in the context of the Exhibitions. Though, if the visitor's vision spreads across the fairgrounds so that it can, at some point, become self-reflexive, giving the specious impression of a restrictive control, on the opposite, the tactical position of any visitors and some other stakeholders in the Exhibitions implies a diversity of points of view, individual creativity, a multiplicity of understandings and interpretations, and, crucially, a critical approach of the exhibitionary complex which challenges any attempt to implement really successful power/knowledge relations.

This is precisely what the fictional diary of Lolly and the drawings of her sister Lilly illustrate. Their femininity is mediated via literary references, the support of a guidebook and a pince-nez, the writing of the diary and the drawing of the pictures. Although the Exhibition guidebook might be an instrument of discipline for the visiting family, and especially its female members, it seems on the contrary a prompt for discovering and putting the emphasis on exhibits often left aside in traditional publications giving a comprehensive survey of the event, with the guidebooks precisely among these. Attributes and occupations therefore demonstrate

⁹³ de Certeau 1988, pp. 29 and 30.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

both a will to be equipped with the knowledge and apparatus needed to engage fully with the Exhibition, and the possibility of an analytical approach to the Exhibition, very often critical, reflexive and thoughtful. This approach in turn provides the readership of *The Graphic* with an unusual description of the *Exposition*, reporting about the event beyond the conventional stories fuelled by releases provided by the communication services of the *Exposition*.

The point of this chapter was to analyse both accounts and engravings published as ‘All the World at Paris’ and the earlier illustrated series published in *The Graphic* in the first half of 1878 as an evidence of visitor participation to the 1878 Paris *Exposition Universelle* and as a first-hand testimony, to further understand the way the public might have engaged with, and messages circulated within, Exhibitions. I have especially focused on the way the visitors’ gaze operates within the Exhibitions, and on what terms, in order to challenge a reading of the organization of Exhibitions as a disciplinary device to contain the crowd via self-control with the internalisation by fairgoers of an official controlling vision.

With the visual and written material about a teenage girl and family experience at the 1878 Paris Exhibition taken from *The Graphic*, it is clear the experience of visitors within the exhibitionary complex is diverse, involving senses beyond mere sight. If the material gathered here is rather tamed as for the importance of publicity and advertising of ideologies and products, it nonetheless signposts the weakness of any attempt at disciplining gaze, but for the observation duly carried out by guardians and warders. This makes the discipline more an instrument of the Exhibitions than one of its very objectives. Besides, the diversity of the characters encountered in the British family and beyond attests for a freedom of the gaze, and also for a gendered experience of the Exhibition driven by personal inclinations.

With both series, full of multisensory experiences, we are given the experience of an ephemeral space beyond the remaining image we can still scrutinize for understanding. The visit accounts still contain ‘effects of smell, sound, taste and touch, and the passage of time’ which our contemporaries concerned with the built environment complain about being ‘removed from the reading’ of the urban space

because of images which function ‘through visual seclusion’.⁹⁷ Whereas ‘the postcard image,’ and most engravings and photographs of international Exhibitions ‘conceal(s) the realities of the experience by becoming only a representation rather than an environment,’ the series of images analysed and commented above emphasize the realities of the experience by giving away the content of personal interactions with the environment.⁹⁸

Visitors look at themselves – that is at one another – not as subjects to control but as objects for attraction and something to be amused and bemused with. There is no evidence of visitors interiorizing any sort of controlling vision of the power looking at them. Individual interests are lively and strong. There is a strong interest in human types driven by a discerning gaze rather than a generalizing and wholly-encompassing one, a strong interest maintained when it comes to engage with visual arts too. The first run of reports published in the first half of 1878 and Lolly’s account of the Exhibition gives a valuable insight into the participation of visitors and their relation with messages conveyed via the various exhibits.

The three structuring themes of this chapter – space, performance, and authenticity – will reappear at various degrees in the following chapters. The engagement with the built environment, which was a crucial aspect of the visitor experience in the *Exposition*, is also a key factor in the preparation of the displays by participating countries and their exhibitors. In doing so, all stakeholders get involved in a performative sequence, in which they have to engage with the ideas and principles established by the organizers of the *Exposition* and negotiate these to introduce their own ideas, not least in negotiating the conflicting claims of nationalism. Authenticity is also a concept which pervades the event, not only from the visitors’ point of view, but also in the way the displays were prepared and, then, interpreted, as all involved also reflected more or less directly on the tensions between tradition and modernity.

⁹⁷ Philip Tidwell, ‘Place, Memory and the Architectural Image’, in *Archipelago: Essays on Architecture*, edited by Peter MacKeith (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2006), pp. 149-55 (pp. 150-1).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

II. The British Façades in the *Rue des Nations*

So far this thesis has been largely concerned with the actual experience of the 1878 Paris *Exposition*, in the tension between tradition and modernity, heritage and innovation, nature and culture, authenticity and deception. As discussed in the introduction, Exhibitions have also been remarkable for the architectural surroundings they prompted, as part of either a permanent or an ephemeral vision. Discussing an ensemble of architectural façades which involved both French and British stakeholders and made a strong impression on the public is therefore only legitimate. In doing so, this chapter continues the experiential dimension, the reactions to the built environment and the cultural and technological context explored in chapter I.

The 1878 *Exposition* in Paris was located around two palaces, on either side of the Seine.¹ This chapter focuses on what happened on the southern bank, inside the boundaries of the Palace on the Champ de Mars, in order to analyse what was at stake in the representation of Great Britain in the Exposition. Its aim is to elucidate both the processes which lead from the inception of a Universal Exhibition to the inauguration of the event, specifically examining examples of built architecture proposed by a foreign country, and the meanings circulating within the Exhibition as a consequence. Why did France suggest a façade for every country? What was the rationale for the overall design and for specific choices? What did the façades stand for? Who were the stakeholders involved in the conception and erection of the façades? Where did the whole process stand in relation to national ideas? How did foreign countries make use of International Exhibitions?

¹ Portions of this chapter were presented at the Prokalo Postgraduate Seminar Series/Architectural History and Theory, University of Edinburgh, The Maltings, on 6 February 2007; at the RX Futures Network: Nationalism, Internationalism and Regionalism, at the University of Birmingham, Barber Institute, Birmingham, on 31 March 2007; at the History of Art Postgraduate Day, University of Edinburgh, Alison House, on 27 April 2007; at the Ecole Internationale de Printemps, at the Terra Foundation for American Art, Giverny, on 13 June 2008; at Les Expositions universelles en France : Techniques, publics, patrimoines, in Paris (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, Archives nationales, Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie), on 16 June 2010.

From the outset, the idea of architecture as ‘a representational form of art’ also needs to be kept in mind to engage fully with the façades in the International Street.² Because Victorians likened buildings to books or portraits of their contemporaries, architecture was meant to convey messages and ideas, in line with a long classical tradition of architectural styles and ornamentation. To some extent, buildings were designed to become an intelligent and intelligible representation of the identity of a person or a community, through a truthful system of representation. These representational pretensions of architecture tie into the national interpretation of buildings. At stake here is precisely the extent to which the stakeholders have been loyal to this representational theory, the degree to which architectural forms are meaningful by association with cultural ideas or, potentially, only ‘forms for the forms’ sake’.

By dealing with Victorian and 19th-century architecture at large, the purpose here is not to identify any sort of stylistic pioneers on a supposed determined route towards modernism or, conversely, to point out design conservatives who would have kept historical styles and revivals alive. In contrast with diachronic ventures which study stylistic evolutions throughout time, the approach of this chapter is mostly synchronic, with focus on the rationale for the fashionable character of some architectural styles rather than of others, and their relationship to national identity at a specific moment in the century. The fact that, as Paul Greenhalgh asserts in his richly informed study, ‘in 1878 in Paris the English chose a heavy black and white Tudor palace for the national pavilion’, opens the way to several questions.³

Firstly, whose England is represented? The emphasis on the role of Exhibitions as international contests among national showcases conveniently relies on nationalism theory that draws on general statements about national identities. In the specific environment of an Exhibition, we may take advantage of the very limited number – the group of Englishmen involved in the process of creation and selection entailed by the preparation of a national display, to best understand who was

² Edward N. Kaufman, ‘Architectural Representation in Victorian England’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 46, No. 1, March 1987, pp. 30-38 (p. 30).

³ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 123.

responsible for the definition of national representations. How does this selection happen? What considerations are kept in mind to take decisions about the architectural representation of a specific country? To what extent is it a matter of choice, or a matter of national inner consensus, or a matter of agreement with the hosting authorities? Why is it at this specific time that specific historical periods are recalled from the past through associated designs, brought back to life in the present and even gesture towards the future to be featured prominently in the Exposition? As a consequence of the previous questions, to what extent is speaking about a 'national pavilion' as representative even relevant?

The scientific rationale of Exhibitions systematically ordering every artefact gathered together has given birth to this idea of Street of Nations or International Street, a project very loosely defined. However, that concept was to become a valuable arrangement for foreign countries and French organizers alike, giving an opportunity for foreign countries to build a highly original architectural statement, both visual and structural, simultaneously addressing matters of both aesthetic and technique. This chapter, as in the first, postulates an open-ended experience of the Exhibition. There may have been regulations constraining the presentation of national exhibits, however, this chapter hypothesises that various stakeholders such as sovereign countries were able to convey to visitors various messages they were interested in propagating to a large audience. Within the regulatory framework provided – in this case – by the French authorities, foreign countries such as the UK would have extensive freedom to arrange their exhibits in a customary way. Beyond these circumstances, there is the suggestion that the multiplicity of façades eventually put up on behalf of the UK represents a variety of different interpretations of the national idea.

More specifically, the concept of street architecture needs to be kept as a backdrop to the negotiation of the project. This notion was an important idea in the British architectural thought throughout the decades leading to the Paris gathering, especially from the second part of the 1850s onwards. The concept of street architecture was used to discuss the urban environment of different time periods and it gained importance throughout the course of the 19th century in the debates about city improvements. Street architecture focuses on the aesthetic dimension of the

space, and the transformation of its aspect via the architectural treatment of building façades and shop fronts. This was achieved by way of structure and ornament. As a consequence, materials, styles, and colours were key elements for architects to contribute to street architecture. A diversification and a sophistication of the features of buildings on commercial streets seems to have been a central concern so that façades would contribute to ornamenting the street.⁴ This interest for the external aspect also grew in reaction to the interest usually paid to shop interiors. Advocates of street architecture claimed both inside and outside deserved equal and appropriate treatment.

Since this chapter is about British architecture as represented in Paris, the concept of street architecture might be put in perspective against the French situation. Charles Eastlake allows for this, writing in the late years of the Second Empire, while he was the Secretary of the Institute of British Architects.⁵ From his comments, it clearly appears that the developments of Haussmann's Paris achieved the opposite effect of the objectives desired in Britain by those interested in street architecture improvements. A few pages after having defined 'taste' as the 'sense of the beautiful' Eastlake complained that 'the architecture of modern Paris is by no means all that a man of sound taste can approve. It is cold and formal in general effect.' The author contrasted with indisputable preference 'the long unbroken line of cornice, window-range, or parapet' of new buildings deemed 'uninteresting' with 'the quaint irregularly-built streets, the overhanging corbelled stories and high-pitched gable-fronts which rise before us as we read *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*' which infers a 'romantic interest'.⁶

The display of architecture from various geographical and cultural areas was not a world premiere within Exhibitions. For example, the 1867 Paris *Exposition*

⁴ Victor Delassaux and John Elliott, *Street Architecture, A Series of Shop Fronts and Façades, Characteristic of and Adapted to Different Branches of Commerce* (London: John Weale, 1855); 'Review: Examples of London and provincial street architecture', *The Art Journal*, Vol. VII, 1 April 1861, p. 128.

⁵ Trevor Keeble, "Everything whispers of Wealth and Luxury": Observation, Emulation and Display in the Well-To-Do Late-Victorian Home', in *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950*, ed. by Elizabeth Darling and Lesley Whitworth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 69-86 (p. 72).

⁶ Charles Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and other Details* (London: Longmans and Green, 1869), pp. 14-6.

featured a group of Russian houses, an Austrian village and a ‘*cottage anglais*’.⁷ However, the rational pretensions of the French organizers give it a special attractiveness, as this original framework makes any negotiation of terms and meaning clearer and therefore more interesting. As a consequence, it is first necessary to look at the brief set for this project of façades so that the British presentation can be fully understood and analysed.

A. An encyclopaedic vision and its negotiation

This first part scrutinizes the inception phase of the project which prompted the erection of a set of British façades in the 1878 *Exposition*, paying particular attention to the significant characters involved in the process from the first official decrees onwards, and to the concepts invested in the project, in particular as they relate to the national idea.

1. ‘A motif of national architecture’

The preparation took place over the months between the presidential decree announcing an *Exposition Universelle* in 1878 and the subsequent law voted on 29 July 1876 to prepare it, and the opening of the event. After the then President of the French Republic Marshal MacMahon had signed on the decree 4 April 1876 for the organization of a Universal Exhibition of Agricultural and Industrial Products,⁸ the *Direction des Sections étrangères* was created on 1 August 1876 to oversee the

⁷ Jeremy Aynsley, ‘Displaying Designs for the Domestic Interior in Europe and America, 1850-1950’, in Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant, eds, *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London: V&A Publications, 2006), pp. 190-215 (p. 192).

⁸ Adolphe Bitard, *L’Exposition de Paris (1878) rédigée par A. Bitard, avec la collaboration d’écrivains spéciaux. Journal hebdomadaire* (Paris: Librairie illustrée and Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878), p. 2.

general division of the Exhibition grounds and surfaces between the various participating countries outside and inside the international buildings.⁹ Perhaps predictably, foreign powers took a long time to send back their answer to the French organisation so as to communicate whether their state, their citizens and corporations would be to take part in the Exhibition.¹⁰ In the meantime, the *Direction des Sections étrangères* was able to clearly set the specifications for foreign representations in the Exhibition.

With a dispatch signed on 14 September 1876, the Ministry of Agriculture and Trade sent out the first comprehensive practical details to foreign governments.¹¹ The size of the Palace on the Champ de Mars was noticeably extended to accommodate larger fine arts displays. Every room would feature a skylight. Fire hazard was to be prevented by stone-masonry-built structures and groupings of displays separated by large open air avenues which could also be enjoyed by the visitors. Most importantly to our focus, foreign countries were not obliged to build a national pavilion on the Exhibition grounds. Instead, foreign countries were offered to achieve ‘an overall decorative work which would lend new glow to the Exhibition.’¹²

The French organizers were thereby answering concerns about expenses entailed by the *Exposition* to come, not long after the 1873 Vienna and 1876 Philadelphia ones. It would be a matter of emphasizing every section’s entrance ‘with a motif of national architecture set up as a façade on the 18-meter large open-air avenue’ doubly running across the building from the *pont d’Iéna* entrance hall on

⁹ Arch. nat., F¹² 3491, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Divers, Sections étrangères, Direction, organisation, Hand-written report by Georges Berger, 15 février 1879.

¹⁰ In his report to the Ministry, the General Commissioner noticed that the way the process of negotiations happened between the host and foreign countries about the allotment of exhibition spaces would give good landmarks to reconstitute the history of international relations at any given point. Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877* (Paris: Typographie Tolmer et Isidor Joseph, 1877), p. 16.

¹¹ Jean-Baptiste Krantz, *Rapport administratif sur l’Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881), Tome Premier, p. 395.

¹² Arch. nat., F¹² 3491, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Divers, Sections étrangères, Direction, organisation, Hand-written report by Georges Berger, 15 février 1879: ‘La dispense réglementaire de toute construction nationale dans le parc ajoutera un nouvel élément d’économie. Les organisateurs de l’Exposition se croient donc autorisés à faire aux nations étrangères la proposition d’un travail décoratif d’ensemble qui donnera un nouvel éclat à l’Exposition.’

the north-west, to the entrance hall across the *Ecole militaire*, on the south-eastern side of the building. Every national commission was free to select its architect who was assumed ‘to get on together with his colleagues to harmonize their partial plans and achieve a homogeneous and picturesque effect.’¹³ The Minister concluded the dispatch with the offer of a pilot project to give an idea of the eventual look potentially achievable with the building frontages. France was also to ornament her side of the open-air avenue with specimens of French architecture across history from the Gallo-Roman period, but that project did not come to fruition.¹⁴

The original idea came from Georges Berger.¹⁵ This is as significant as the profile of the figure epitomizes ideas contained in the project itself. Born in Paris on 5 October 1834, Paul Louis Georges Berger entered the *Ecole des mines* in Paris in 1855 after classical studies at the Lycée Charlemagne, to begin his professional career as an engineer for the *Compagnie des chemins de fer du Nord*.¹⁶ He soon entered in service with the foreign section of the 1855 Paris *Exposition Universelle*.¹⁷ He then came to the fine arts, becoming an art critic and an aesthete.¹⁸ He wrote for the *Journal des débats*,¹⁹ gave lectures at the *Ecole nationale des beaux-arts* as a supply professor of Hippolyte Taine, professor of history of art and aesthetics there

¹³ *Ibid.*: ‘Il s’agirait d’accuser l’entrée de chaque section par un motif d’architecture nationale établi en façade sur l’avenue découverte de 18 mètres, dont il a été déjà question (A.A. du plan). Il va sans dire que chaque Commission désignera, en tout cas, un architecte, celui-ci pourrait être chargé d’étudier le projet du tronçon de cette façade correspondant à sa section ; il s’entendrait avec ses collègues pour accorder toutes ces parties en un tout à la fois pittoresque et homogène. La Direction des section étrangères a pris les devants en faisant composer un avant-projet destiné à donner tous les éclaircissements désirables sur les hauteurs, les alignements et les aménagements compatibles avec le régime de la construction générale du Palais.’

¹⁴ Simon de Vandières, *L’Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée, suite de L’Exposition universelle illustrée de 1867, publication internationale autorisée par la Commission* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1879), No. 76, Décembre 1876, p. 151.

¹⁵ Hector Gamilly, ‘Les façades caractéristiques de la section étrangère’, *L’Exposition de Paris. Journal hebdomadaire*, No. 5, 4 mai 1878, pp. 34-5 (p. 34).

¹⁶ P. Vaucelles, ‘Berger (Paul-Louis-Georges),’ in *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, dir. by M. Prevost and Roman d’Amat (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1951), Tome Cinquième : Baltazar-Bergeret de Grancourt, p. 1515.

¹⁷ *Le Second siècle de l’Institut de France : recueil biographique et bibliographique des membres, associés étrangers, correspondants français et étrangers des cinq académies*, http://www.institut-de-france.fr/franqueville/affichage_fiche.cfm?page_acad=berger_geor.html (Accessed on 20/09/2009).

¹⁸ *L’Exposition de Paris. Journal hebdomadaire*, No. 4, 27 April 1878, p. 26.

¹⁹ Georges Berger, *Fondation d’un palais des arts...* (Paris: impr. de J. Claye, 1876), extract from the *Journal des Débats*, 7 February 1876.

from 1864.²⁰ When Berger was nominated to become the *Directeur des sections étrangères* in 1877, he had already had extensive experience of universal, fine arts, international, and national exhibitions. For the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*, he had been chosen by Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882) to be the *sous-directeur des sections étrangères*. In 1869, he was nominated as French Commissioner for the Amsterdam International Exhibition.²¹

The first known idea of composition, a sort of blueprint for how the south-west international front of the double inside avenue would appear, was prepared by Emile Bénard, *architecte attaché à la section étrangère*, and shortly thereafter published in three subsequent issues of the newspaper *L'Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée*, that had taken on the role played by the same publication during the 1867 *Exposition*.²² Henry Jean Emile Bénard (1844-1929) was trained at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* from 1863, winning the *Second Grand Prix de Rome* in 1866 and eventually the prestigious *Premier Grand Prix* in 1867.²³ During his stay in Italy, he was particularly interested in Renaissance architecture, but was only obliged to study Antique architecture to comply with the regulations of the school.

The idea of the French architect for the British façade is not of the most stimulating nature. The lengthy feeling of the avenue façade is barely made more attractive by the two turrets framing a long flat, horizontal and linear two-level front and roofline, which very thin columns divide regularly into tripartite bays. They give free access to large glazed windows. The same thin columns can be found around the turrets, suggesting that they could have a polygonal shape, possibly octagonal. Every ornamental feature of the design implies a Gothic feeling. However, there is no

²⁰ Georges Berger, *L'École française de peinture, depuis ses origines jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*, leçons professées à l'Ecole nationale des beaux-arts (1876-1877) (Paris: Hachette, 1879).

²¹ *L'Exposition de Paris. Journal hebdomadaire*, No. 4, 27 April 1878, p. 26. Later on, Berger was to become the General Commissioner for the 1889 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris. In his way he took up the *cursus honorum* completed by some of the Third Republic's most distinguished people, contributing to the creation of the *Union centrale des Arts décoratifs*, becoming a French deputy of Paris in 1889 as a progressive republican, presiding the *Société des Amis du Louvre*, entering the *Institut de France* when elected to join the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, and being awarded the distinction of *Grand-Officier* of the Legion of Honour. His role as a correspondent for the South Kensington Museum in London suggests specific connections with the UK (R. E. D., 'Art in France', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 17, No. 89, August 1910, pp. 308-9 (p. 309).).

²² Gamilly 1878, p. 34.

²³ M.-L. Blumer, 'Bénard (Henri-Jean-Emile)', in Prevost and d'Amat 1951, Tome Cinquième: Baltazar-Bergeret de Grancourt, p. 1398.

archaeological accuracy whatsoever, and this composition is closer to a Gothic Revival aesthetic than to the English Perpendicular. Further than that, Bénard offers here a very classical design, highly balanced, not inspired by any characteristics of the Picturesque. The scarcity of the ornamentation can easily be understood and explained by the ephemeral character of the proposed structure. However, the top balustrade is more reminiscent of a Renaissance Italian palace, or of Versailles, than a Gothic urban palace. Also understandable by the concern to keep expenses as low as possible and to make the most of the framework offered by the *Exposition* palace, the low profile of the pitched roof recalls neo-Gothic buildings erected in the previous decades all over the UK, notably the redevelopment of the Palace of Westminster following the design given by Charles Barry (1795-1860), which was the implicit reference for the façade design.²⁴

This design had been agreed by the United Kingdom, as the other national façades had to have been agreed by their recipient and represented countries. It is not completely clear, though, whether the countries actually agreed specifically on the proposition of design and ornamentation mandated by Bénard.²⁵ A contemporary administrative report the General Commissioner sent to the Ministry of Agriculture to account for the progress in the preparation of the entire Exhibition provides some information on this matter. What emerges from that source is that the idea in principle of ‘signalling every national exhibition compartment with a stretch of typical façade outside the fine arts quarter of the Palace was accepted as an attractive novelty.’²⁶ A later newspaper report about negotiations gives further details about the preparation:

In order to make foreign commissioners understand the programme of this exhibition of a new kind, the administration commissioned a large drawing of buildings showing various styles, appropriate to every

²⁴ Gamilly 1878, p. 34: ‘l’Angleterre, au lieu du palais du Parlement, nous présente sur sa longue façade [...]’ (England, instead of the Houses of Parliament, shows on its long façade’).

²⁵ Vandières 1879, No. 76, December 1876, p. 151.

²⁶ Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 1^{er} novembre 1877* (Paris: Typographie Tolmer et Isidor Joseph, 1877), p. 16: ‘L’idée de signaler chaque compartiment national par un tronçon de façade typique établi le long de l’avenue découverte des Beaux-Arts a été, dès le début, acceptée comme une nouveauté attrayante.’

people's ideas and needs, and following the same order as the sequence of exhibiting nations inside the palace.

It was a simple display; but as it was a very pleasant sight, and illustrated newspapers reproduced it, the general public could think it was a final design, and it was satisfied with it. Consequently, it was a great disappointment, when one learnt of the non-execution of this design.

In fact, truth is every nation wanted to be the only one who could judge for its own décor, so that the whole ensemble of façades built up on the inside avenue of the palace offers variety and unexpectedness which add up to its charm.²⁷

Another correspondent also preserved the suspense, only explaining that, 'on the inner side of the foreign division the architectural façades are some of them finished exteriorly, and all in progress'.²⁸ The overall aims of the architectural presentation in this inside avenue were not very clear. An article the Exhibition news service collected in October 1876 explained that 'in both of the main ranges [of the palace on the Champ de Mars], it is intended to construct façades, representing the most admired styles of house architecture in different countries', most certainly relying on the dispatch the French Ministry of Agriculture had sent to foreign governments the month before.²⁹ It is worth noting the slight shift in content and number from 'a motif of national architecture' (singular) to 'the most admired styles of house architecture' (plural).

The *Whitehall Review* reported that 'the façades on the outer sides of this gallery [would], it is stated, be adorned with representations of the favourite styles of house architecture in different kingdoms.' It added a humorous comment upon the

²⁷ 'Voyage autour du monde dans l'Exposition', *Nouveau Journal*, 16 March 1878, in Arch. nat., F¹² 3294/27, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat général, Direction de la presse, January 1876 – April 1878: 'Pour bien faire comprendre aux commissaires étrangers le programme de cette exhibition d'un nouveau genre, l'administration fit exécuter un grand dessin représentant des édifices de styles très divers, appropriés aux idées et aux besoins des peuples, et se succédant selon l'ordre dans lequel les nations exposantes se suivront dans le palais. C'était une simple démonstration ; mais, comme elle avait le mérite d'être fort agréable à la vue, et que les journaux illustrés la reproduisirent, le public put croire que c'était un dessin définitif, et il s'en montra satisfait. Aussi le désappointement fut-il grand, quand on apprit que le projet ne serait pas exécuté. Or, la vérité est que, chaque nation ayant voulu rester juge du choix de son décor, l'ensemble des façades construites dans l'avenue intérieure du palais offre une variété, un imprévu qui en augmentent beaucoup le charme.'

²⁸ 'Paris Exhibition', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1323, 29 March 1878, pp. 384-6 (p. 385).

²⁹ Arch. nat., F¹² 3265, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Exploitation, Service de la presse : coupure de journaux ; 'International exhibition of 1878 (From a correspondent)', unknown newspaper, Tuesday 17 October 1876, p. 8.

relationship of the Englishmen to their private housing and an interesting element as it pertains to the stylistic features of houses: ‘The ingenious Frenchman who suggested this idea can scarcely have been aware that the boast of an Englishman is not only that his house shall be his castle, but that his particular castle shall be different from that of everybody else.’³⁰

As far as can be understood from these two of British accounts of the French project, there is very little, if not anything about British national identity. Both sources either refer to unspecified ‘countries’, or to ‘different kingdoms’. Moreover, there is a feeling of interest in fashion, the wonderful and surprising potential of the plan with the desired selection of ‘the most admired styles of house architecture’. The ‘adornment’ of the palace inside fronts with these façades intended to decorate and beautify its overall aspect from the outside reinforce this feeling of fashionable interest. The idea of ‘style’ is certainly at the core of the scheme, however nobody seems assured *which* style should be privileged. Indeed, according to the correspondent for the *Whitehall Review*, there is a very obvious debate on architectural style in society, at least across the Channel, fuelled by the common, but nonetheless intimate feeling, that an Englishman’s ‘particular castle shall be different from that of everybody else.’ This comment leads straight to the second part in the analysis of the preparatory phase which deals with the actual preparation and selected designs for the façades erected on the Champ de Mars on behalf of the United Kingdom.

2. Negotiating the French idea in British terms

During the next Spring, in 1877, the periodical report of the General Commissioner to the Ministry gives additional details about the specific content of this project of *rue des nations*, explaining, that the ‘façades should be composed of the most

³⁰ Arch. nat., F¹² 3294/4, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat général, Direction de la presse, Jan. 1876 - April 1878; Gerald Wheeler, *The Whitehall Review*, 28 October 1876.

characteristics specimens of ancient or modern architecture of every country.’³¹ Later on, during the Autumn 1877, the General Commissioner goes on with the explanation of the exhibition concept. The latter actually introduces a modulation in the traditional and systematic arrangement of an International Exhibition as known in Europe from 1851 either in the UK or in France. Quality of the exhibits is a premium concern and aim for the entire *Exposition*. In addition to this interest in the quality of exhibits, the French Commissionership welcomes and encourages the idea of ‘collective exhibits’ – *expositions collectives* – that must be much more attractive than the stands and eccentric accumulations.³²

According to the British Commissioners’ report presented to the Parliament in 1880, the British authorities understood the French project in the *Palais du Champ de Mars* as follows: ‘the architectural façade [...] fronted the *Rue des Nations*, the central avenue of the Industrial Section, and illustrated the styles of architecture, characteristic of each of the contributing nations.’³³ From this very phrasing emanates a rather open-ended understanding, since ‘characteristic of the contributing nations’ is not particularly specific. One presumably could break down what constituent ‘characteristic’ parts create a ‘national’ character in architecture. The actual confusion about the French objectives with this project of ornamented frontages still appeared very late in one of the numerous publications printed for the readership interested in the Exhibition. As late as February 1878, one could read:

Nothing has yet been decided by the authorities as to the laying out of the Central Garden of the Champ de Mars. Although not official, the sketch, by Karl Fichot, which we reproduce, gives a sufficiently accurate idea of what this magnificent garden will be like. [...] In the background appears

³¹ Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877*, p. 16 : ‘Ces façades devaient être composées des spécimens les plus caractéristiques de l’architecture ancienne ou moderne de chaque pays.’

³² Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 1^{er} novembre 1877*, p. 16 : ‘Ils ont tous compris que l’on ne pouvait aujourd’hui attirer sérieusement l’attention du public par le simple étalage de nombreux produits, ou par l’amoncellement fantaisiste d’objets d’une valeur médiocre. Ils ont pris le sage parti de n’envoyer que des échantillons de choix et de les grouper dans des expositions collectives qui offriront par là même un puissant intérêt.’

³³ *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, to the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty*. Vol. I. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1880), p. 35.

a part of the façades of the foreign sections, each of which is built in the style of architecture peculiar to the country it represents. This immense building, nearly half a mile in length, forms a panorama in which visitors may admire specimens of every style of building in the civilized world, and foreigners will find a pleasing *souvenir* of their country.³⁴

The artist identified as Karl Fichot may likely be Michel Charles Fichot (1817-1903), landscape painter, architect, illustrator and lithographer. He had been trained at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris*, exhibited at the Salon from 1841 onwards. He worked for *L'Illustration* and for *Le Magasin pittoresque* as an illustrator.³⁵

A guidebook published in 1878 provides further depth to the process of negotiation of the French ideal by foreign countries. It also creates a connection between the ideal of the singularity of each and every façade associated with a particular country, and the possibility for foreign countries to free themselves from the intended pattern suggested by the organizers. By pointing out that ‘each section on the side of the Avenue Suffrén (sic) has a characteristic structure, illustrative of architectural native skill,’ the anonymous author of the guide bestows an additional meaning and way to be meaningful within the *Exposition*, alongside ideas of national identity and taste.³⁶ The notion of skill confers to the idea of national façades a technical significance by offering the opportunity to exhibit specific capability and expertise related to building. This interest and awareness is further confirmed in the coverage of the street published in *The Art Journal*: ‘The amount of artistic skill and labour bestowed on those two thousand feet of frontage alone will never be known, but it must have been enormous’.³⁷

Whatever interpretations of the concept was taken, it inevitably fell within tight financial limitations. The French authorities undoubtedly expected the foreign

³⁴ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 1, 22 February 1878, p. 7.

³⁵ The *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française* allows him until 1897 whereas Benedite traces him there only until 1875, although recalling a *mention honorable* in 1887.

³⁶ *The English Visitor's Guide to Paris and the Exhibition, with full information as to routes of travel, attractive scenery, places of interest, architecture, art, and science, in addition to a register of the principal manufacturers and merchants and a classified list of exhibitors* (London: Edward William Allen; New York: American News, [1878]), p. 79.

³⁷ ‘The Street of Nations’, *The Art Journal*, January 1878, pp. xi-xxi (p. xii).

participating countries to cover the expenses for their façades. Indeed, France was already paying for the complete development of both grand palaces on the *colline de Chaillot* and on the Champ de Mars. However, like other countries, the UK certainly had different views on the matter.³⁸ While the British Treasury had spent £126,000 for the 1867 Paris Universal Exhibition, it only secured £50,000 for the 1878 Exhibition, meaning that there was only £1.48 to be spent to every square meter, the smallest allowance made so far for any large international Exhibition held either in Europe or in Northern America. As a consequence, it is no surprise that the British Commissioners explained that the project of *Rue des Nations* ‘appeared at first to offer insuperable difficulties’.³⁹ From the report of the General Commissioner, it is evident that the plans for the British façades were completed at the latest by the end of October 1877.⁴⁰

By Spring 1877, long before the definitive arrangement of the British section, the General Commissioner Berger was already able to report that ‘the English façade on the 18-metre pathway [would] be among the most developed and the most interesting ones.’⁴¹ He was also pleased about the prospect of the British exhibition being ‘one of the first ready, one of the most brilliant and one of the most seriously instructive.’⁴² England eventually featured five specific façades on the *Rue des Nations*, ‘to give to each of the five houses a distinctive character, and to relieve the

³⁸ The General Commissioner actually mentioned this reluctance of the foreign countries in general to engage further expenses for this specific project. Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 1^{er} novembre 1877*, p. 16: ‘Lorsqu’il s’est agi de l’exécution, des difficultés ont surgi de plusieurs côtés ; on était tenté de reculer devant ce surcroît assez notable de dépense. Nous avons, heureusement, triomphé partout d’une résistance, qui n’avait pas laissé que de nous inspirer des craintes.’

³⁹ *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 1^{er} novembre 1877*, p. 16: ‘Toutes les commissions étrangères, sauf celles de l’Autriche-Hongrie et des Etats-Unis d’Amérique du Nord, ont déposé les dessins de leurs façades et ont traité avec des entrepreneurs nationaux ou français pour en effectuer la construction immédiate.’

⁴¹ Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877*, p. 18: « La façade anglaise sur le passage de 18 mètres sera une des plus riches et des plus intéressantes ; [...]. »

⁴² Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l’Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877*, p. 18: « La section britannique sera probablement l’une des premières prêtes et, à coup sûr, l’une des plus brillantes et des plus sérieusement instructives. »

monotony of a long, unbroken frontage.’⁴³ They stretched along 35 bays of the 2000 foot-long building front, each bay measuring about 16 feet.⁴⁴ The United Kingdom was thus displayed in this pedestrian street in the most original way: first, the diversity of projects for a single country made it unique in the whole alleyway; second, instead of selecting British official, civic, then, collective and political buildings which would be reproduced at the core of the Exhibition palace, the Royal Commission came with several ideas of what private architecture could be about at the time in Britain.

B. Taste and technology

A French guidebook neutrally explained that ‘visitors [would] find themselves first in front of English manor-houses’, thereby pointing out the way exhibition goers would have most likely approached the group of façades.⁴⁵

1. Taste, technology, and professional success

From the main vestibule on the north side of the Exhibition palace, the first British façade along the range, described as a bourgeois house for the country or the town – ‘une habitation bourgeoise pour la campagne ou la province’ – was built by William Henry Lascelles (1832-1885), following a design by Richard Norman Shaw, R.A.

⁴³ ‘English Houses at the Paris Exhibition,’ *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1859, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 461.

⁴⁴ *The English Visitor’s Guide to Paris and the Exhibition* [1878], p. 79.

⁴⁵ Livret-Chaix, *Guide du visiteur à l’Exposition universelle de 1878 : itinéraire en huit et en quatre jours : objets remarquables à visiter* (Paris: A. Chaix, 1878), p. 24 : ‘On se retrouve d’abord en face de manoirs anglais.’

(1831-1912).⁴⁶ More specifically, the enquiring observer could learn that ‘the first of these buildings replicates the style of architecture of the time of Queen Anne; it is the type of an English seigniorial 17th-century manor house: small one-floor mansion in red bricks, with white-stone balusters creating a balcony.’⁴⁷

Associated in contemporary London housing developments, Lascelles and Richard Norman Shaw were at the core of the negotiation of meaning operated by the British participation. W. H. Lascelles was a builder established on 121, Bunhill Row, London.⁴⁸ In 1878, like many other companies, he was showing new appliances and innovative fabrication processes in the exhibition halls, such as concrete domestic sink and floor tiling, all products and processes that were meant to cut building costs and make construction easier. Within the *Rue des nations*, Lascelles took up the occasion to show a life-size open-air exhibit, one which visitors could experience fully and keep vibrant memories of. Lascelles’ building system consisted of ‘a patented imitation of red brickwork [...] faced with thin slabs of Portland cement concrete, with smaller slabs of red concrete, the size of bricks; these slabs are screwed on to a timber framework.’⁴⁹

The underlying narrative of this exhibit discusses the possibility for architects and builders to erect detached family cottages quickly, with a reasonable comfort, at affordable prices for both tenants and landlords, and of a long-lasting quality. Lascelles’ patent, registered in 1875, gave the opportunity to cut building costs with dispensing ‘almost entirely with skilled labour.’⁵⁰ Indeed, along the 19th century, building costs remained stable in contrast with manufactured goods, with some materials like timber becoming more expensive, and some others like cement

⁴⁶ *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878, ouvrage rédigé par des écrivains spéciaux et des ingénieurs, illustré de vues d’ensemble et de détail, de scènes, de reproductions d’objets exposés, etc.* (Paris: Librairie illustrée et Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878), p. 112.

⁴⁷ Livret-Chaix 1878, p. 24 : ‘Le premier de ces édifices reproduit le style d’architecture du temps de la reine Anne, c’est le type d’un manoir seigneurial anglais du XVII^e siècle : petit hôtel en brique rouge d’un étage, balustres de pierres blanches formant balcon.’

⁴⁸ ‘English Houses at the Paris Exhibition,’ *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1859, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 461.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; ‘The British Houses on the International Façade,’ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 73; ‘Concrete Slab Cottages,’ *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1697, Saturday 14 August 1875, p. 731.

⁵⁰ A. E. J. Morris, ‘A Century of Concrete System Building’, *Building*, 13 June 1975, pp. 107-9.

becoming more affordable. In the meantime, labour costs rose.⁵¹ All surfaces, walls, floors, ceilings and roofs were made of these slabs, cut to fit exactly, and mounted on a wooden frame.⁵² This last characteristic attracted criticism from commentators who praised concrete precisely for its structural benefits but saw the use of a timber framework to bring together and support concrete elements as entirely counter-productive.⁵³

Born in Edinburgh from Irish descent by his father, and once an apprentice in the London practice of the Scottish architect William Burn (1789-1870), Norman Shaw himself was, at the time of the third Paris *Exposition*, a very successful London-based architect, ‘the most brilliant of all later Victorian architects’.⁵⁴ By then, he was well known for his ‘Old English’ or ‘Old Sussex’ design style for domestic architecture, developed from the first half of the 1860s and flourishing with increasingly numerous commissions towards the end of the 1860s.⁵⁵ His participation, fifteen years after having set up his own practice, could be considered as an acknowledgement of his professional and social status in the late 19th-century London society. From the early 1870s, Norman Shaw had been developing many projects of London townhouses with a Queen Anne vocabulary.

Here, therefore, his composition shows a harmonious façade extending over three floors, divided in three symmetric bays framed by elegant fluted pilasters. Visitors would have found a ‘vast, spacious, aeriou’ interior. A French ephemeral publication about the Exhibition rated the Queen Anne style as ‘very charming and, above all, very loved by English people’.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, an England-based counterpart newspaper would remind its readership that the Queen Anne style was

⁵¹ Richard Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 19-20.

⁵² ‘Concrete Slab Cottages,’ *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1697, Saturday 14 August 1875, p. 731.

⁵³ Andrew Saint, *Richard Norman Shaw* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 187.

⁵⁴ Andrew Saint, ‘Shaw, Richard Norman (1831-1912)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36050>, accessed 16 February 2007]; David Watkin, *English architecture: a concise history* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001; 1st edn 1979), p. 172.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 113: ‘Construite dans un style très charmant et surtout très aimé des anglais (sic), le style du temps de la reine Anne’.

then ‘so fashionable in London’.⁵⁷ In 1878, exactly at the time of the Exhibition, Norman Shaw and Lascelles published a collection of project drawings set in picturesque surroundings to attract potential customers, under the title *Sketches for Cottages and Other Buildings to be constructed on the patent cement slab system of W. H. Lascelles, from sketches by R. Norman Shaw, R.A.*⁵⁸

The question of this style needs to be considered for it has been traditionally a central matter in the representational role of architecture. Even if the Queen Anne style refers to an actual sovereign, its symbolic connotation evokes broader elements of British history and identity, of national power and confidence at a specific time in history. One of the outcomes of the Revolution of 1688 was a comfortable parliamentary monarchy with a sovereign accepted by the propertied classes. Later on, England developed foreign relations generally placing France as an enemy, for instance during the War of Spanish Succession and in the successes of Marlborough. Britain was opposing France in gaining supremacy overseas, against Louis XIV’s expansionist policies, and any project of Bourbon Catholic Empire, and French commercial competition.⁵⁹

Norman Shaw’s career supports the idea that “Queen Anne” flourished because it satisfied all the latest aspirations of the Victorian English middle classes. They had been growing in size, wealth, and sophistication, and the 1870s and 1880s found them at the height of their prosperity and power.’⁶⁰ For instance, in 1881, such a successful and fashionable portraitist as Frank Holl (1845-1888), who featured in the British Fine Arts Section for the Paris Exhibition with two subject pictures, *The Lord Gave and the Lord Taketh Away*, *Blessed Be The Name of the Lord* (1868, oil on canvas, Guildhall Art Museum, City of London), and *Leaving Home* (1873), would commission Norman Shaw to build two houses in the Queen Anne style, his studio house in Hampstead, ‘Three Gables’, and a country retreat in Surrey,

⁵⁷ ‘The British Houses on the International Façade,’ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 73.

⁵⁸ Richard Norman Shaw, *Sketches for Cottages and Other Buildings Designed to be constructed on the patent cement slab system of W. H. Lascelles, 121, Bunhill Row, Finsbury, London, E.C., from sketches and notes by R. Norman Shaw, R.A.; drawn by Maurice B. Adams, A.R.I.B.A.* (London: William Henry Lascelles, 1878)

⁵⁹ Paul Langford, *Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1-5.

⁶⁰ Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: The ‘Queen Anne’ Movement 1860-1900* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977; repr. 1990), p. 1.

‘Burrow’s Cross’.⁶¹ Earlier on, in 1875, Norman Shaw had designed houses in Melbury Road, Kensington, London, for two successful artists, Marcus Stone (No. 8) and Luke Fildes (No. 31, formerly 11).⁶²

Because the façade by Norman Shaw is lacking in a traditional context of patronage and commission, Frank Holl’s daughter provides interesting insights into the mind-set of contemporaries involved in the building commissions from her father: ‘Then came the momentous question of the choice of an architect, which was however, very quickly settled, Norman Shaw being selected.’ She would remember it as ‘a turning-point in Norman Shaw’s style, which had hitherto been more ornate [...]. The plan of the building was square, the façade having three large gables of perfectly symmetrical shape, facing to the road.’⁶³ She would also keep in mind Holl suggesting that Norman Shaw build ‘just a little place to run down to’, which the architect devised as ‘just a little cottage that you can shut up and take the key of when you’re not there.’⁶⁴

This socio-cultural situation of the English middle classes at this point in the century echoes the late 17th-early 18th-century social transformations which saw the rise of a wealthy ‘middle class’ or ‘middling orders’ along the traditional landed wealth. Both the earlier middling orders and their Victorian counterparts shared the search for a social status of their own, not based on hereditary and stability, but built on civil virtue and polite behaviour.⁶⁵ Moreover, this style may reveal more about the actual aims of the British Commission in the Exhibition, with the façade standing for an open-ended conception of the nation itself. The different façades not only illustrated a notion of diversity in the representation of that nation, but might have also reflected the variety of social groups and aesthetic tastes in the last quarter of the 19th century in Britain.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Julian Treuherz, ‘Frank Holl: “the graver, greyer aspect of life”,’ in Julian Treuherz, *Hard Times: Social Realism in Victorian Art* (London: Lund Humphries in association with Manchester City Art Gallery, 1987), pp. 73-82 (p. 73).

⁶² Watkin 2001, pp. 174-6.

⁶³ A. M. Reynolds, *The Life and Work of Frank Holl* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. 208.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

⁶⁵ Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain: 1688-1783* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 93-101.

⁶⁶ Girouard 1990, p. 1.

This participation of Norman Shaw and Lascelles also sheds light upon the conditions of the British display. The Royal Commission could not afford the full expense of façades to fit along the very wide stretch of palace front that faced the surface of exhibition hall actually occupied by British exhibitors. There, some of the latter were invited to profit by this unique way of exhibiting available in the palace, to put their goods on show in the most vivid and attractive way. At the same time, because the Exhibition was so successful with British manufacturers and traders, space allocated in the palace was not large enough to accommodate them all and the General Commissioner had to allocate some room around the palace for several annexes.⁶⁷ This shortage of space gave another favourable reason for the negotiation of meaning suggested by the French organizers and for the commodification of the space by the exhibitors.

A commentator shedding light on the structures for their French readership especially mentions the very inexpensive character of Lascelles' building system, which cuts the building expense in a significant proportion, explaining that this system 'allows somebody to have a house for a few thousands francs'.⁶⁸ This comment positions the project of the façade within the Exhibition and the motivation for Queen Anne reference in a broader cultural context: this is a style made up to overtake worn-out Gothic revivals, a fashion encouraged to suit the taste of a newly growing elite. This project, rooted in a historical depth, and also taking into account financial availabilities of potential customers in its present time, acknowledging the widening of the audience, and the possibility of a more diverse patronage.

By contrast, this development of a style intended to offer something different to the commissioning public and city dwellers in general was met with dismay from architectural professionals. The Queen Anne style of building was a free take on classical references which was deemed of no use for architectural education, as it

⁶⁷ *Rapport au Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877*, p. 18: 'Les demandes des exposants des trois royaumes ayant dépassé toutes les prévisions, nous avons dû concéder à la Commission royale de vastes espaces dans le parc, sur lesquels vont bientôt s'élever d'importantes annexes.'

⁶⁸ *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878*, p. 113 : 'Son système présente le grand avantage d'être très économique ; on peut avoir une maison pour quelques milliers de francs.'

distracted students from the original models.⁶⁹ Moreover, the newer style was denounced for its ornamentation and attempted picturesque, its ‘mock windows and shaped gables’, somewhat to the detriment of the truth of the buildings’ structure.⁷⁰

2. A battle of styles

Approaching the *rue des nations* from the northern vestibule of the palace, visitors could discover the second façade known as the Prince of Wales’s pavilion. With the Prince acting as the President of the British Commission, and by the especially official character of its name and purpose, this house might appear as the one of the five British ones which is the most closely related with the original French vision. Indeed, this second façade was designed by Gilbert Richard Redgrave, ‘Her Majesty’s Commissioners’ [...] architect, [who] was instructed to prepare a design for a small building, suitable for offices for the staff to occupy the centre of the frontage.’⁷¹ The architectural style is another element which connects this design with the blueprint submitted by the French organizers. This façade was generally seen as erected ‘in the Elizabethan style’,⁷² although an article in the same publication challenged this analysis perhaps with excessive precision and approached the façade as ‘rather more Jacobean than Elizabethan.’⁷³ In period publications, Elizabethan and Jacobean style are barely distinguished and it is not rare to find them juxtaposed as equivalent or qualified with the word ‘or’.

The façade as described in French terms is seen as rather dull, common and plain: ‘The external shape of this pavilion has nothing to seduce much either visually

⁶⁹ ‘The Queen Anne and Other Forms of Free Classic Architecture. Architectural Association’, *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1673, Saturday 27 February 1875, pp. 179-81.

⁷⁰ ‘The “Queen Anne” Revival in Ireland. Architectural Association of Ireland’, *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1682, Saturday 1 May 1875, pp. 395-6.

⁷¹ *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878* 1880, p. 35.

⁷² ‘The British Houses on the International Façade,’ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 73.

⁷³ ‘The Prince of Wales’ Pavilion,’ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 69.

or intellectually.’⁷⁴ Symmetry prevails in the disposition of the openings, around a central door ornamented with a little portico, and windows of both floors aligned together – and clumsiness pervades the design, for instance with a ‘massive capital very like the one topping the summit of a triumphal arch and where the British flag hangs.’ Critics about the silhouette of the façade hint at the architectural theory underlying the contemporary interpretation of the built environment: ‘Both first floor windows, strictly identical to the ground floor ones (...) are topped by a sort of little domes [through] which nationality is hardly identifiable.’⁷⁵ This comment conveys a concern for national authorship: every architectural motif, every building shape comes from a specific environment, a specific *milieu*, of which the nationality is a crucial factor. Moreover, this authorship needs to be obvious in the design of a new building; the observer must be able to recognize clearly the various threads of national tradition that have fuelled a newly completed design.

Neither the commentator for *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* gets pleasure from the red bricks, nor does the relative creativity allowed by the variety of colour for the plaster joints please the writer. He does not condemn the ground floor too fiercely, thanks to its Bath stone pilasters which regularly adorn the surface; though the effect achieved is described only as ‘ordinary’. The first floor is deemed to produce a worse effect, however, with the absence of stone pilasters and red brick all over. The ornamentation produced by black brick lozenges does not satisfy either, since it does not prevent an overall impression of monotony. From other sources, English readers could learn that both bricks and stone facings were actually fake, made of coloured plaster.⁷⁶

By the time of the *Exposition*, the virtues of the Elizabethan versus the Gothic Revival had already been hotly debated. After the destruction by fire of the old Palace of Westminster, the Parliamentary Commission responsible for setting the competition regulations for the entries for plans for the new palace had decided that

⁷⁴ *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 114 : ‘La forme extérieure de ce pavillon n’a rien qui séduise beaucoup l’œil ni l’esprit.’

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114 : ‘Les deux fenêtres du premier étage, absolument pareilles à celles du rez-de-chaussée, au-dessus desquelles elles sont mathématiquement placées, sont surmontées d’espèces de petits dômes dont a quelque peine à reconnaître la nationalité.’

⁷⁶ ‘Paris Universal Exhibition – Pavilion of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales,’ *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, 22 March 1878, p. 290.

the design of the latter should be either Gothic or Elizabethan. The meaning of the style and its national connotations were foremost topics of heated discussion, centred on the appropriateness of the style for the appearance of the seat of government. Questions arose, such as: was the Elizabethan style genuinely English, a mere derivation of the native Gothic style, or the local elaboration from motifs imported from southern Europe in the Early Renaissance? In 1872, a reader of *The London Journal* could understand that the Elizabethan style was ‘accepted as English and national, because belonging to the period when “good Queen Bess” reigned and Shakespeare wrote.’⁷⁷ Beyond the evolution of the style, there was also a political take on the discussion questioning the relevance of a style which did not echo the political innovations brought into the greater representational power of the Parliament with the Reform Act 1832.⁷⁸

In 1878 the Elizabethan style might have been favoured for its potential to place more articles on display for passers-by along the street of nations, since it allowed larger openings in any shop façade. At least as early as the beginning of the 1840s, the Elizabethan style had been noticed for its particularly favourable structural characteristics within commercial buildings. The traditionally slender silhouettes of its load-bearing elements and its use of pillars and mullions instead of plain walls could contribute in the most flattering way to street architecture, and these were an excellent fit for expansive glazed openings designed to display more items. This quality could have been put to profit along the street of nations, to use the ground floor of the façade as shop windows. However, in the context of the Exhibition, it is quite clear that the Commission’s architect decidedly went for a house design rather than for an element of commercial street architecture, and did not take profit of the structural possibilities of the Elizabethan style to a mercantile, and thereby functional end.

Beyond the possible influence of the *Exposition*’s organizers on the design of the foreign façades, this refusal of a utilitarian end to the project – turning them bluntly into shop windows – interestingly and precisely echoes earlier comments on

⁷⁷ ‘The Hall and the Hut’, *The London Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 1438, 31 August 1872, p. 136.

⁷⁸ ‘New Houses of Parliament’, *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, Vol. 29, No. 830, 22 April 1837, p. 256.

street architecture and the role of architectural styles in this context. Still in the early 1840s, the limited usefulness of shop windows was pointed out, on the grounds that, ‘of more than half the shops in London, the exhibitions at their windows serve merely as *signs* of the commodities they deal in, or to amuse the idle loungers and gazers, who never enter them except to make some trumpery purchase.’⁷⁹ By contrast with this representational function of the shop window and its content, its very rejection might have been encouraged by the other opportunities available throughout the Exhibition – to glance at specific objects closely in dedicated stands with personalized explanations given by exhibitors.

Plus, in this very particular context of the *Exposition*, the architect had to focus visitors’ attention towards the façade itself, rather than its potential added content. The conceptual and physical juxtaposition of shop windows geared towards commercial and profitable ends with the allocation of the façade and adjoining rooms to the official and private use by the Prince of Wales, might have seemed peculiar. Along the same lines, the physical and contextual disconnection between the content of the potential shop windows and the gallery spaces, where similar objects would have been available for closer inspection might have undoubtedly jarred in visitors’ minds, by virtue having all manner of objects of a similar kind or origin grouped together in the halls.

In addition to that diversity of possible options, the question of the (non-)insertion of the experience of the shop window also clearly involves questions of social class interactions, as the contemplation of the opening was also understood as a barrier between two worlds, the ones who can, and the ones who cannot afford to enter the shop and its lavish world of commodities:

The folks who stand transfixed with wondering admiration before such shops as Saunders and Woolley’s, or the one we are speaking of in Oxford Street, are not likely to be attracted over the threshold to give an order for any of the magnificent paper-hangings by which they are smitten; while those who can afford to line their rooms with elaborate patterns all radiant with gold, and crimson, and azure, are most assuredly

⁷⁹ Candidus, ‘A Codicil to “A Chapter about boutiques, &c.”’, *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol. 23, No. 135, March 1841, pp. 328-339 (p. 334).

not the people who stand to gape at, to examine and criticise them, as they are displayed at shop-windows.⁸⁰

This clear divide between insiders and outsiders was also replicated with the setting of the *Exposition* itself: within the boundaries of the city, which created limits of its own with gates and railings all around the Exhibition grounds, where, for the people who could come into the Exhibition and see the displays at first hand, were not the same as the ones only able to take a peek at the show from outside the railings.

As the preference for, say, the Queen Anne style over another, then the selection of the Elizabethan style for a façade for the purposes of national display might also be questioned. An architectural review of the early 1840s provides two insights about the reasons for favouring all things Elizabethan, as with the prior revitalisation of the Queen Anne style: a political dimension and an economic dimension. Indeed, a description of the new Chester Training College in 1842 included an explanation of the Elizabethan style which explicitly mentioned these two elements. This proximity of reasons for using both Queen Anne and Elizabethan styles should be noted. In the political realm, ideas of social stability and peace are paramount, while in the economic sphere both styles are associated with a widening distribution of wealth throughout society, at least from the aristocracy towards the ‘middling sort’ if not the poor.⁸¹

The diversity of the British façades thus reflects the contemporary architectural scene of the time in the kingdom, made of eclecticism from at least the beginning of the 1870s, after the largely medievalizing High Victorian style practiced in the two preceding decades.⁸² Standing as examples of the two major strands of contemporary English architectural style, the first two façades representing Britain give a very conscious feeling of a national identity expressed through

⁸⁰ Candidus, ‘A Codicil to “A Chapter about boutiques, &c.”,’ *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol. 23, No. 135, March 1841, pp. 328-339 (p. 334).

⁸¹ ‘Chester Training College (From the Chester Courant),’ *The Christian Remembrancer*, Vol. 4, No. 22, October 1842, pp. 448-454 (p. 448). The Elizabethan style was ‘the style of building which began to prevail in England when peace and good order, the consequence of an undisputed monarchy, rendered the castellated form less necessary, and when wealth, beginning to increase with the extension of commerce and the improvement of agriculture, diffused itself among the middle ranks of society, and enabled them to substitute the hall or the manor for the keep or the tower.’

⁸² Watkin 2001, p. 170.

architecture. Indeed, Queen Anne and Elizabethan revival were coined as two distinctive stylistic terms illustrating opposing viewpoints on what 19th century architecture should be in Britain, between classicism and medievalism, and between references to architectural patterns alleged to originate in the British Isles and motifs inspired by models from continental Europe.⁸³

3. Prime craftsmanship and promotional acumen

While the first British façade revealed a contemporary thriving partnership between an architect and a builder, the third façade acts as a piece of evidence on the story of an entrepreneur and manufacturer who knew how to capitalise on the International and Universal Exhibitions, and who took part in the 1878 Paris event with the experience of previous Exhibitions in the UK, in France and in the US.⁸⁴ The Doulton venture had started in business from as early as the 1830s, specialising in mundane stoneware and earthenware such as beer and ink bottles, and spirits jars, and expanding this range of products to include ornamental figures designed by trained fine artists. From the mid-19th century, the diversification of products increased to cater for more industrial needs, such as a sanitary ware and telegraph insulators, and concurrently developed items designed for ornamental purposes. By the 1870s, the company had specifically developed processes for manufacturing architectural ornaments in stoneware, coloured with manganese and cobalt.

By the middle of the 1870s, the time was ripe for the promotion of terracotta for Doulton and John Sparkes, headmaster of the Lambeth School of art, co-responsible for the placement of students within the world famous local pottery-works, encouraged the use of terracotta for architectural purposes in his writing and

⁸³ Ellen K. Morris, 'Symbols of Empire: Architectural Style and the Government Offices Competition', *JAE*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Politics and Design Symbolism, November 1978, pp. 8-13 (p. 8).

⁸⁴ Paul Atterbury, and Louise Irvine, *The Doulton Story* (Stoke-on-Trent: Royal Doulton Tableware, 1979), pp. 11-12.

at public gatherings.⁸⁵ The selling points for these articles were their physical lightness and financial cheapness as opposed to stone, their ability to replicate the appearance of stones like jasper or granite, and their durability in the urban environment against the hazards of acidic pollution thanks to impermeable glazing.⁸⁶ Presenting to the London Architectural Association, Sparkes remarkably referred to other times and other regions than Victorian Britain to legitimize the use of glazed terracotta for the building industry, from Etruscan Italy to Renaissance Germany.

By the time of the 1878 Exhibition, Henry Doulton, founder and director of Doulton and Company from 1854, was experienced in the dynamics of International Exhibitions and knew well the profit he could take out of them.⁸⁷ Thus Doulton's presentation at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition had attracted a lot of attention and First Class Awards to the company, and sealed a high reputation.⁸⁸ As part of a global vision of its corporate communication, Tarring and Wilkinson, the architects of the 1878 façade, had also designed a new London headquarters for Doulton between 1876 and 1878 (in the couple of years before), on the corner of Black Prince Road and Lambeth High Street, London.⁸⁹ Both structures exemplified the research carried out in these years in polychromatic architectural stoneware. With these different elements in mind, it is only logical that Doulton took the opportunity offered by the project of International Street in Paris to display his architectural ceramics at a scale and to an effect that would have been impossible to achieve in traditional displays within the international thematic galleries.

Doulton and Company's red brick and terra cotta façade was designed by Frederick William Tarring (1847-1925) and Robert Stark Wilkinson (1844-1936).⁹⁰ According to *The Building News*, the façade was a partial replica of a section of the façade of the new company's headquarters, which might have explained the slightly

⁸⁵ James Doulton, 'Terra Cotta and Stoneware as Applied to Architecture', *The British Architect*, Vol. 3, No. 70, 30 April 1875, [p. v].

⁸⁶ Professor Archer, 'The Lambeth Potteries', *The Art Journal*, March 1874, pp. 66-67 (p. 67).

⁸⁷ Kieron Tyler, with John Brown, Terence Paul Smith and Lucy Whittingham, *The Doulton Stoneware Pothouse in Lambeth: Excavations at 9 Albert Embankment, London* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005), p. 12.

⁸⁸ D. Eyles and Louise Irvine, rev., *The Doulton Lambeth Wares* (Shepton Beauchamp: Richard Dennis, 2002), p. 77.

⁸⁹ Tyler 2005, p. 13.

⁹⁰ RIBA, *Directory of British Architects, 1834-1914* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), Vol. 2: L-Z, pp. 758 and 993.

out-of-proportion scale of the structure within the framework of the palace on the Champ de Mars.⁹¹ The efficacy of this combination of craftsmanship and commercial acumen was made obvious with the façade itself, which not only displayed a diversity of ornamental stoneware but also featured specially-designed blocks with inscriptions promoting the identity of the company on all sides of the construction above the level of the entablature, set high enough to be clearly visible even from within crowds. It is also significant that Doulton would decide to develop the façade on only two sides, the front and the northern side of the structure, the one which faces towards the main palace vestibule, where most visitors would come from. Plus, the bricks were French and not imported from England, which was noticeable to an English audience because of the difference in the bricks' colour.⁹² This arrangement allowed the achievement of the most successful effect at the least expense.

Just as Lascelles developed his patent in the Exhibition under the guise of the Queen Anne style, Doulton exploited the Victorian vogue for ornament and eclecticism of taste to develop and promote his technical and industrial research and products.⁹³ This blend of technical innovation and canonical aesthetic achievement which impressed so many visitors to the Paris Exhibition was supported by an original collaboration between Doulton and Company and the Lambeth School of Art whose master, John Sparkes, had convinced Doulton of the aesthetic and commercial opportunities offered by the association of arts and design with utilitarian stonewares from the early 1860s.⁹⁴ The conflict which arose between Doulton and the Operative Bricklayers' Society only a few months before the Exhibition was an indication of the real or imagined status of the original building technique: indeed, Doulton did not want terracotta pieces to be laid like ordinary bricks but carefully placed to achieve the best overall effect, under the instructions of plasterers.⁹⁵

By contrast with the innovative research in the colouring of the building façade, its French critical reception demonstrates some perplexity with its features.

⁹¹ 'The Paris Universal Exhibition – III', *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 31 May 1878, pp. 540-541 (p. 540).

⁹² 'The Street of Nations', *The Art Journal*, January 1878, pp.xi-xxi (p. xiii).

⁹³ Hans Van Lemmen, *Architectural Ceramics* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 2002), pp. 18-9.

⁹⁴ Tyler 2005, pp. 13-14.

⁹⁵ Edmund Gosse, *Sir Henry Doulton: The Man of Business as a Man of Imagination* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), pp. 92-7.

The cold reaction to the brick and terracotta structure is made even more obvious with putting it side by side with favourable commentaries from English sources. The commentator for *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878* criticises the monotony of the red construction. Unable to make his mind on the exact style and building type of the façade, he admits nonetheless that it is 'very elegant' and observes that 'everybody is charmed'.⁹⁶ Confused, the writer describes the façade as a blend of various styles and traditions, and even calls in the Moresque.⁹⁷ Yet, the stylistic features of the façades seem obvious enough to make one think that the guide writer is being ironic or sarcastic when he suggests such an affiliation:

The house features two floors. The ground floor is composed of two interrupted pointed-arch windows on slim columns, which capitals feature leaves of acanthus. The upper floor is composed of three pointed-arch windows, decorated with numerous little columns with messy capitals. A see-through balustrade, which would suggest there is a patio, tops the small building.⁹⁸

Nonetheless this author is attracted to the decorative details of the building's structure, Doulton's known area of expertise. Just a few weeks before the opening of the *Exposition* in Paris, the reporter for *The Builder* visiting Doulton's premises in Lambeth was keen to praise 'the excellent and really artistic spirit in which the work of this eminent firm has been carried out, upon a system which encourages and stimulates individuality of design and workmanship'.⁹⁹ Once more, as seen with the façade built with the patented building process of Lascelles, the relation between artistic and engineering issues, mechanical and aesthetic input are at the core of the analysis of the relative merits and weaknesses of the displays. This interest in this kind of issue probably benefitted Doulton's manufacturing even more since the

⁹⁶ *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 118: 'Sa façade est très élégante, et il est indéniable qu'elle charme tout le monde, mais il paraît assez difficile de dire, au point de vue architectural, à quelle époque ni à quel genre elle se rattache.'

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 'Il y a de tout, en effet, sur cette façade ; il semble même que l'auteur se soit passablement inspiré du genre mauresque.'

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: 'La maison a deux étages. Le rez-de-chaussée se compose de deux fenêtres à ogive coupé reposant sur des colonnettes, dont les chapiteaux sont faits de feuilles d'acanthé. L'étage supérieur comprend trois fenêtres également à ogives, ornées d'innombrables colonnettes dont les chapiteaux font fouillis. Une balustrade à jour, et qui ferait croire à l'existence d'une terrasse, achève le couronnement du petit édifice.'

⁹⁹ 'Messrs. Doulton's Pottery', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1833, Saturday 23 March 1878, p. 304.

company was able to put on the market such diverse a range of housewares as jugs, ink-bottles, spirit-kegs and figurines for inside, and drain pipes in stoneware, sculptures, terracotta reliefs and medallions for ornamentation outside.¹⁰⁰

Seen through the critical gaze of the eminent Charles Blanc, the façade Doulton offered to the Royal Commission epitomizes the weakness of British architecture. Presumably expecting from foreign countries the proposition of new designs or the replication of homeland official buildings as opposed to Doulton's shop-front, Blanc begins his critique of the British façades by rejecting any possibility for British architecture to stand out in terms of monumental or grand civic architecture, because there is 'the homeland of individualism, of at one's, of the *home* (sic).'¹⁰¹ Focusing precisely on Doulton's façade without ever mentioning explicitly any exhibitor's name, Blanc points out very sharply all characteristics which are wrong, i.e. not acceptable to his criteria of taste, which were deeply informed by the French academic and rationalist traditions of architectural composition. In his eyes, the Gothic style used in the structure is a 'bastard gothic style, that is to say Tudor style mixed with Renaissance'; there does not seem to be an overall vision since 'surfaces are broken into pieces by lines and difference of materials, interrupted with alternations of colours, fractioned with applications of enamels and faience'.¹⁰²

To be fair, French reporters were not the only ones expressing some incomprehension about the design of Doulton's structure. Such a high-profile periodical publication as the professional *Building News* pointed some flaws of the arrangement. The accumulation of such a wide diversity of terracotta elements in a very limited available space was seen as problematic. More importantly for the understanding of the circulation of meanings throughout the *Exposition*, is this

¹⁰⁰ 'Visits to Doulton's, Maudslay's, and Blackfriars Station. The Society of Engineers "on the Surrey Side"', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1846, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 637.

¹⁰¹ Charles Blanc, 'Exposition universelle. Architecture. III. La rue des Nations', *Le Temps*, 20 juin 1878, Dix-huitième année, No. 6270, n.p.: 'Ce peuple n'a aucun sentiment original de l'architecture, et cela doit être parce que son pays est la patrie de l'individualisme, du chez-soi, du *home*.'

¹⁰² Blanc 1878: 'Les surfaces, d'un style gothique bâtard, c'est-à-dire du style Tudor mêlé de Renaissance, sont morcelées par les lignes et par la différence des matériaux, rompues par des alternances de couleur, fractionnées par des applications, en petit, d'émaux et de faïences ; les colonnettes sont divisées par des anneaux ; la sculpture y est ciselée dans le menu ; la matière céramique y est refouillée ; enfin les fenêtres sont à guillotine, et des rosaces sont inscrites sous l'ogive.'

comment made about the potential impact of the display on Doulton's trading activity: 'The colour of the Doulton ware bosses and string-courses is agreeable, and we predict that there will be a large demand for this material for architectural decoration, as it is pleasant in tone, and not liable to be affected by weather or the London smoke.'¹⁰³ The presentation might be thought to be directed towards a global audience visiting the Exhibition but Blanc unhesitatingly narrows down the potential market to customers experiencing the urban environment of London.

Thanks to these qualities of his company's exhibits, Henry Doulton was bestowed the dignity of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour by the French President, and Doulton and Company received a *Grand Prix* from the jury of the *Exposition*.¹⁰⁴ Doulton's attention to tradition and innovation in equal measure had paid off.

4. A consistent vision of the British identity?

From the fourth British façade, the commentators possibly had exhibition fatigue, if this is to be judged from the brevity of reports dealing with the last two façades the Royal Commission put together. This scant reportage on both structures might have had to do with their being more easily understood by the public thanks to a more familiar design, which was more directly recognizable by both architecture connoisseurs and amateurs, and with their more traditional building materials and processes. In this fourth house façade, the circulation of meaning between building and audience was crucially supported by the frontage inscription engraved at the top of the elevation and which read '1649'.¹⁰⁵

This rare inscription, aside from the plaques giving out the name and place of origin of Doulton's architectural terracotta on the second structure, prevented any possible ambiguity as to the understanding of the stylistic features of the façade. And

¹⁰³ 'The Paris Universal Exhibition – III', p. 540.

¹⁰⁴ Ralph Barton White, *Prefabrication. A History of its Development in Great Britain* (London: H.M.S.O., 1965), p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ François de Kérinou, 'Causerie sur l'Exposition. La rue des nations', *La Semaine des familles*, No. 10, Vingtième année, Samedi 8 juin 1878, pp. 146-8 (p. 146).

sources are indeed consistent on that matter, all agreeing on the term of ‘Old English’ to summarize its characteristics, and situating the development of these features back into the period extending from the 15th to the 17th century, most notably its traditional half-timber structure and its remarkable front porch. The central projecting part of the façade was inspired by the original 16th-century building of the Nantwich Grammar School, in Cheshire, pulled down in the 1860s, but previously illustrated in Charles James Richardson’s *Architectural remains of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I* published in London in 1838.¹⁰⁶

As a consequence, this building would have required little originality. Like the Prince of Wales’s pavilion, this house was built after the design of the Royal Commission’s architect, Gilbert R. Redgrave, and built by the workmen from William Cubitt & Company, ‘of 258, Gray’s-inn-road’ who thereby took part in their first Exhibition.¹⁰⁷ This increased involvement of the Commission’s architect as far as the design was concerned and the reconstruction of an historic structure might demonstrate the commitment of the British authorities to abide by the terms of the original terms of the French project of International façade, especially since this fourth structure displays a style distinct from the previous ones. The loyal reproduction of ‘the arms of four shields, of Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Warwickshire’ as they were carved on the original building is evidence of this loyalty to the original intention for the palace range.¹⁰⁸

William Cubitt and Co. were a reputable contracting and building firm located in Gray’s Inn Road, W.C., London. A notable, later episode of their history of relations with France was to be in the early years of the 20th century, when a court case against the judiciary representative for Hennebique about the patent for the use of concrete reinforced with internal iron rods was opened. This came a few years after both companies had agreed to work together to put to use the process in London, with Cubitt and Co. petitioning for exclusivity on the building system

¹⁰⁶ ‘The Paris Universal Exhibition – III’, p. 540.

¹⁰⁷ ‘English Houses at the Paris Exhibition,’ *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1859, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 461; ‘The Paris Exhibition’, *British Architect*, Vol. 9, No. 10, 8 March 1878, p. 110; *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ ‘The Paris Universal Exhibition – III’, p. 540; ‘Half-Timbered House at the Paris Exhibition’, *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 28 June 1878, p. 648.

patented by Hennebique. However, Cubitt and Co. later decided to emancipate themselves from this restrictive clause in order to be able to use alternative building systems, which Hennebique claimed was a way to counterfeit their process.¹⁰⁹

The building method of this house does not seem to be as problematic as the ones of some other houses, as most sources mention accordingly a half-timbered frame made of pitch-pine, while the interstitial spaces are filled in with plaster panels.¹¹⁰ *The Building News* went into slightly more detail on the matter for their professional readership, pointing out that the timber frame had been filled in with ‘cement concrete, faced with Parian cement.’¹¹¹ This choice of material somewhat echoes the technological research put on explicit display in the second façade built by Doulton. Indeed Parian cement crystallises rapidly into a hard material and with a polished finish. It was used to create a protective layer on a wall, either internal or external, against dampness and was especially favoured for hospital buildings, although its medical benefits were not as yet unquestionably established.¹¹² The combination of Parian cement and pitch-pine wood was common at the time if it is to be judged from the then recently-built Huddersfield Council Chamber which featured ‘a panelled and moulded dado running round of polished pitch pine, and above this, panels of Parian cement.’¹¹³

The Old English style was favoured to contribute to the improvement of street architecture as discussed earlier on, partly because ‘Old English’ was a broad enough categorization to include the Elizabethan. A characterization of the style in the late 1830s emphasized its fitness for frontages which could not develop the length of a street, in contrast with any classical references which rely too heavily on horizontal

¹⁰⁹ ‘Concrete Building Patents’, *The British Architect*, 3 August 1906, p.78.

¹¹⁰ ‘The British Houses on the International Façade,’ *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 73.

¹¹¹ ‘Half-Timbered House at the Paris Exhibition’, *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 28 June 1878, p. 648.

¹¹² ‘Parian Cement’, *The Literary Gazette*, No. 1690, 9 June 1849, p. 436; Robert Hunt, ‘On the Applications of Science to the Fine and Useful Arts’, *The Art Journal*, April 1849, pp. 128-9; ‘London General Hospitals, with a Description of the New St Thomas’s’, *The London Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1866, 13 January 1866, pp. 29-30; ‘Pity the Poor-Rate Payer’, *Tinsley’s Magazine*, No. 7, January 1871, pp. 656-68; ‘Contrasts’, *The Illustrated Review: a fortnightly journal of literature, science and art*, Vol. 5, No. 74, May 1873, pp. 549-52.

¹¹³ ‘Huddersfield. New Public Offices’, *The British Architect and Northern Engineer*, Vol. 7, No. 22, 1 June 1877, p. 337.

lines to be harmonious.¹¹⁴ Alongside the pointed arches used in the Doulton structure, and in advance of the fifth and final component of the British façade, this old English frontage emphasizes the primacy of Gothicism in the British architectural psyche; Gothic elements of architecture prevailed over Classicism. As Robert Kerr had put it in the middle of the 1860s, ‘the old English model, with all its crudities, was English, and not even obsolete; and such a thing as the Pompeian house, with all its refinement, foreign and antiquated’. Most importantly, the preference in style was not primarily about appearance and aesthetics, but about utility, ‘[the old English model] specially calculated to meet practical requirements of English comfort and convenience, and [such a thing as the Pompeian house] the growth of altogether different circumstances.’¹¹⁵

The idea of comfort was not lost on French commentators reviewing the British façades either. Molinari held them as ‘elegant specimens of modern comfort’ and appreciated that they featured characteristics looking both ‘comfortable but modest’.¹¹⁶ Another believed contemporary houses did not appear to be as comfortable as their predecessors.¹¹⁷ The *Art Journal* also pointed out the ‘pleasing’ character of these ‘thoroughly comfortable-looking houses’. Moreover, the same reporter noticed that an audience other than only British was pleased with the last two houses’ ‘novelty and evident homeliness’ and also emphasized the important role the attraction took in the mind of visitors, acting as a visual landmark and easily

¹¹⁴ W. S., ‘Art. VI. A Design for a Small Cottage Villa’, *The Architectural Magazine, and Journal of improvement in architecture, building and furnishing and in the various arts and trades connected therewith*, Vol. 4, No. 45, November 1837, pp. 524-9 (p. 529).

¹¹⁵ Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman’s House; or, how to plan English residences from the parsonage to the palace; with tables of accommodation and cost, and a series of selected plans; Second edition, revised, with a supplement on works of alteration, and additional plates* (London: John Murray, 1865), pp. 50-1.

¹¹⁶ Gustave de Molinari, ‘Visites à l’Exposition universelle. (Deuxième article - Voir le Journal des Débats du 29 mai). II. L’empire britannique’, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, Jeudi 6 juin 1878, n.p.: ‘Des deux côtés ce sont des cottages, aussi en briques rouges ou en terre cuite, avec des faïences décoratives ; une vieille maison en bois du quinzième siècle, comme on en voit encore à Bruges et dans quelques autres anciennes cités flamandes ; des jardins ornés de grilles d’un beau travail en fer forgé : le tout d’apparence confortable mais modeste. [...] ces élégants spécimens du confort moderne [...]’

¹¹⁷ Kérinou 1878, p. 146: ‘En regardant cette habitation, j’avoue franchement que j’ai pensé qu’en Angleterre comme en France le style n’a pas gagné en pittoresque, car si, comme l’indique une inscription gravée au fronton, cet édifice date de 1649, il faut reconnaître que les habitations actuelles n’ont ni ce confortable ni cet aspect harmonieux.’

identifiable meeting point amidst the vast expanse of exhibition halls.¹¹⁸ And we shall give again the last word on that matter to Robert Kerr who claimed in 1865 that:

What we call in England *a comfortable house* is a thing so intimately identified with English customs as to make us apt to say that in no other country but our own is this element of comfort fully understood; or at all events that the comfort of any other nation is not the comfort of this.¹¹⁹

Accounts on the last British façade are even briefer than for the previous one, as if the colour scheme of its aspect acted against it, especially by contrast with the sharply contrasted Old English façade nearby. Here both structural timber and lath and plaster filling are nearly white. Most commentators value the fact that it conveniently represents a specific period: the Elizabethan time, and a specific clearly identifiable building type: a country house. This provokes a lot of praise from the writer of *Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878*, who appreciates how the available space has been carefully and efficiently developed, notably thanks to the overhanging façade of the upper floor, supported by a colonnade which creates a porch on the lower level.

However, there are nuances in the stylistic assessment of the building. According to *The Builder*, this façade featured characteristics of the time of William III, whereas the *Building News* made a point about this structure arguing that it appeared closer to the actual Queen Anne period than those Victorian buildings claiming their style as ‘Queen Anne revival’. Collinson and Lock, who were in modern parlance, interior designers, were in a peculiar situation in relation to the façade because they usually had nothing to do with the building trade, and therefore likely needed a plain enough design which would draw the public towards their indoor display without distracting the attention from them.

In the same way as Lascelles did with his cast concrete commodities, Collinson and Lock gathered their products in the exhibition halls of the palace to attract the attention of both the general public and the official jurors for possible

¹¹⁸ ‘The Street of Nations’, p. xiv.

¹¹⁹ Kerr 1865, p. 69.

awards. They displayed a whole panelled ceiling and examples of furniture in ‘dark woods with little gilding’.¹²⁰ Like Doulton, Collinson and Lock were hardly newcomers in the circuit of the Exhibitions; their name had been noticed on the other side of the Atlantic at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, where they had shipped cabinets without specific period features but coined as belonging to a general ‘old English in manner.’¹²¹

The partnership between Thomas Colcutt and Collinson & Lock was to last beyond the Paris Exhibition as Colcutt designed some furniture for the workshops of the upholsterer and cabinet maker.¹²²

C. Architecture as a national representation?

The British Royal Commission’s capitalisation on the *Exposition*’s simpler intentions for the national façades happened by taking full use of the serial context of the space available within the template of the Palace on the Champ de Mars. With the reformulation of the French idea which the British Royal Commission proposed, it seems two intellectual traditions were meeting in a way French organizers probably could have never anticipated. Ultimately, if this display was about the aesthetics and the technology on offer in contemporary Britain for a British public, the question arises of the impact of this diverse and historicised display within a French environment. Be it International Street, Street of Nations, ‘*rue typique*’, ‘*rue des façades*’, or ‘*rue des nations étrangères*’, the very name of the street was vague enough to prompt and welcome the widest variety of comments and interpretation,¹²³ as the critical coverage of the display demonstrates.

¹²⁰ ‘The Paris Universal Exhibition, V’, *The Magazine of Art*, January 1878, pp. 113-6 (p. 113).

¹²¹ ‘Contribution to the International Exhibition, Philadelphia’, *The Art Journal*, October 1876, pp. 309-16 (p. 309).

¹²² Lewis F. Day, ‘Victorian progress in applied design’, *The Art Journal*, June 1887, pp. 185-202 (p. 199).

¹²³ Kérinou 1878, p. 146.

The French project embodied a more rationalist tradition, which also fuelled the overall vision for the *Exposition*. Products and displays were methodically arranged: the multiplicity of artefacts, manufacturers and countries was ordered by a single classificatory system. This rationalist tradition also extended within the political realm: the national idea was a philosophical system centred on a notion of presenting a unity of values, a shared culture and heritage. The façades exemplified this rationalist tradition where idea of a nation and items came together in a scientific order. Every country was meant to exhibit a single characteristic example of architecture: one country, one façade. By contrast, the five British façades could be attached to an empiricist, certainly more pluralist tradition, where classical and vernacular styles might work together. Additionally, grouped along the street in a common framework, these façades provided a life-scale experience reminiscent of the pattern books and manuals intensely circulated at the time which provided a variety of options for British clients to choose to suit various circumstances: whether middle-class domestic, aristocratic or mercantile.

From his significant intellectual position in the late 1870s, Charles Blanc regarded the *Rue des nations* in terms of representation of national trends in contemporary architecture:

without paying excessive attention to constructions which are not meant to last, they can nonetheless be considered as desired evidence of a genius specific to each and every people, for the only reason that they have been designed under the influence of emulation.¹²⁴

From Blanc's approach, it is without doubt that French critics shared the same intellectual framework as the Exhibition's organizers along a common 'horizon' of expectations. Inevitably, and in pure logic within this framework, every country matched a singular people who were themselves animated by an original 'genius'.

Beyond the commercial purpose and the stylistic analysis, the variety of architectural surroundings put on display by the UK might have been the expression

¹²⁴ Blanc 1878: 'sans attacher une importance excessive à des constructions qui ne doivent pas durer, on peut les regarder cependant, par cela seul qu'elles ont été faites sous l'empire de l'émulation, comme des manifestations voulues du génie particulier à chaque peuple.'

of a specifically British conception of the nation, one that would be particularly based on liberty and diversity.¹²⁵ The stylistic diversity of the British façades might be associated with the Liberal Anglican and Whig traditions of political thought. In the Liberal Anglican tradition, ‘the nation [is thought of] as a step away from the particular and towards the universal’. The aim was not ‘to emphasize [one] nation’s particularity in relation to other nations’ as the selection of a single project (and therefore projection) would have done; most importantly, the nation is ‘the most general and universal of actual communities.’¹²⁶ Thus, while illustrating a limited range of architectural styles, the British façades might also have been an opportunity to look toward a national style of architecture, if not at a universal level, at least at a British and imperial level.

Incidentally, it is appropriate to note here the part Lascelles’ technological patent played in the larger history of prefabricated building which was mostly stimulated by imperialist colonial ventures and developed for colonial destinations. Lascelles’ structural research and innovation and its very presence on the grounds of the International Exhibition in Paris on behalf of the British Royal Commission bear witness to the fact that ‘the history of prefabrication is inextricably involved in the social and economic history of Victorian Britain and its empire, in the history of its industrialization, urbanization, and colonial expansion’.¹²⁷ Although Lascelles’s patented process might not have entered the mainstream of colonial exports and building practices, there is no denying that his product, and its contemporary competitors, are a late offshoot of a long association of light, modular, inexpensive, and transportable housing structures with colonialism, from the early 19th century portable wooden cottage to the later corrugated iron house.¹²⁸

In parallel with the Liberal Anglican approach, the Whig tradition ‘placed constitutional liberty at the centre of its account of English history and English nationhood.’ In other words, the national idea revolved around individual liberties, which might be embodied in the diversity of styles put on display in the British

¹²⁵ Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), pp. 27-31.

¹²⁶ H. Stuart Jones, *Victorian Political Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 49.

¹²⁷ Gilbert Herbert, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: the British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

façades – every castle here is, indeed, different. The critical writing of Charles Blanc seems to validate this interpretation by linking stylistic and wider cultural comments: ‘this people have no original feeling of architecture, and this must be because their country is the fatherland of individualism, of the at-home, of *home*.’¹²⁹ In line with the Whig interpretation of history, Blanc asserted that English architects were most noticeable for completing private commissions rather than public buildings. As a consequence of this line of argument and because he likely expected the replication or the invention of façades suitable for official buildings, Blanc was meant to think that ‘the English exhibition in the Champ de Mars shows nothing great, nothing original.’¹³⁰

The Art Journal might have had the key to the understanding of the way the Royal Commission and British-based exhibitors negotiated the meaning contained in the French vision of International Street. Indeed, the periodical publication presented the project as a ‘collection of examples of the architecture of the civilised world.’¹³¹ Crucially, instead of envisaging the concept of International Street as a set of discrete architectural occurrences, this approach pictures the series of buildings as a consistent ensemble similar to a ‘collection’. By doing so, it points towards the centrality of the concept of civilization to English thinkers in their endeavour to articulate the composition and originality of human nature. The concept of nation was rather disliked because it seemed to favour the community over the individual, therefore leading to uniformity.

On the contrary, the concept of civilization was useful to accommodate diversity and differences, and it ‘remained the framework within which English conservatives evaluated their own people – a framework within which some English people were palpably different from (and superior to) others, even if most English people were also superior to most foreigners.’¹³² These rather inclusive (yet

¹²⁹ Charles Blanc, ‘Exposition universelle. Architecture. III. La rue des Nations,’ *Le Temps*, 20 juin 1878, Dix-huitième année, No. 6270, n.p.: ‘Ce peuple n’a aucun sentiment original de l’architecture, et cela doit être parce que son pays est la patrie de l’individualisme, du chez-soi, du *home*.’

¹³⁰ Blanc 1878: ‘Il ne faut donc pas s’étonner si la façade de l’Exposition anglaise au Champ de Mars ne présente rien de grand, rien d’original.’

¹³¹ ‘The Street of Nations’, p. xi.

¹³² Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 29.

paradoxically somewhat exclusive) ideas of civilization and the free combination and juxtaposition of stylistic references as displayed in the British façades in the Exhibition supported each other and came together in the contemporary promotion of an overall idea of eclecticism, at a time when ‘synthesis was definitely in, and purity of style definitely out.’¹³³ In architectural and building practices as in contemporary political thought, diversity was a leading concept, and it also informed the critical reception of the British façades in some quarters.

The commentator for *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* did not address the rue des Nations as a space of overtly nationalistic demonstration. If every façade was unmistakably to be pointed out with its national identification, like ‘English characteristic façades’¹³⁴, the writer rather addressed the matter as ‘specimens of English architecture in different periods’ (‘*époques*’).¹³⁵ Most remarks, if not all, were friendly and balanced. For instance, in the case of the façade proposed by Lascelles and Norman Shaw, the central bay-window on the ground floor caught the attention for its unusual proportions: ‘the window, at about 1-metre high on the wall, is wide, but not big; honest and very discreet daylight comes through it; the window enlightens the family life, it does not publicize it.’¹³⁶ When it came to dealing with the second façade, the one expressly designed by and for the Royal Commission, stiffer critics discuss the exterior of the building, blaming the very ordinary character of the composition and of its effect. But then, this afflicted stance is immediately contrasted by an exclamation of satisfaction and contentment when entering inside the house: “Move on inside, what a difference and what a revelation!”¹³⁷

Overall, before entering into the details of the analysis for each façade, *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* introduced the International Street as ‘the straightest and the most picturesque’ route from one end of the exhibition palace to the other. This practical advice was meant for visitors who would not be primarily

¹³³ James Stevens Curl, *Victorian Architecture: Diversity and Invention* (Reading: Spire Books, 2007), pp. 417-8.

¹³⁴ *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 112.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113: ‘La fenêtre, placée à un mètre d’élévation à peu près, est large, mais peu haute ; elle répand dans la pièce un jour honnête et très discret ; elle éclaire la vie de famille, elle ne la divulgue pas.’

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

interested in architecture. The writer actually characterized as ‘brave’ every visitor that would be able to walk along the street without stopping by in front of every façade, because ‘attraction is great.’¹³⁸ The street was indeed ‘the great attraction of the Champ-de-Mars.’¹³⁹ According to the same, ‘one could easily spend a whole day to scrutinize these specimens of foreign architecture’ which create all together a ‘marvellous street’.¹⁴⁰ *The Art Journal* shared this approach of the International Street combining practical considerations of evidence of its popularity. It reported on the fact that ‘from May to November it was thronged from morning till evening with admiring crowds from almost every nation under the sun.’¹⁴¹ Moreover, it was able to witness the transformation of the street into ‘the rendezvous of the peoples’.¹⁴²

This popular success was supported by the various publications at the disposal of visitors to help them with wandering throughout the *Exposition* grounds in a methodical and comprehensive, rationalist manner. Over an eight-day tour of the Exhibition, the *Guide indispensable à tout visiteur* gathered everything that is a ‘must see’ across the Exhibition grounds, to answer visitors’ needs which other guides had not been able to satisfy before then.¹⁴³ It therefore recommended touring the exhibits on show on the left bank of the Seine, on the second day of the programme, after a first day spent on the right bank, on the *colline de Chaillot*. Even more specifically, the International Street was to be visited preferably on the morning of the second day: because of the orientation of the avenue, the sun would then not be too high for people to enjoy the visit.¹⁴⁴ This planning of the visit might also have

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30 : ‘Le visiteur qui, partant du vestibule d’Iéna, veut se rendre à la galerie du travail, n’a pas à hésiter. Il n’a qu’à prendre la rue des Nations, c’est à la fois le chemin le plus direct et le chemin le plus pittoresque ; cependant, nous avouons que ce n’est le plus court que si on a le courage de ne pas s’arrêter devant chaque façade, afin de ne voir qu’en passant ; car l’attrait est grand, et on passerait facilement une journée entière à examiner ces spécimens d’architecture étrangère.’

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 112 : ‘(...) cette pittoresque *rue des nations* (...) est le grand attrait du Champ-de-Mars.’

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30 : ‘on passerait facilement une journée entière à examiner ces spécimens d’architecture étrangère. [...] Nous parlerons un peu plus loin, avec le détail qu’elle comporte, de cette rue merveilleuse’

¹⁴¹ ‘The Street of Nations’, *The Art Journal*, January 1878, pp.xi-xxi (p. xi).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. xii.

¹⁴³ *L’Exposition en huit jours. Guide indispensable à tout visiteur* (Paris: Librairie de Dubuisson et Cie, 1878).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

allowed visitors in the know to avoid queues for admission and ‘subsequent lines of visitors [who] awaited their turn all day long.’¹⁴⁵

Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878 addresses the characteristics of the streets in terms of anatomy, ‘sketching the physiognomy’ of the architectural setting.¹⁴⁶ This approach fits within the general cultural context mentioned in the introduction, a cultural context which expected architecture in general and buildings in particular to be associated with external meanings and a representation of these meanings. The physical metaphor alluded to by the word of ‘physiognomy’ extends toward an analysis throughout a national grid. Indeed, considering the second façade, for the Prince of Wales’ pavilion, the commentator points out the fact that the ‘first-floor windows are surmounted with several sorts of small domes which nationality it is somewhat difficult to identify.’¹⁴⁷ As previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated, the British façades displayed elements which ‘re-presented’ more a transient identity, were related to contemporary taste and fashion and motivated by social and technological transformations, rather than attempting to present a lasting national character.

D. Conclusion

The participation of private British companies within the façades put on display by the Royal Commission is indeed unusual, but not exceptional. This practice had already been developed previously at least from the 1876 Philadelphia World’s

¹⁴⁵ ‘The Street of Nations’, *The Art Journal*, January 1878, pp.xi-xxi (p. xii).

¹⁴⁶ *Les Merveilles de l’Exposition de 1878* 1878, p. 30 : ‘Nous parlerons un peu plus loin, avec le détail qu’elle comporte, de cette rue merveilleuse ; aujourd’hui, nous nous bornerons à en esquisser la physionomie.’

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114: ‘Les deux fenêtres du premier étage [...] sont surmontées d’espèces de petits dômes dont on a quelque peine à reconnaître la nationalité.’

Centennial Exposition onward.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, the replication of the same circumstances throughout five distinct façades as an answer to the original proposal from the French general Commissioner and direction for foreign countries is what makes this material especially unique and interesting. Not only did private companies supported their national authorities to represent their country in a foreign exhibition, but also the multiplication of the same pattern with a wide diversity of underlying narratives challenged the usual understanding of International Exhibitions as a competition among internally consistent nationalist showcases.

The British Royal Commission eventually dismissed the French design proposal which was largely inspired by the river façade of the Houses of Parliament. However, the five structures eventually built followed up in expressing the same dual spirit of stylistic historicism and technological innovation of the new Palace of Westminster. In the same way as the latter applied cast-iron beams in shallow brick vaulting structures, or cast-iron plates for the roof covering, the former promoted the use of precast coloured concrete elements, glazed terracotta architectural elements, and Parian cement as contributing elements to domestic architecture.¹⁴⁹ The Gothic or Elizabethan style of the Palace gave way for the wide diversity of Queen Anne, Tudor, Renaissance, Elizabethan, and William and Mary, pointing to the general resurgence of interest in early modern architecture inspired by British history, instead of turning towards classical patterns.

This decision was not only limited to the outside aspect of the structures. British entrepreneurs also enjoyed the interior spaces they created at the margins of the international exhibition halls to display discrete and comprehensive interior design presentations with full fittings and furniture. This practice was following up a tradition of interior design exhibiting originating from the 1851 Great Exhibition.¹⁵⁰ As pointed out earlier on, the rooms thereby created were actually functional and not mere décors and were put at the functional disposal of national commissioners and

¹⁴⁸ 'Section britannique, Rapport préliminaire de la commission anglaise. British Section, Preliminary Report of the English Committee', *L'Exposition illustrée de Philadelphie. The Philadelphia Exhibition (illustrated)*, 1 April 1876, No. 1, p. 10.

¹⁴⁹ Curl 2007, p. 100.

¹⁵⁰ Jeremy Aynsley, 'Displaying Designs for the Domestic Interior in Europe and America, 1850-1950', in Aynsley and Grant 2006, pp. 190-215.

officials. Consideration of the material innovations involved in creating these total settings would be worth specific attention on its own merit, but must end here.

On a wider scale, as alluded to with the building and contracting partnership between Norman Shaw and Lascelles, these five façades were a loyal reflection in the French environment of the contemporary suburban development of English cities. The small size of the structures within the enormous exhibition palace and the interspersed gardens in between each project gave some clues of their practical and geographical origins. Even if the French idea was first and foremost completely remote from any commercial and speculative ends, prompted by the scientific and rationalist intellectual framework mentioned earlier, from a more economics-based perspective, these five façades stood as examples of current models and fashions in individual housing widely practised in the UK at the time, amidst a general boom in building activity in the second half of the 1870s.¹⁵¹

As in chapter 1, this chapter was interested in a particular body of material which was used to generate meaning and also prompted a projection of meanings from other sources than the initiators of the project. The extraordinary creation of the British façades entailed the involvement of external stakeholders – both individual and corporate – who had to negotiate and adapt the original intentions of the official authorities ultimately responsible for the content and the organisation of the national displays in a way which demonstrates in the most striking way how modernity and tradition could be combined in unexpected and effective ways. In doing so, beyond the stylistic and structural questions, this creativity also shed light, right at the heart of the *Exposition*, on the conflicting claims of nationalism on either side of the Channel. The display of paintings in the fine arts galleries, whose preparation is the focus of chapter 3, was another ground for these issues to be debated – and solved?

¹⁵¹ Helen Long, *Victorian Houses and Their Details: The Role of Publications in Their Building and Decoration* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2002), pp. 2-11; Christopher G. Powell, *The British Building Industry Since 1800: An economic history* (London: E. & F. N. Spon, 1996), p. 46.

III. The Royal Academy of Arts and British Visual Culture

The nature and content of this chapter connects this case study to the literature interested in considering the phenomenon of Exhibition in terms of organization and planning of the event. The value of this chapter lies in the way it looks at the positioning of a key institution in front of the prospect of an Exhibition, how this organisation attempts to make the most of the space at avail to promote a message and a visual content to a wider audience. It is therefore about power relations, between the hosting authorities and the invited foreigners, between established institutions and individuals. It is also about space, and how various stakeholders compete to exploit it for their own profit; all in all, about different groups and characters who intended to direct the eye in divergent ways. Ultimately, this chapter is about the negotiation between tradition and modernity in the preparation of the British display of fine arts

In the last quarter of the 19th century, London was an imperial metropolis and Great Britain a global economic and industrial power. In its 1875 *Annual Report* the Royal Academy of Arts (henceforth RA) was still able to come to the conclusion that, ‘whereas Belgian and French pictures are well known and command a sale all over Europe, English Pictures are but little known and esteemed out of England.’¹ What role did the RA take in the preparation of the visual arts exhibition that Great Britain presented in the 1878 *Exposition Universelle et Internationale* in Paris? How far did it get involved in the preparation of the British displays? Where did it stand between individual exhibitors – namely, British artists – and the Royal Commission installed to oversee the preparation of the British exhibits and find a consensus between parallel, if not utterly divergent pressures?

This chapter relies on original research conducted at the *Archives nationales*, Paris, and at the RA, Burlington House, London. Between artistic and commercial

¹ *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1875* (London: William Clowes, 1878), p. 60.

interests, it aims at identifying the issues at stake and detailed examination of the objectives formulated for the British fine arts galleries, insofar as it is possible to understand them from surviving sources.² In order to do so, it will first consider the institutional context of the participation of the RA, then analyse the issues at stake in placing the British visual arts participation in perspective against its critical reception. This analysis aims to bring in a different perspective on the material covered in other chapters, considering a key ‘national cultural institution’ along with its agenda and stakeholders which altogether constitute parts of the character of the final displays.³

This chapter deals with issues of political message and national identity, particularly as conveyed in the context of International and Universal Exhibitions. Beyond the specific circumstances of the preparation of the *Exposition*, this case study provides valuable original information on the general operations and position of this institution on the British art scene in the third quarter of the 19th century. Although the involvement of the RA in the preparation of the British display in Paris in 1878 does provide additional insight on the institution at the turn of the last quarter of the 19th century, it seems that no historian has ever noted it so far, be they Charles Holme, Walter Rangeley Maitland Lamb, Eric Shanes, Sidney Charles Hutchison, or James Fenton.⁴

With the transformation of the larger art world in the second half of the 19th century, and the growing importance of art galleries, dealers and publishers attending to the taste of more numerous private collectors, the RA seems to shift somewhat towards a peripheral zone within its contemporary environment. The historiography both of the institution and the period emphasizes this feeling of rarefied and diminishing influence. Thus, Holger Hock’s *The King’s artists: the Royal Academy of Arts and the politics of British culture, 1760-1840* provides a body of scholarship

² The author would like to thank Mark Pomeroy, Archivist at the Royal Academy of Arts’ Research Library and Archive for his precious help in the documentation of this paper.

³ Holger Hock, *The King’s Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), p. 3.

⁴ Charles Holme, ed. *The Royal Academy: From Reynolds to Millais* (London: The Studio, 1904); Walter Rangeley Maitland Lamb, *The Royal Academy: A Short History of its Foundation and Development* (London: G. Bell, 1951); Eric Shanes, *The Genius of the Royal Academy* (London: John Murray, 1981); James Fenton, *School of Genius: A History of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006).

on the history of the RA focused on the second half of the 18th century and the first four decades of the 19th century.⁵ The promotion of a national school via the teaching and mounting of exhibitions by the RA in order to educate both artistic and public taste is a key element that Hoock points out for ‘his’ period prompts discussion of the evidence from the slightly later period.⁶

A. For ‘a proper representation of British Fine Art’

In 1878, Great Britain was in a position of choice in the *Exposition*, with the largest surface at its disposal across the various sections, including in the fine arts galleries. A Royal Commission oversaw the project, coordinating several committees responsible for the different types of exhibits that merited inclusion. British long-standing institutions were also involved alongside this commission established for just this occasion. Among these, the RA, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the two Water Colour Societies participated in arranging the British fine arts display.⁷ International and Universal Exhibitions were major commercial events, even if items were not available for immediate sale (at least, not in Paris). They were also political gatherings, although more entertaining attractions competed with grand discourses for visitors’ attention.

The entire process of preparation for the 1878 Universal Exhibition began in April 1876 with the signature of two decrees by the then President of the French Republic Marshal MacMahon. Indeed, on 5 April 1876 the *Journal officiel* published the text by which the President decreed that ‘*une Exposition universelle des produits agricoles et industriels*’ would open in Paris on 1 May 1878 and would close down

⁵ Hoock 2003.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 52 ff. and pp. 67 ff.

⁷ The official British Commissioners’ report published in 1880 summarized and explained in the most comprehensive way the various aspects of the British exhibition notably its organisational characteristics. *Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, to the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1880), Vol. I, p. 37.

on the following 31 October. The second paragraph of the decree stated that every nation's products would be admitted.⁸ Fine arts were greeted with a separate presidential decree signed on 13 April 1876 with the second signature of and transfer of responsibility for the operation to the Minister for Public Instruction and Fine Arts, then William Henry Waddington. This document set up a 'universal exposition of fine arts, independent with the annual living artists' exhibition', due to take place at the same time as the agricultural and industrial exhibition.⁹ Almost immediately, news of the French project was dispatched to foreign countries to give them enough time to consider the possibility of their commitment to the event and the extent of their participation. One week later, on 20 April 1876, a formal intimation was sent to the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs by His Excellency the Marquis d'Harcourt, ambassador from the French Republic in London.¹⁰

Written material prepared at this early stage of the planning of the Exhibition provides evidence of a unanimously favourable move towards the organisation of the event which transcended any political oppositions. At the very beginning of July 1876, a select committee was formed at the *Assemblée nationale* to study the government bill to open an International and Universal Exhibition. It had been forwarded to the lower chamber according to the urgent procedure – *urgence déclarée* – which permitted quicker discussions, debates, and votes.¹¹ Indeed, there was no time wasted in endless debates since the Exhibition was meant to be

⁸ Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1, Décret instituant une Exposition universelle de l'agriculture et de l'industrie en 1878, published in the *Journal Officiel*, 4 April 1876: 'Article premier. Une Exposition universelle des produits agricoles et industriels s'ouvrira à Paris le 1er mai 1878 et sera close le 31 octobre suivant. Les produits de toutes les nations seront admis à cette Exposition.'

⁹ Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1, M. Teisserenc de Bort et Léon Say, *Projet de loi ayant pour objet l'ouverture à Paris d'une Exposition internationale universelle en 1878*, Chambre des députés, Session 1876, No. 238, Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 26 juin 1876, p. 26: 'Article 1er. Une exposition universelle des beaux-arts, indépendante de l'exposition annuelle des ouvrages des artistes vivantes, s'ouvrira à Paris en même temps que l'exposition agricole et industrielle, le 1er mai 1878, et elle sera close le 31 octobre suivant.'

¹⁰ *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878*, p. 9.

¹¹ Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1, M. Journault, *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi ayant pour objet l'ouverture à Paris d'une Exposition internationale universelle en 1878*, Chambre des députés, Session 1876, No. 316, Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 13 juillet 1876, p. 1.

beneficial for the whole nation. The report of this committee acknowledged this feeling of concord:

we have been unanimous to pay homage to the high and patriotic thought which has inspired this bill. It is right that France puts forward her vitality and wealth after incredible disasters in her history, and that one can see her, almost on the day after her reverse of fortunes, welcome the entire world for peaceful and fruitful battles of art and industry. Every nation has understood this thought; everyone, – as we have been confirmed –, will rush to answer it.¹²

Later on a minister's order was issued to take action as a consequence of the series of presidential decrees and the publication of the General Regulations for the Exhibition. French artists were invited at the Palace of Industry on the Champs-Élysées to visit, or to be represented to hand by a descriptive entry – *notice* – of titles and size of their works completed from 1 May 1867 that they would like to have exhibited in the Palace on the Champ de Mars.¹³

Whereas the French dispatch to foreign countries had been sent in April 1876, it is not before 22 January 1877 that a Royal Commission was established by Queen Victoria, under the presidency of the Prince of Wales.¹⁴ From then the process for the preparation of the British displays accelerated. By 17 February, a Committee for the British Fine Art Section was appointed.¹⁵ Consistently, this Committee shows characteristics of an operational body with the gathering of the principal positions in the British art world of the time, including the presidents of the Royal Academy (Sir

¹² Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1, M. Journault, *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi ayant pour objet l'ouverture à Paris d'une Exposition internationale universelle en 1878*, Chambre des députés, Session 1876, No. 316, Annexe au procès-verbal de la séance du 13 juillet 1876, p. 2: '[...] nous avons été unanimes pour rendre hommage à la haute et patriotique pensée qui a inspiré le projet de loi. Il est bon que la France affirme sa vitalité et sa richesse après des désastres inouïs dans son histoire, et qu'on la voie, presque au lendemain de ses revers, convier le monde entier aux luttes pacifiques et fécondes de l'art et de l'industrie. Toutes les nations ont compris cette pensée ; toutes, - nous en avons reçu l'assurance, - s'empresseront d'y répondre.'

¹³ Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Arrêtés ministériels d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 2, Direction des Beaux-Arts, Arrêté du 7 février 1877.

¹⁴ *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878*, p. 9.

¹⁵ Henry Blackburn, *An Illustrated Catalogue of painting and sculpture in the British Fine Art Section* (Paris and London: Galignani & Co. and Chatto & Windus, 1878), [p. 2].

Francis Grant), the Society of Painters in Water Colours (Sir John Gilbert), and the Royal Institute of British Architects (Charles Barry). Alongside these representatives of major institutions, eminent figures such as Frederick Leighton and William Calder Marshall widened the artistic representation in the Committee. The Duke of Westminster, chairman, Lord de l'Isle and Dudley, Sir Coutts Lindsay, Sir Richard Wallace, and Colonel Arthur Ellis, were involved to various extent in the contemporary artistic scene and art market. For instance, when the RA did not allow the Pre-Raphaelites to put their works on prominent public display, Sir Coutts Lindsay famously promoted them with the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery from 1877 onwards.¹⁶ Sir Richard Wallace acquired several collections in public auction sales in Paris and London, beyond inheriting a fine arts collection from his natural father, the 4th Marquess of Hertford. The appointment of Philip Cunliffe Owen as the Commission's Secretary was another valuable addition to the organisation of the British participation, since he had already taken part in the same sort of operations for previous International Exhibitions, such as the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.¹⁷

Shortly after the creation of the Committee, the Prince Albert Edward was writing from Marlborough House to Francis Grant, as the President of the RA and the newly appointed Royal Commissioner, to ask for the participation of the RA to the 1878 *Exposition* in Paris. The Prince argued for 'a proper representation of British Fine Art' and the desirability of 'rendering the display of British Art as complete as possible'.¹⁸ He also emphatically made mention of the 'exceptional aid' the RA gave in the preparation of the British fine arts displays for the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. The Council of the RA received this letter on 20 March 1877, which was to be read to the General Assembly, on 21 March., as recorded in the *Annual Report*:

¹⁶ See on the matter, Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, eds, *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

¹⁷ In 1875, Philip Cunliffe Owen was appointed Executive Commissioner by the Duke of Richmond, Lord President of the Committee of Council on Education. *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy... for the Year 1875*, p. 54.

¹⁸ RAA/SEC/5/2/1, original letter, dated 7 March 1877, from Marlborough House.

Some delay occurred before [framing a reply], owing to there being considerable difference of opinion whether it was advisable to make any reference to the paragraph in the letter referring to the loan by the Academy of the Diploma Pictures to the Philadelphia Exhibition, with a view of informing the Commissioners that the Academy would not be prepared to make a similar loan to the Paris Exhibition.¹⁹

Right from the outset, it is possible to feel the embarrassing position in which the RA was placed by this princely invitation. Understanding a few elements about the participation of the RA for the Philadelphia Exhibition is needed here to fully comprehend why the 1876 Exhibition is invoked in 1877 for the preparation of the 1878 Paris *Exposition*, and to form a better idea of what exactly was at stake at the preparatory phase of such international events.

B. An 'exceptional aid'

From mid-March 1875, the RA had been liaising with the Committee of Council on Education after the British Government had accepted the invitation of the President of the United States to take part in the International Exhibition to be held at Philadelphia in 1876. The Duke of Richmond, Lord President of the Committee of Council on Education, responsible for the British section in the Philadelphia Exhibition, called upon the RA to contribute to the fine arts exhibition. Firstly, the RA was concerned about the expenses incurred by its participation, mostly for shipping and insurance of the works sent to America. The uncertainty as to the possibility for the Committee of Council on Education to take responsibility for these expenses delayed the preparatory process by several weeks. In May 1875, the RA explained that its involvement would not be possible within the financial allowance

¹⁹ *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1877* (London: William Clowes, 1878), pp. 5-7. This letter is mentioned in the Royal Academy Council minutes, C, 1876 to 1877, XV, p. 130, 'Letter from H.R.H. the Prince of Wales about the Paris Exhibition'.

the Commons had voted and also to comply with the overall policy of the Committee in liaison with every particular exhibitor.²⁰ The RA Council expressed concerns about the impossibility of an appropriate British fine arts section without a proper allowance. It recalled a precedent of the 1855 Universal Exhibition in Paris when the Royal Commission responsible for the British representation had supported the expenses for shipping artworks into France.

With a ponderous argument on the endorsement of expenses which the British participation entailed, this episode points precisely towards the very unique character of the RA, who was not accountable to Parliament, rather, ‘has been given every opportunity, from the outset, of managing its affairs in its own fashion, and it has been responsible to no one save the Sovereign personally.’²¹ On 16 July 1875, Philip Cunliffe Owen sent a letter to the RA to announce a meeting with the Duke of Richmond and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as solicited, at the Privy Council Office, which is evidence of this financial and political concern.²² Five days later, the President, the Secretary and the Keeper of the RA, and the artists Philip Hermogenes Calderon, Charles West Cope, William Powell Frith, Frederick Leighton, William Calder Marshall, John Everett Millais, John Pettie, Richard Redgrave, and William Blake Richmond met the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to discuss the expenses incurred by shipping the RA works of art to Philadelphia.²³

Before a meeting was officially scheduled, in preparation of the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, the Council of the RA had prepared a memorandum to propose shipping a selection of Diploma Works of deceased Academicians.²⁴ In order to elucidate the necessity of a proper British fine art display in Philadelphia, the *Memorandum* interestingly explains:

British Art has hitherto made a very poor show at all International Exhibitions, while foreign countries like France and Belgium have always been well represented; and the result is that whereas Belgian and

²⁰ *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy... for the Year 1875*, p. 9.

²¹ W. K. West, ‘The Royal Academy: Its Origin and History,’ in Holme 1904, pp. i-xvi (p. i).

²² *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy... for the Year 1875*, p. 59.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

French pictures are well known and command a sale all over Europe, English Pictures are but little known and esteemed out of England.²⁵

This single quote could have been dismissed for insignificance if it had been a hand-written note in a margin, or an excerpt of a draft not reproduced in the final and definitive document. Yet this consideration was considered of enough importance not only to be inserted in the aforementioned official memorandum but also to appear in the *Annual report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1875* published in 1878. This comment went on with financial considerations, with praises towards foreign governmental support to their national arts and regrets that ‘the British Government has done nothing to assist English Artists.’²⁶

This evaluation of British fine art displays in International Exhibitions provides several ideas about the objectives of the RA in its participation in mounting the British displays. First, the Council of the RA rated the British fine arts displays in Philadelphia as ‘very poor’ suggesting on that occasion that there was much room for development and improvement. Second, in comparative terms British artistic exhibits have looked a sorry sight compared with Belgian or French ones. This has been detrimental both in terms of knowledge – ‘little known’ – and fame – ‘little [...] esteemed’. Since the idea of ‘sale’ is clearly mentioned in that comment, this limited awareness and appreciation of British art abroad does not seem to be related to aesthetic considerations and ‘higher ideas’ of artistic creativity but rather calls upon practical concerns of contemporary artists about finding appropriate outlets for their production. This comparison with Belgian and French practice may even suggest specific markets the RA would have been interested in opening to diversify the commercial prospects of British artists, especially as these markets were easy to reach by their geographical proximity. Yet here the focus was clearly on the display of British ability in the fine arts to an American audience. The *Memorandum* went on with a spur invoking Switzerland:

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Were it only to imitate to a certain extent in this matter the example of small countries like Belgium and Switzerland, British Art would soon take its proper place abroad, and in the present instance we should be able to show the Americans that we occupy as high a place in Art as in other matters.²⁷

This argumentation and the meeting it was to fuel were both conclusive, since the RA Council received on 5 August 1875 a letter from the Duke of Richmond, stating that:

the Government had consented, in consideration of the representations of the Deputation from the Royal Academy on behalf of the Artists of the country, to defray the expenses of the collection, transport, return, and insurance of the Paintings which might be selected from the Works of Living Artists for the Philadelphia Exhibition.²⁸

The following autumn, the RA set up a committee (consisting of the President, Calderon, Leighton, Redgrave, and Richmond) to select Diploma Works of deceased artists to be sent to Philadelphia.²⁹ The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts sent a letter ‘congratulating the Royal Academy on the action it had taken with the British Government with respect to the exhibition of British Art at the approaching Exhibition at Philadelphia.’³⁰ On 16 November 1875, the Selection Committee reported to the RA Council a selection of 22 works, ‘two of these, however, were not approved by the Council, and were withdrawn’.³¹ The final list of artworks lent by the Royal Academy for the British display of fine arts in Philadelphia read as follows:

Painting.
Morning
The Lark

Sir A. W. Callcott, R.A.³²
John Constable, R.A.³³

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, *Morning*, oil on canvas, 995 x 1335 mm, 1810, Diploma Work Sir Augustus Wall Callcott, R.A. accepted in 1810, 03/1372

³³ John Constable, *A Boat Passing a Lock*, oil on canvas, 1016 x 1270 mm, 1826, Diploma Work John Constable, R.A. accepted in 1829, 03/923.

<i>Landscape</i>	Thomas Creswick, R.A. ³⁴
<i>View on the Coast of Scotland</i>	William Daniell, R.A. ³⁵
<i>Sleeping Nymph and Satyr</i>	William Etty, R.A. ³⁶
<i>Thor Battering the Serpent of Misgard</i>	Henry Fuseli, R.A. ³⁷
<i>The Rape of Ganymede</i>	William Hilton, R.A. ³⁸
<i>The Wood-ranger</i>	Daniel Maclise, R.A. ³⁹
<i>The Village Buffoon</i>	William Mulready, R.A. ⁴⁰
<i>Abelard</i>	Gilbert Stewart Newton, R.A. ⁴¹
<i>Boy and Kitten</i>	William Owen, R.A. ⁴²
<i>Portrait of the Painter</i>	Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A. ⁴³
<i>Samson and Delilah</i>	John Francis Rigaud, R.A. ⁴⁴
<i>On the Scheldt</i>	Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. ⁴⁵
<i>Dolbadern Castle, North Wales</i>	John M. W. Turner, R.A. ⁴⁶
<i>Christ Blessing Little Children</i>	Benjamin West, P.R.A. ⁴⁷
<i>Boys Digging for a Rat</i>	Sir David Wilkie, R.A. ⁴⁸
<i>Portrait of the Painter</i>	Richard Wilson, R.A. ⁴⁹
Sculpture	
<i>Bust of Benjamin Flaxman, R.A.</i>	Edward H. Bailey, R.A.
<i>Bust of Benjamin West, P.R.A.</i>	Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A. ⁵⁰

³⁴ Thomas Creswick, *Landscape with Artist Resting Beside a Road*, oil on canvas, 710 x 915 mm, ca. 1851, Diploma Work Thomas Creswick, R.A. accepted in 1851, 03/574.

³⁵ William Daniell, *Culzean Castle, Ayrshire*, oil on canvas, 873 x 1280 mm, 1822, Diploma Work William Daniell, R.A. accepted in 1822, 03/207.

³⁶ William Etty, *Sleeping Nymph and Satyrs*, oil on canvas, 1295 x 1784 mm, 1828, Diploma Work William Etty, R.A. accepted in 1828, 03/1292.

³⁷ Henry Fuseli, *Thor Battering the Midgard Serpent*, oil on canvas, 1330 x 946 mm, 1790, Diploma Work Henry Fuseli, R.A. accepted in 1790, 03/995.

³⁸ William Hilton, *The Rape of Ganymede*, oil on canvas, 1848 x 2343 mm, ca. 1806, Diploma Work William Hilton, R.A. accepted in 1819, 03/209

³⁹ Daniel Maclise, *The Woodranger*, oil on canvas, 2142 x 914 mm, 1838, Diploma Work Daniel Maclise, R.A. accepted in 1840, 03/1298.

⁴⁰ William Mulready, *The Village Buffoon*, oil on canvas, 763 x 636 mm, 1816, Diploma Work William Mulready, R.A. accepted in 1816, 03/1333.

⁴¹ Untraced.

⁴² William Owen, *Boy with a Kitten*, oil on canvas, 770 x 640 mm, 1807, Diploma Work William Owen, R.A. accepted in 1807, 03/391.

⁴³ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Self-portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.*, oil on panel, 1270 x 1016 mm, ca. 1780, Given by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., 1780, 03/1394.

⁴⁴ John Francis Rigaud, *Samson and Delilah*, oil on canvas, 1303 x 1562 mm, ca. 1784, Diploma Work John Francis Rigaud, R.A. accepted in 1784, 03/1087.

⁴⁵ Clarkson Stanfield, *On the Scheldt near Leiskenshoeck: a Squally Day*, oil on canvas, 966 x 1302 mm, 1837, Diploma Work Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. accepted in 1837, 03/1366

⁴⁶ J. M. W. Turner, *Dolbadern Castle*, oil on canvas, 1194 x 902 mm, 1800, Diploma Work J.M.W. Turner, R.A. accepted in 1802, 03/1383.

⁴⁷ Benjamin West, *Christ blessing Little Children*, oil on canvas, 1166 x 2149 mm, 1781, 03/1028.

⁴⁸ Sir David Wilkie, *Boys Digging for Rats*, oil on board, 364 x 304 mm, 1812, Diploma Work Sir David Wilkie, R.A. accepted in 1811, 03/1379.

⁴⁹ Untraced.

⁵⁰ *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy... for the Year 1875*, p. 62.

This selection was consistent with the aims suggested in the RA's *Memorandum*. The selected works gave a glimpse at the practice of famous British artists in the various genres of portraiture, landscape, genre, religious and mythological painting, from the second half of the 18th century to the mid-19th century. Knowledge and reputation of British art stemmed from the knowledge and reputation of its modern masters, and the RA handily owned their Diploma Pictures.

The most remarkable aspects of this account of the British fine art preparations for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition are a clarification of the aims of the RA: promoting and raising the profile of the British fine arts abroad. This fitted within the consensual direction given by the Royal Commission, in the context of the limited resources available to achieve these aims, with both the British Commission and the RA struggling to secure appropriate funding and the very limited – however committed – character of the role of the RA in the British fine arts display. Yet the sending of Diploma Works bore some ambiguity as to the exact aims of the RA, and about a possible hidden agenda beyond the international support of British art in general, with the promotion of works that RA members created. The UK certainly exhibited more than 20 works in Philadelphia. Then, how were works for the subsequent Paris *Exposition* chosen? The evidence still available about the Paris Exhibition provides some helpful answers.

In 1877, following the mention by the Prince of Wales of the very valuable commitment of the RA for the 1876 Exhibition in Philadelphia, the institution declared itself not keen on lending as many works to the International Exhibition in Paris as for the one in Philadelphia. The Council had 'considerable discussion' on the Prince's invitation letter for the Academy to take part in the preparation for the 1878 event. Several answer letters were drafted though none was sent on the day the letter was debated, and the sending of a reply was delayed to following meetings.⁵¹ Unfortunately, there seems to be no evidence left to understand the exact reason for these hesitations of the RA and the lack of enthusiasm in sharing its collections for the benefit of the British fine arts exhibition. Concerns about the conservation of the

⁵¹ *Royal Academy of Art Council Minutes*, C, 1876 to 1877, XV, pp. 135 and 146, 4 April 1877 and 26 April 1877.

works might have arisen, since Philadelphia and Paris Exhibitions followed each other only within months. Besides, Academicians may have disagreed among themselves about the number of old works to send to Paris since these would have taken the room otherwise available for living artists to send their own, more recent works for the sake of their promotion.

By the end of May, a group of 20 Royal Academicians signed a collective letter in opposition with a plan of the Committee of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the British Fine Art Section.⁵² In order to take action while the RA was not clear on the steps to follow for its participation, the Royal Commission and its Committee for the Fine Art section may have decided to set up its own process and criteria of selection, which the collective letter's signatories described in these words:

We readily admit that all personal feeling should be subservient to a great International object but we believe that so insidious a procedure as calling upon artists to form a graduated scale of merit applicable to their brethren in art would bring with it no compensating benefit for the extreme annoyance it would without doubt produce. However we believe that it would be impossible to draw out such a scale with any approach to real justice.

We entertain equally strong objection to the mode the scheme would enforce in the arrangement of the Exhibition but it is not necessary to enter in such detail in this communication.⁵³

Twenty Academicians and Associates thus dismissed what reads like a plan of peer-assessment of artworks as a preparation for the Exhibition. Such an occurrence reveals the 'web, or *field* of interdependencies, conflicts and institutional associations that composed the art world' in which the RA was located.⁵⁴ Beyond, it might provide another piece of evidence of the inadequacy of the RA when, at the same time, 'social relations between artists and patrons [were] restructured by the further absorption of art within a market economy.'⁵⁵ Beyond the challenge to an

⁵² RAA/SEC/12/18/1, original manuscript letter, dated 24 May 1877.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Gordon Fyfe, 'Auditing the RA: Official Discourse and the Nineteenth-Century Royal Academy,' in *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Rafael Cardoso Denis and Colin Trodd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 117-30 (pp. 119-20).

⁵⁵ Colin Trodd, 'Academic Cultures: the Royal Academy and the Commerce of Discourse in Victorian London,' in Denis and Trodd 2000, pp. 179-93 (p. 184).

appraisal and selection mechanism, RA members and associates challenged the very existence of the institution and its methods.

In the circumstances, artists no longer expected, as a matter of priority, to be ranked and valued, but to be put on display, where the buying public, the critics and the dealers would have the opportunity to make up their own minds. The scheme mentioned in the letter was likely meant to somewhat ease the selection process of the works submitted by individual artists. It might also have been designed to create a sort of value grid in anticipation of the sales of the works during or immediately after the end of the Exhibition. The idea of this ranking system seems to have been withdrawn or not further developed after this collective letter was sent to the Royal Commission, as no surviving source accounts for its implementation.

In parallel with the actions taken by the Council of the RA in collaboration with the Royal Committee, individual RA members also took the initiative to promote their works and get them sent across the Channel. For instance, at the beginning of the summer 1877 Frederick Leighton asked the RA to send to the Exhibition his statue of *An Athlete Strangling a Python*.⁵⁶ A month and a solicitors' consultation later, the RA answered Leighton that the sending of his statue was not legally possible because of the context of its purchase thanks to the Chantrey bequest, and therefore could not be sent abroad.⁵⁷ Later on, Henry T. Wells sent a list upon request to the Royal Commission for the forthcoming Exhibition at Paris which featured his Diploma Work. Wells therefore asked the RA for its authorisation to send his Diploma Work to Paris for the Exhibition, before the Prince of Wales asked the RA for it himself.⁵⁸

Furthermore, artists did not limit themselves to approaching the RA management but also contacted the Royal Committee directly to promote their personal interests; and later events proved them right in doing so. Indeed, upon several artists' request, the Prince of Wales wrote to the RA in February 1878 to ask for H. T. Wells' *Letters and News at the Loch side*, C. W. Cope's *Selecting pictures*

⁵⁶ RAA/SEC/4/82/8, original manuscript letter from Frederick Leighton to the RA, dated 5 July 1877.

⁵⁷ RAA/SEC/4/82/9, manuscript copy of a letter signed by Francis Eaton, to Frederick Leighton, dated 11 August 1877.

⁵⁸ RAA/SEC/4/140/2, original manuscript letter from Henry T. Wells 'to the President and Council of the Royal Academy', dated 22 January 1878.

for the Royal Academy Exhibition, and W. J. Yeames' *Amy Robsart*. As an incentive, the Prince explained that these loans would contribute in 'promoting the success of the British School of Fine Arts in Paris'.⁵⁹ Upon reception of the Prince's letter, the RA Council considered again the fate of the works purchased with the Chantrey bequest, because Yeames's picture was also one of them, and resolved against their earlier decision and, seemingly, against the RA's solicitors' advice 'that as the full representation of British Art in the greatest Exhibition of the world has a tendency to the encouragement of that art, it is expedient that the works of art belonging to the Chantrey fund be (when decided by the author) exhibited in the International Exhibition at Paris; therefore that permission to that effect be given.'⁶⁰ Consequently, the Prince Albert Edward wrote to the RA to ask for Leighton's sculpture *An Athlete Strangling a Python* after the artist's request had reached him,⁶¹ and the RA Council eventually gave permission for the loan of Leighton's sculpture, following the precedent concerning work acquired with the income of the Chantrey bequest.⁶²

When the 1878 *Exposition* opened in Paris on 1 May 1878, the Royal Academy had lent five works on its behalf; three paintings: Charles West Cope, RA, *The Council of the Royal Academy Selecting Pictures for Exhibition, 1875* (oil on canvas, 145,2 X 220,1 cm, 1876, Royal Academy of Arts); Henry Tanworth Wells, RA, *Letters and News from the Loch side*; and William Frederic Yeames, RA, *Amy Robsart* (oil on canvas, 281,5 x 188,5 cm, 1877, Tate Britain); and two sculptures: Frederic Leighton, *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (bronze, 174,6 x 98,4 x 109,9 cm, 290 kg, 1877, Tate Britain); Margaret Grant, *Bust of Sir F. Grant, P.R.A.* (marble, 660 x 350 x 300 mm, ca. 1865, Royal Academy of Arts).⁶³ This was considerably fewer than those loaned to the Philadelphia exhibition.

⁵⁹ RAA/SEC/5/4/1, original manuscript letter, mentioned in *Royal Academy of Art Council Minutes*, C, 1878 to 1879, XVI, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ *Royal Academy of Art Council Minutes*, C, 1878 to 1879, XVI, p. 11, 12 February 1878.

⁶¹ RAA/SEC/5/4/2, original manuscript letter, dated 9 March 1878.

⁶² *Royal Academy of Art Council Minutes*, C, 1878 to 1879, XVI, p. 22, 19 March 1878.

⁶³ *Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1878* (London: William Clowes, 1879), p. 66.

C. Famous on the Continent?

In the quotes mentioned earlier, the RA members' main concerns were phrased in terms of knowledge – 'little known' – and appreciation – 'little [...] esteemed'. This difference could also be qualified as a distinction between the realities of the artistic life of Britain, its characteristics, its actors and themes, and an aesthetic interest which compares and contrasts the artistic output of Britain side by side with artistic creations from other countries. As the comments made by the Council of the RA demonstrate, International Exhibitions were a double-edged sword, an opportunity either for a country to be noticed among others for its high qualities and merits, or for a display to be attacked because it compared badly with others. To assess their relevance and pertinence, these comments of the RA also call for a closer look at the foreign criticism about British arts ahead of the 1878 display, keeping in mind the historically strong connections between English and Flemish arts from the 17th century onwards which were still a reference to thought about British art well into the 19th century. It is worth paying attention to both British criticism on Belgian art and the reception of British fine art displays in International Exhibitions.

The unfavourable comments of the RA in 1875 that contrasted British painting and its mainland European counterparts such as Belgium were actually anticipated within French art criticism. Indeed, writing his *Voyage à travers l'Exposition des Beaux-Arts (Peinture et Sculpture)* to account for and analyse the content of the 1855 Paris *Exposition Universelle*, the French art critic Edmond About acknowledged his French contemporaries' limited knowledge of British art. According to About, this was because 'English painters were not used to, as Belgian ones were, to send their works to [French] exhibitions'. One way to alleviate this dearth of British paintings in France was the publication of printed reproductions, but About regretted that 'engraving, especially burin engraving, only accounts for the composition and the drawing; it can barely give any indication of colour. It only

takes a spiritual idea and an appropriate drawing to make a commendable vignette; it takes something on top of that to make a painting.’⁶⁴

What is particularly interesting here is that Belgium already appears as a reference for foreign national presence on the European art market via public exhibitions, specifically in France in 1855, a full twenty years before the comments made within the Council of the RA. Moreover, About repeats the classical *topos* of visual analysis which dissects the image between colour and drawing. Actually, About’s critique of the 1855 British display might have influenced, twenty years later, the discussion of the performance of British artists beyond the Channel. An indicator of the impact of his evaluation of the first Paris *Exposition* can be found in John Lewis Roget’s *History of the ‘old water colour society’ now the Royal Society of painters in water colours* which quoted some of his remarks about the 1855 display of British watercolours more than twenty-five years after their publication.⁶⁵ The British point of view on Belgian art in the years up to the 1878 Paris Exposition is also relevant here.

The comparison between Belgian and British arts was already well developed in the 1850s, stimulated with the first International Exhibitions, and the growth of London art galleries. Thus, the critic for *The Athenaeum* could worry ‘that our English school will soon be exposed to the exciting rivalry of two foreign styles’ with the opening in 1856 of a ‘French Exhibition’ containing a gallery of Belgian pictures within. To overcome this rivalry, the critic judged reasonable to offer a straightforward motto reading ‘Know all schools; imitate none.’⁶⁶ The awareness of owing much to the Old Dutch School as a characteristic shared by both British and Belgian arts might have fuelled this fear of international competition.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Edmond About, *Voyage à travers l’Exposition des Beaux-Arts (Peinture et Sculpture)* (Paris: Hachette, 1855), p. 4: ‘Les peintres anglais n’ont pas comme les belges, l’habitude d’envoyer leurs œuvres à nos expositions. Nous ne connaissions leurs tableaux que par la gravure. Or la gravure, et surtout la gravure au burin ne rend que la composition et le dessin : c’est à peine si elle peut indiquer la couleur. Il ne faut qu’une idée spirituelle et un dessin correct pour faire une vignette admirable : il faut quelque chose de plus pour faire un tableau.’

⁶⁵ John Lewis Roget, *A History of the ‘Old Water Colour Society’ now the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours. With biographical notices of its older and of all deceased members and associates...* (London: n.l., 1891), Vol. II, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁶ ‘The French Exhibition,’ *The Athenaeum*, No. 1494, 14 June 1856, pp. 750-1.

⁶⁷ ‘The International Exhibition,’ *London Society*, Vol. 20, No. 118, October 1871, pp. 289-98 (p. 296).

The British interest in Belgian national art school, ‘a great favourite with Englishman’, might have been stimulated by its short and recent history as the aftermath of the Belgian revolution.⁶⁸ Belgian arts were able to thrive in renewed political circumstances and emancipate themselves from the Dutch arts of Rembrandt’s long fame. The freshness and rapidity of this movement towards the creation of an autonomous art school was a striking feature for a British observer amidst lasting and repeated debates about the merits and uniqueness of the British art school.⁶⁹ The critic of the 1862 International Exhibition for the *Saturday Review* casts an original light on the British appreciation of Belgian arts by discriminating between both strengths and weaknesses of English paintings and foreign pictures along the lines of the Exhibition’s classification itself. On a positive note, colour and light are the first criterion to distinguish English and Continental works ‘look[ing] dead and flat after the English,’ the subject matter comes second, with English works having ‘more width and depth of feeling in them,’ ‘more variety and intensity of purpose,’ and ‘more feeling, more imagination, more attempt to express what it is hard to express from the depth of the thought’.

By contrast, this critic praised Continental paintings because of their ‘marked superiority in the conception of human action as a subject of representation and in the drawing of form’ the delineation of man in his noblest moments, in his hours of grandeur, and in his wrestling with fate or with his own spirit’.⁷⁰ In line with this assessment, the impression of ‘very poor show’ made by British art at all International Exhibitions might also have had aesthetic reasons. In addition to the financial argument, British art did not live up to the expectations of the RA and the original intentions set up in the discourses of Joshua Reynolds towards a regulated and intellectual art designed according to classical standards. by contrast, the commentator acknowledged an English weakness in drawing and representation of the human figure alongside distinctive formal qualities.

⁶⁸ Sidney Colvin, ‘Painting at the International Exhibition’, *The Dark Blue*, Vol. 1, No. 5, July 1871, pp. 611-9 (p. 619).

⁶⁹ ‘Art. IV.-- 1. Complément de L’Œuvre de 1830, Etablissement, dans les Pays Transatlantiques. Avenir du Commerce et de l’Industrie Belge. Bruxelles, 1860’, *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 112, No. 224, October 1862, pp. 379-410

⁷⁰ ‘The English and Foreign Pictures at the International Exhibition’, *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, Vol. 13, No. 347, 21 June 1862, pp. 709-10.

Closer in time to the key quote of this chapter, the 1875 London Annual International Exhibition of Fine Arts at the Albert Hall supported the interest in Belgian arts. In addition, the public could contemplate even more works by Belgian artists at a newly opened Belgian Gallery at 28 Old Bond Street.⁷¹ This affluent representation of Belgian arts in London is the immediate background of the comment made in the RA if it did not indeed inspire it directly. Throughout these various commentaries about Continental, Belgian and British paintings, the intermingling of aesthetic and mercantile references is especially remarkable. It echoes and parallels discussions about the RA which debated its function in the British artistic environment between ‘professional authority and business power’⁷² and also reflects the contemporary development of ‘close relationships established between the artist and the collector, the artist and the art market and the artist and the viewing public.’⁷³

When it comes to the reception of British art abroad, this feeling of first encounter with British painting that the 1855 Paris Exhibition had seemed to offer to Edmond About was confirmed by another critic, Ernest Chesneau. Taking stock of the 1867 Paris Exhibition, Chesneau reflected in 1868 on the theme of *Les nations rivales dans l’art*.⁷⁴ He decided to start his volume with the English school, and his recollection of the 1855 Exhibition: ‘There was there for our audience like a revelation of an art, of a school whose existence we did not even suspect. [...] our neighbours across the Channel, hitherto disdained, achieved here a great success [...], a kind of vogue that has left vivid memories in every mind.’⁷⁵

⁷¹ W.M. Rossetti, ‘The Belgian Gallery’, *The Academy*, No. 155, 24 April 1875, pp. 434-5 (p. 434).

⁷² Colin Trodd, ‘The Authority of Art: Cultural Criticism and the Idea of the Royal Academy in mid-Victorian Britain’, *Art History*, Vol. 20, 1997, pp. 3-22 (p. 3).

⁷³ MaryAnne Stevens, ‘The Royal Academy in the Age of Queen Victoria’, in *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria: Treasures from the Royal Academy of Arts Permanent Collection*, edited by Helen Valentine (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999), pp. 26-39 (p. 33).

⁷⁴ Ernest Chesneau, *Les nations rivales dans l’art* (Paris: Didier, 1868).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

D. Conclusion

What comes out most prominently from this chapter is that very little power of initiative or influence was left in theory or indeed in practice to the Royal Academy in the definition of the actual content of the British fine art displays. The only way for the institution to contribute fully to the event was through its own collection, somewhat illustrative of something other than the contemporary painting at the time of the Exhibition, since it was made of its Members' Diploma Pictures, therefore leaving a significant part of current British artistic creation aside. Even before visitors would be in a situation to formulate their own judgment upon the exhibits, the situation of the British fine art display was very much at odds with the scientific, calculated approach of the Exhibition project. At a national level, the RA was not able to bring together in the Exhibition 'a collective representation that symbolizes an entire community'.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the available evidence suggests that much in the conception of the British fine art section was the consequence of artists' individual initiative in taking action – or not – to have their most recent works on display. It may be concluded as a matter of fact that 'the dynamic, fluid and multidirectional character of institutions' left very little room to 'circulate' the practical implications of a national discourse about art in the actual preparation and implementation of the fine art exhibit, considering the random – if ever existing – process of selection in place to create a consistent body of artworks that may have fitted in a wider narrative.⁷⁷ If there was, in the British display, any exhibition of artworks 'in a manner calculated to embody and communicate specific cultural meanings and values', this did not happen at the level of the Exhibition's organizers, nor at the level of the national

⁷⁶ Burton Benedict, 'The Anthropology of World's Fairs,' in *The Anthropology of World's fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915*, ed. by Burton Benedict (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1983), pp. 1-65 (p. 7).

⁷⁷ Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, 'Introduction: Constituting the Public: Art and its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century London', in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 1-25 (p. 1).

commission, but at the level of the individual artists and patrons who got involved in the process.⁷⁸

In his analysis of the RA exhibitions at Somerset House between 1780 and 1836, David Solkin has made unsympathetic claims about the institution for an earlier period than the one under consideration in this chapter. While Sidney Charles Hutchison, in his *History of the Royal Academy, 1768-1986*, does not mention at any point the contribution of the RA to the 1878 Universal Exhibition, it is a hard-hitting reality that the archival evidence is perhaps too fragmentary to firmly recreate the timeline between, and meanings within, events and decisions pertaining to the preparation of the British fine arts display for the Paris Exhibition.⁷⁹

Nonetheless, I would argue that this moment in the history of the RA provides a case study which not only confirms and reinforces Solkin's assertions about the role and objectives of the institution, but also extends their validity beyond the mid-1830s: yes, the RA 'might have been dedicated to the pursuit of higher, transcendent truths,' but the constraints of its contribution to the 1878 world Exhibition 'only brought confirmation of its failure to live up to this mandate.' Yes, the RA might have been 'ostensibly designed as a showcase for the laudable achievements of the British School, and as an engine for the edification and improvement of society at large' but its own artistic and material resources were not sufficient to lead the way for British artists to compete abroad, and the mechanisms of the Royal Commission and Committee overtook its potential leadership. And, finally, yes, the Britishness of the British art market was at odd with the assumptions and expectations developed by the French organizing authorities: whereas the RA assumed power over the promotion of its members' success, of British artists in general, and of its very own ventures, the Fine arts section in Paris was not a showroom as such because it did not provide an opportunity for sales, thereby limiting British artists' commercial opportunities in this context, and perhaps, therefore, their enthusiasm.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 6.

⁷⁹ Sidney Charles Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy, 1768-1986* (London: Robert Royce, 1986).

⁸⁰ David H. Solkin, ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), p.8.

IV. 'In a Railway Station How Much of Our Lives Is Centred!': The Modernity of William Powell Frith

Chapter 1 included critical material published in *The Graphic* illustrated newspaper which offers a fascinating take on the 1878 *Exposition*, from the visitors' point of view – although it should not be understood as being representative of all or most visitors' reactions. Chapter 2 looked at a unique piece of built environment which triggered discussions about ideas of nationality, the disparities between the intentions of different organizers, and between these intentions and the perceptions of the visitors. Chapter 3 focused on the preparation of the British fine arts display by the Royal Academy of Arts and its critical reception. This chapter 4 focuses on one single painting which was part of this British fine arts display in the 1878 *Exposition*, as this painting has been part of a body of material associated with various debates about nationalism, tradition and modernity.

This chapter deals with the perception of architecture in the context of the International Exhibitions by focusing on William Powell Frith's *The Railway Station*.¹ The exhibition of this painting in the third room of the British fine arts section of the 1878 Paris *Exposition Universelle* gives an opportunity to think about the contemporary perception of the architectural and urban environment, and appreciate how the understanding and meaning were constructed around a particular work. How little attention the pictorial representation of the railway station attracted, both in contemporary times and in the historiography, is at the core of this chapter. A telling example of the attitude toward Frith's work is this feature *The Builder* published only as miscellanea toward the first days of the original exhibition of the painting, in late April 1862:

* 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station.'" *The Athenaeum, Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, No. 1798, Saturday 12 April 1862, pp. 502-4 (p. 503).

¹ Portions of this chapter were presented at the History of Art Postgraduate Day, University of Edinburgh, Talbot Rice Gallery, on 18 May 2006, and at the RX Futures Network conference 'Technologies and Techniques', at the University of Reading, on 10 May 2008.

The reputed large price agreed to be paid for this work before a line was drawn (8,750*l.*, including the right to exhibit and engrave, and a reduced copy for the latter purpose) led to so much talk about it that the chances were the public would be disappointed with the result. We have no hesitation, however, in saying that this will not be the case. It is one of the finest works of its class ever produced; – full of story, full of truth, and full of beauty. Notwithstanding the large number of figures engaged, and the episodic nature of the incidents (a struggling Frenchman in the hands of a cabman, a wedding party, sailors, soldiers, fussy women, boys for school, the arrest of a forger, and a dozen other points), they group admirably, and form a whole of a remarkable character. In respect of manipulative skill, too, its merits are very striking: notice the shawl of the mother who is stooping in the foreground to kiss her departing child; and the dress of the porters. Mr. Frith has done honour to himself and the British School, and deserves the hearty congratulations of his contemporaries.²

Keeping this account in mind with reading the following quote from *Building News* gives a good idea of the tension which could lie in the engagement with the modern world and its representation: ‘Railway termini and hotels are to the nineteenth century what monasteries and cathedrals were to the thirteenth century. They are truly the only representative buildings we possess... the leaders of the art spirit of the time.’³ Considering Frith’s painting in particular, it is especially remarkable that one of the leading architectural periodicals of the time – *The Builder* – did not dedicate even just a few words to discuss the question of the architectural environment of ‘the incidents’. How can it be explained that the sense of space of the station seems to have had such a limited appeal for its contemporaries?

It is not the intention of this chapter to elaborate upon what has already been written about the striking representation of social characters and the contemporary interest in physiognomy and natural classification it reveals.⁴ The accurate study and representation of the human figure was not new in the second half of the 19th century. It was a key component of artistic training and a topic for publications dealing with

² ‘Mr. Frith’s “Railway Station.”’, *The Builder*, Vol. XX, No. 1003, 26 April 1862, p. 302.

³ *Building News* quoted in Stephen Daniels, ‘Images of the Railway in Nineteenth Century Paintings and Prints’, in *Train Spotting: Images of the Railway in Art* (Nottingham: Castle Museum, 1985), pp. 5-19 (p. 17).

⁴ About this dimension of the painting, see *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age*, edited by Mark Bills and Vivien Knight (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006) and, earlier, Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

the representation of characters' expression and passions, at least from the 17th century onwards. Yet by looking again specifically at this artwork and its reception, this chapter is an opportunity to reflect on the partial take of the art-historical literature on the visual material under its scrutiny and tries to articulate the relation between visual arts and modernity in the second half of the 19th century.

Without even mentioning our post-modern attraction towards 19th-century train stations as aesthetic objects and symbols of audacity, the gap that endures between the quantitative impact of Victorian architecture within our very own built environment and the lack of comment on the train station at the time W. P. Frith represented it in his painting is remarkable. By contrast, this chapter aims to look beyond the human foreground in order to focus on the architectural background, to recreate connections between visual arts and technology which were original to the 19th century and its modernity. The argument relies on British material published from the 1830s – the start of the widespread expansion of railway infrastructure across the country – to the 1870s – after the completion and reception of Frith's painting, until the 1878 Paris Exhibition.

This chapter does not discuss in detail the strong association between modernity and French arts. It is nonetheless worth sketching a parallel between an artist like Frith, who deliberately engaged with contemporary topics, and painters such as Edouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte, and Claude Monet, who all answered in one way or another to the Baron Haussmann's overhaul of the Paris urban environment and the contemporary incursion of railways in the urban environment. In Britain as in France, technological innovation featured prominently in 19th-century visual arts, and this paper assumes the representation of technologies is a key – if not *the* key – to account for the modernity of British visual arts, besides any formal innovation.

William Powell Frith (1819-1909) was, in the early 1860s as in the late 1870s, already famous for entertaining scenes the new railway's openings allowed, such as *Derby Day* (1858) and *Life at the Seaside (Ramsgate Sands)*, the latter exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1854 and immediately bought by Queen Victoria. These paintings were demonstrations of Frith's interest in contemporary society and settings as a topic for visual representation, and therefore as such 'remain

unsurpassed as icons of the Victorian age.’⁵ Frith favoured genre painting and public taste over the requirements of academic art.

First exhibited at the Haymarket Gallery in London from April to September 1862,⁶ *The Railway Station* stands at the crossroads of rather discrete disciplinary discourses which share the built environment and its representation as a common object of study.⁷ It often features in art history readers, in books about the history of the railways’ development, and in architectural history studies.⁸ Architectural history takes the painting as an illustration of the ground-breaking design of Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859) for the Great Western Railway terminus better known as Paddington station and, beyond, as the representation of a forerunner of modern and contemporary architecture.⁹ The history of 19th-century British art focuses on the anthropological dimension of the scene: it researches and adopts the Victorian ‘period eye,’ takes the architectural environment as a mere background, emphasizes the further introduction of modern life in grand painting, and favours the narrative side, the living instead of the still, flesh and breath instead of stone and iron.¹⁰

⁵ Vivien Knight, ‘The Private Life of William Powell Frith’, in Bills and Knight 2006, pp. 1-27 (p. 1).

⁶ Steven Brindle, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), p. 51. *The Art Journal* indicates that 750 guineas had been paid to Frith specifically ‘as an inducement to the painter to forego the right to exhibit the work at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy (“Life at a Railway Station,” by W. P. Frith, R.A.’, *The Art Journal*, Vol. VII, February 1861, p. 61). *The Railway Station* is now owned by Royal Holloway College, University of London.

⁷ Alina A. Payne, ‘Architectural History and the History of Art: A Suspended Dialogue’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, No. 3, September 1999, pp. 292-9; Katherine Fischer Taylor, ‘Architecture’s Place in Art History: Art or Adjunct?’, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 83, No. 2, June 2001, pp. 342-6.

⁸ Christopher Wood, *Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life* (London: Faber, 1976; repr. 1990), fig. 220, pp. 208-9; Lionel Lambourne, *Victorian Painting* (London: Phaidon, 1999), p. 256 (detail) and p. 265; Christopher Wood, *Victorian Painting* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999); Richard R. Brettell, *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 14, where W. P. Frith mysteriously becomes Francis Frith, p. 87.

⁹ Brindle 2004; Robert Thorne, ‘Inventing a New Design Technology: Building and Engineering’, in *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, ed. by John M. Mackenzie (London: V&A Publications, 2001), pp. 172-85 (pp. 182-3): ‘As well as the animation of the railway scene, Frith captured the architectural effect of Paddington Station, with its two 50-foot wide transepts. The team responsible for its construction – I. K. Brunel, Matthew Digby Wyatt and the contractors Fox Henderson – had all been involved with the Crystal Palace.’ (p. 183).

¹⁰ Stephen Daniels, ‘Images of the railway in nineteenth century paintings and prints’, in *Train Spotting: Images of the Railway in Art* (Nottingham: Castle Museum, 1985), pp. 5-19; Cowling 1989; Caroline Arscott, ‘William Powell Frith’s “The Railway Station”: Classification and the Crowd’, in Bills and Knight 2006, pp. 79-94. Rather surprisingly, Francis D. Klingender did not mention Frith at all, nor paid any particular attention to the depiction of railway stations in his *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (Evelyn, Adams & MacKay, 1968), although he dedicated an entire chapter to ‘The Railway Age’, pp. 134-65.

To quote but one example of these secondary sources, Richard R. Brettell approaches the painting as being 'among the earliest works of fine art to deal explicitly with rail travel. It glories in the glass and steel architectural setting for the vast machines, but does so in a style that is in no way different than that used for historical or genre painting.'¹¹ The introduction of modernity in visual arts does not seem to happen in any way thanks to the architectural setting, but only via the selection of a wide range of social types. If this scene is to be considered as an example of genre painting, Frith proposes a vision of the 19th-century urban society and environment which blurs social distinctions in a space with people of different classes gathering in a common public location. As Jonathan Crary puts it, relying on post-modern philosophers like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, 'modernization is a process by which capitalism uproots and makes mobile that which is grounded, clears away or obliterates that which impedes circulation, and makes exchangeable what is singular'.¹² This argument finds itself validated within Frith's painting.

Neither art nor architectural histories have discussed comprehensively the representation of the architectural environment of the scene as such, despite its qualitative and quantitative significance on the canvas. Brettell's very cursive analysis is actually a rare art-historical attempt to address the architectural environment of the scene in this narrative, and later on the author includes the painting in a section dealing with 'Transparency and unmediated modernism,' to argue that 'the most obvious way to represent modern reality is to choose as one's subjects those aspects of the visual world unavailable or not invented in the past.'¹³ The painting seems to act as a bridge between art and architectural theories since the problems architects addressed at the time – as represented within the picture itself as its general context – were to a large extent the same as those discussed within aesthetic theory of visual arts, in other words 'the expression of contemporaneity' and 'the need for truthfulness'.¹⁴ Has this disciplinary divide been an innovation of

¹¹ Brettell 1999, p. 14.

¹² Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1992), p. 10.

¹³ Brettell 1999, pp. 87-9.

¹⁴ Stefan Muthesius, 'The "Iron Problem" in the 1850s', *Architectural History*, Vol. 13, 1970, pp. 58-63, 128-31 (p. 58).

the historiography, or a reflection of the relative (non-)engagement of contemporaries with the train station?

The character of ‘traffic building’ attributed to railway stations in the architectural literature may be a useful element to take into account, but it may not completely explain the relative indifference to the architectural background of Frith’s painting.¹⁵ Almost entirely completed by 1854, Paddington station was an eight-year old building by the time this painting was varnished. In the mind of people at the time, was that ‘only eight years old?’, or on the contrary, ‘eight years old already?’ At stake here is the role and importance of structural and architectural landmark the station played over the late 1850s and early 1860s. Did contemporaries let themselves be overawed for eight years? Was it actually considered with special notice right from its completion as a pioneering achievement? Or was it simply absorbed in the growing London metropolis, its unique character blended in the everyday life of the travellers, commuters and trains entering and departing?

It is worth going back to the time of completion of the building itself in order to understand the medium-term impact of this building on the larger, collective perception. How were contemporaries not more interested in the representation of the station, if we can assess such an interest with the evidence art criticism provides? How did contemporaries react to the railway expansion between the 1830s and the 1870s? As Carter puts it in 2001, ‘one hundred and seventy years after the Liverpool and Manchester Railway opened for traffic, it is not easy for us to appreciate how radically railway travel disturbed contemporaries’ cultural understandings.’¹⁶ This is the scale of the disturbance one needs to reveal in order to understand the nature of the reception given to Frith’s painting. By contrast with this apparent indifference to the representation of the space of the railway station, the extent to which Frith renewed the vision of such a place with his painting might be questioned. Besides, in the context of International Exhibitions, the question of the importance of the national significance of the railway expansion arises.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th century* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986), p. 172.

¹⁶ Ian Carter, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 25.

Since Frith's painting is the core of the argument, this chapter exclusively focuses on images inside train stations, excluding all other material dealing with images of the locomotive, carriage scenes, railways in the landscape – tunnels, bridges, and other works of engineering developed along the railway lines – which have been extensively represented in period sources, and would require too lengthy and irrelevant a discussion.¹⁷ After formal analysis of *The Railway Station* and its precedents, this chapter goes on to deal with the perception of the British people in the face of the rapid expansion of the railways and its eruption into the urban environment. Finally, it will take stock of the previous two parts to elicit the significance of Frith's painting.

A. Images of railways stations

First, I am going to examine Frith's *Railway Station* in isolation. The objective is not to detail 'the incidents' and groups gathered on the platform, as this has been done at length right from the time of its initial presentation onwards. In 1862, the playwright and writer Tom Taylor (1817-1880) was indeed the first to vividly describe the representation of the groups and their deeds in the pamphlet he wrote to promote the sale of the engraving produced after the painting. Taylor recalls what painting is all about, in the continuation of the Renaissance tradition, and in full awareness of his contemporaries' psychological and physiognomic expectations. Frith edits the everyday life of the public venue with an acute awareness of the sort of stories his audience expects, understands and enjoys. He would share the opinion that 'it is just the function of the painter to intensify and point his subject by selection and combination of incidents, just as he gives unity and harmony to his composition by

¹⁷ In specifying the remit of this chapter, I borrow the typology of visual material drawn in Daniels 1985, pp. 5-19. James Taylor provides a thorough analysis of the representation of the actors of railway business – directors, board members, shareholders, and employees – in caricatures from 1845 to 1870 in 'Business in Pictures: Representations of Railway Enterprise in the Satirical Press in Britain 1845-1870', *Past and Present*, No. 189, November 2005, pp. 111-45.

studied arrangement of forms, colours, and lines.’¹⁸ The entire composition is physically based on, painted on, the background layer of the painting, but this has been often overlooked; I shall therefore mainly focus on it.

1. Frith’s point of view on the railway station

Frith – as a painter – stands with the spectator within the London terminus of the Great Western Railway, whose wrought and cast iron train sheds featured the widest span in existence at the time of their completion. The scene takes place on the departure platform, on the southern side of the station. The departure building stands to the back of the viewer, with the clock arch nearby (Figure 38).¹⁹ From the outer – or, country – end of the station, in the left hand side of the scene, the south span or nave of the shed develops towards the viewer, diagonally across the painting, counting seven bays which the cast-iron columns clearly emphasize. Then the rhythm of the barrel vault is interrupted by a transept before resuming in the extreme right of the composition.

The reality of the selected point of view satisfies the requirements of the pictorial composition. Beyond the nearest row of columns on which rests this southern span, a second nave expands the space of the scene, with distant vistas towards further girders and skylights which emphasize the regular rhythm of the modular structure of the shed; and the large transparent end windows and opaque roofing surfaces greatly contribute to the balance of the composition. The final northern column of the background nave frames the stretch of visible end windows exactly in the middle of the canvas, separating the vitreous surfaces on the left hand side from the more obscure intrados of the vaulted roof on the right hand side. The viewpoint that ensures the most desirable spot to situate the scene also ensures the best angle to appreciate the unique character of the building.

¹⁸ Tom Taylor, *The Railway Station painted by W. P. Frith, Esq., R.A.* (London, 1862), p. 4.

¹⁹ Frith actually gives a portrait of himself as a paterfamilias in the family group gathered towards the centre of the canvas.

A close observation of the painting in comparison with the actual setting of the train station nowadays gives additional clues about the relations between the painter and the architectural environment (Figure 53 and Figure 54). It is likely Frith carefully selected this spot for his scene, not only the best point of view possible to display a wide variety of incidents on the platform, but also situated just by the original entranceway where passengers could flood through from the departure side, and half way through the stretch of the platform along the train station building.²⁰ This was a familiar point of view, one everybody could experience while entering the station – although few travellers would have taken the time to consider it as fully as Frith does.

Frith could have set his viewpoint from the very eastern end of the platform, toward the Great Western Royal Hotel, a viewpoint most people can experience nowadays by entering the station via the main concourse – known as 'the Lawn' – whereas the original southern entrance via the clock arch is rather quiet (Figure 38). Instead, he selects a middle point half way between the genuine materiality of and the feeling given by the vastness of the built structure, and the light filtering through the open end of the station towards the countryside. He does not use the tunnel effect of the train shed to its full, which would not have been of great ease and use to set his scene as it would draw the eye away from the foremost plane.

Beyond this compositional choice, Frith's particular point of view of the railway station finds its expression in a clear difference in the level of detailing and precision between the groups of characters, the train and the station background. The superimposition of pigment layers is particularly visible in the junction zone between foreground and background, towards the top of the train wagons charged with luggage, where the foreground pigment layer gives away by transparency the continuation of the iron structure behind train and characters. This does not happen, because an upward movement of saturated colours in the background would have given it more presence. On the contrary, the area representing the station shed conveys a strong impression of sketchiness. Its colouring is very dull, like a grisaille painting. This is in line with Frith's comment: 'I don't think the station at Paddington

²⁰ The shed counts an additional six and seven bays separated by a second transept towards its 'town' end, in the back, or on the right of the viewer.

can be called picturesque.²¹ He spent more than a year working on *The Railway Station* between the autumn 1860 and the end of the winter 1862, beginning the actual painting at the very end of August 1861.²² Furthermore, although Frith did not reveal the matter himself, photography seems to have been helpful to reproduce the architectural background. The painting could be completed in the studio, away from the business of the station, but busy with the participation of numerous models, with the attention of the artist focused on the groups of figures rather than on their surroundings.

Indeed, it is likely that Frith was not the actual author of the architectural background for the painting: ‘With the help of an architectural draughtsman he delineated the iron work of its vaulted roof and the Great Western Railway posed its best locomotive for him; but it was the crowd that captivated Frith and his audience.’²³ He must have set his composition after photographs he commissioned from Samuel Fry – Samuel Fry & Co., located at 83, Gracechurch Street, E.C., London.²⁴ Fry had exhibited two collodion photographs of locomotive (No. 4 and 89) at the 1861 London Photographic Society Exhibition at the Gallery of the Society of Painting in Water Colours, at 5A Pall Mall East.²⁵ The actual depiction of the architectural details has been completed by one William Scott Morton (1840-1903).²⁶ In his early twenties, trained in decorative design in Glasgow and a former apprentice of the Glaswegian architect James Smith, the young Scottish artist was able to contribute his noticeable skills as a draughtsman and a designer to a major work conceived by a famous artist.²⁷ Though he does not mention Scott Morton’s contribution in any of his writings, Frith must have valued it since he was to confess,

²¹ W. P. Frith, *My Autobiography and Reminiscences* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887), Vol. I, p. 327.

²² Frith 1887, pp. 327, 329, and 334.

²³ *Train Spotting* 1985, pp. 5-19 (p. 18).

²⁴ Michael Pritchard, *A Directory of London Photographers, 1841-1908* (Watford: PhotoResearch, 1994, 2nd edn), p. 62.

²⁵ Roger Taylor, *Photographic Exhibitions in Britain, 1839-1865: Records for Victorian Exhibition Catalogues*, <http://peib.dmu.ac.uk/index.php> (Accessed on 24 April 2008).

²⁶ Brindle 2004, p. 51.

²⁷ Elspeth Hardie, ‘William Scott Morton’, *The Antique Collector*, Vol. 59, No. 3, March 1988, pp. 70-9 (p. 70).

two decades later, in his *Autobiography and Reminiscences*: 'perspective bewildered me, and to this day I know little or nothing about that dreadful science'.²⁸

Frith's relationship with photography helps understanding the conception of the painting, especially as he used a photograph to paint the steam engine. Both his previous paintings *Ramsgate Sands* and *Derby Day* had been sometimes criticized for the stationary and stiff attitude of their characters and the lack of coherence of the composition because of the diversity and autonomy of the various groups. These criticisms echoed by contrast the requirements and outputs of photography which demanded rather long poses and produced static portraits. The threat that photography inflicted to genre painting actually became an incentive for the artist to push his art further, beyond a traditional type of representation, meanwhile using the technology as an assistant.²⁹

Frith has carefully avoided provoking the same sort of critics with *The Railway Station* by paying much attention to the impression of movement and dynamics given by the individual characters as by the crowd in general. The eventual outcome of Frith's work is a painting whose characters challenge photographic limitations while the built environment profits by photographic accuracy in the rendering of architectural details and space in two dimensions. The completed painting shows a scene that photography alone would have rather unlikely been able to achieve. A moving crowd imposes a very short period of exposure of the *camera obscura* to give an acceptable image. In the meantime, the details of the metal structure would have required a longer exposure to capture.

Although Frith deliberately focused his attention on the representation of characters in his painting, it is nonetheless the architectural environment of the railway station which occupies the most significant part of the canvas surface. This was a logical consequence of the compositional choice Frith made in the first place. Aware of the decisions Frith took to stage his motif, enquiring on the degree of representational innovation of *The Railway Station* is legitimate to understand its

²⁸ Frith 1887, pp. 36-7.

²⁹ E. D. H. Johnson, *Paintings of the British Social Scene from Hogarth to Sickert* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p. 14.

reception. To do so, I will first look, by way of contrast, at earlier representations of railway stations.

2. On track to create representational conventions

In the early 1840s, the Great Western Railway was already a motif of visual representation (Figure 39 and Figure 40). The pitched-roof shelter whose structure rests on cast iron columns somewhat dwarfs groups of rather well-to-do passengers walking on the boarded platform. The train engine can be the main point of interest too, strong on the broad gauge tracks, challenging the horse-pulled cabs approaching near the platform in the light of the lanterns.

In 1843, a print representing the opening ceremony of the railway station in Rouen provides a new evidence of graphic engagement with the theme of the railway station, with a particular emphasis on the building (Figure 41). This view represents the latter at a distance, from the exterior, and therefore does not quite satisfy the selection criteria described to select my visual material. However, it also shows the interior of the structure above the tracks. It takes a broad viewpoint not only of the event and the crowds it provoked, but it also distances itself from the railway station, emphasizing the straight lines of the rails, the large surface of the station shed gable, and the vastness of the volume covered by the train shed.

Back in England, lithographs depicting the space under the train shed of Victoria Station in Manchester, Bristol Station, and Liverpool Edge Hill, in the middle and the second half of the 1840s, seem to point towards a contemporary fascination for the straightforward character of every line involved in the design and construction of the building and its facilities (Figure 43, Figure 44, and Figure 46). The point of view is very similar with the one adopted in Rouen. By their sheer scale and inevitable regularity, the lines of the rail tracks, the edge of the platform, and the supporting beams of the shed probably contrasted greatly with the silhouette of any inn known before then. All these lines bring to reality the orthogonals of a Brunelleschian linear perspective in the most obvious way. Iron columns, girders,

arches and spandrels seem to recede indefinitely into the distance. One can easily imagine the appeal to any artist of such an opportunity of representation. This was no longer about conjectural ideal cities, but about tangible and functional, real modern buildings.

A lithograph published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1846 (Figure 45) confirms a shift, or at least a new balance, in the gaze on railway stations. A visual account of the breaking of the standard gauge in Gloucester, it focuses on the railway station less as essentially as a building, or as a technology put to task in a built structure, but more as an inhabited space, a busy locale, full of activity and movement. Instead of grounding the representation on the straight lines of the station, the image emphasizes the mayhem of the transfer of passengers and belongings from one train to another. There is a strong feeling of movement, loss and disorder. The side of a train car, a shed pillar with a direction sign and a few floorboards give some stability to the railway agents and passengers making their way among or dealing with loads of luggage. This focus on the activity taking place in the railway station confirms an interest in social collision which the earlier pictures downplayed, in order to underline the sheer proportions of the place.

A view of the new station built at Kings Cross circa 1852-3 takes roughly the same outlook as the view of Rouen station by returning to a distanced engagement (Figure 47). The angle of the scene underlines the juxtaposition of arcades of different sizes on the façade of the building, and more generally the contrast between the grand silhouette and the sharp and unadorned lines of the new building and the accumulation of tiny people and carriages on the open area in the foreground. While other earlier pictures have emphasized the perspective effect allowed by the length of the train shed, this view rather distorts the scale of the structure. The front arcade is in direct relation with the crowd, whereas the side arch dwarfs them, and the central pair of front arches beyond the smaller arcade is remote from humanity, strongly buttressed on both sides by thick pillars of rectangular section.

Previous and contemporary artists often represented people sitting in the waiting room of a railway station, or sitting very close to each other inside a carriage. There was then still a feeling, if not of privacy, at least of intimacy. Many predecessors of Frith, either painters or engravers, have focused on scenes within

train carriages. In terms of composition, both frame and volume of the carriage give firmly structured, though shallow-centred perspectives, with the wall of the carriage as a backdrop, sometimes with lateral or back openings through side windows. This setting allows the spectator to focus on the diversity of the characters, and the action taking place inside the carriage.

Other artists have decided to pay particular attention to people's movements and deeds on the platform. The latter is often viewed plainly as a theatre stage, the edge of the platform/stage being parallel with the edge of the canvas, creating a simple perspective with a central vantage point. Some artists chose to break away from this balanced composition to introduce a lateral vantage point. For instance, the *Arrival of the Christmas train* (*Illustrated London News*, 21 December 1850) shows this sort of composition.³⁰ Frith uses this same arrangement, though far more boldly than his predecessors, since the vanishing point is not only a lateral one, but is even located outside the picture, beyond the left edge of the canvas. Frith deliberately displaces the frame of the usual railway station representation to fix it on the platform, increasing the feeling of movement and spectacle. Frith introduces new features in the visual representation of railway stations with his work: the most noticeable innovations are the location of the point of view, and the point of view itself.

As on a theatre stage, the construction of perspective Frith favoured allows for more space on the represented platform and the presence of more characters than would have been possible in front of the plane surface or inside the box of a central perspective. Moreover, the space is not limited by the façade of the departure building of the stage. The wider context of the scene is left largely open, thus increasing the impression of infinity. This construction thoughtfully enhances the impression of movement given by the crowd of travelling passengers, and is suited to the subject matter of the train station. Meanwhile, Frith improves his mode of representation after *Ramsgate Sands* and *Derby Day* which could be considered a bit static.

³⁰ Cowling 1989, p. 266.

These few images show a diversity of pictorial approaches to the railway stations in the decades before Frith's interpretation of the motif. Is it the recurrence of the theme before the 1860s that fuelled the indifference of the art critic to the architectural background when Frith started working on his project? Or are there other explanations?

3. The indifference of the art critic

The analysis – carried out in the previous point – of both Frith's and other works representing the railway station environment gave an opportunity to take the measure of the importance of the architecture in the painting, and provokes questions about the relative indifference of contemporaries about this specific aspect of this work when first put on display in 1862.

By stark contrast with the analysis of *The Railway Station* and several previous pictorial representations of such a place in the UK, the coverage of the painting by contemporary critics gave little attention, if any, to the architectural environment included in Frith's composition. It rather created and amplified the coup Frith realised in securing the funding from Flatou for the completion of the work. Long before the presentation of the work at the Haymarket gallery, *The Art Journal* was sure that 'the subject' of *Life at a Railway Station* was 'secure of the best possible treatment,' considering in the meantime that 'there [could] be conceived no subject with higher or more interesting capabilities,' and that 'there is no incident of life, no phase of character, that need be excluded from it,' thereby anticipating only the human dimension of the scene. No mention is made of the station shed, pushing one to wonder what the point was to set the subject in such a location if it did not matter in the first place, and was not part of it.³¹

After the opening of the exhibition, the same publication would go back to the topic, to commend 'a work of immense power, not only in the variety and interest

³¹ "Life at a Railway Station," by W. P. Frith, R.A., *The Art Journal*, Vol. VII, February 1861, p. 61.

of its incident – in its admirable grouping and colour – but in its conscientious elaboration of finish,’ incidentally side-lining the drawing board finish of the architectural environment.³² The *Illustrated London News* thought ‘the scenes at a railway station, as a mere spectacle, present us with an inexhaustible series of dissolving views, many of which are perfect epitomes of contemporary history, or, if not of actual history, of the most valuable “*mémoires pour servir*”.’³³ This reference to the magic lantern and its projected pictures is telling: the railway station is a means to an end, a tool to prompt interesting scenes, in the same way as the magic lantern does.

The art criticism Frith’s painting provoked seems to confirm the fascination for the Brunelleschian approach discussed earlier in more ancient pictures. Recently, in his analysis of the relations between railways and the Victorian imagination, Michael Freeman confirms this fascination with pointing out the redefinition of space and time, the decay of ‘natural space’ in favour of the straight lines and parallelism that the spread of railways involved.³⁴ In his pamphlet, Taylor wrote ‘one word for Mr. Frith’s management of the rigid lines of iron architecture,’ noticing ‘the skilfulness with which the long lines of the girders are employed to give strength and support to the arrangement of the groups below’.³⁵ *The Illustrated London News*’s reporter expressed this fascination further, appreciating ‘the management of the lines – a lower but still essential part of composition,’ especially ‘the straight lines of the roof and carriages supporting and setting the undulating line of the figures, and at the same time, by their diagonal disposition, giving fine effects of linear perspective.’³⁶ Also focusing on the compositional aspects of the representation of the railway station, the reviewer for *The Athenaeum* sympathizes with Frith, although quite critically, writing that the painter had

³² “‘Life at a Railway Station,” by W. P. Frith, R.A.’, *The Art Journal*, Vol. I, 1 May 1862, pp. 122-3.

³³ ‘Mr. Frith’s “Railway Station.”’, *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457.

³⁴ Michael Freeman, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 57.

³⁵ Taylor 1862, p. 22.

³⁶ ‘Mr. Frith’s “Railway Station.”’, *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457.

found his greatest enemies in the Directors of the Railway Company, who, having removed Mr. Owen Jones's decorative colour from the roof and columns of the station that form the background of the picture, have compelled him to introduce an enormous mass of grey, such as all the resources of his individual skill have failed to overcome. To counteract this, he has been compelled to localize more than in another case he would have done.³⁷

His colleague of the *ILN* is more positive, considering 'the grey mass of the roof is clearly taken advantage of to secure aerial perspective and give distinctiveness to the foreground.'³⁸

The disciplinary and historiographical divide in the engagement with *The Railway Station* as I described it to begin this chapter may actually echo the way the painting was received by its contemporaries. Commentators would go to great length detailing every single character and situation gathered on the platform transformed into a basis for this human processional frieze which Frith created. However, the space of the Great Western Railway terminus remains barely noticed. If, as Wolfgang Schivelbusch has argued, "“annihilation of space and time” was the early-nineteenth-century characterisation of the effect of railroad travel', then the railway station itself seems here to disappear in the rush of the travellers' departure; the interest of the audience for the emotional features of the event provoking 'a shrinking of space', however large this might be, not only condensing, as the geography might do because of the increase of travelling speed, but literally evaporating, vanishing.³⁹

To understand the critical reception of *The Railway Station*, some attention must be paid to its context, and especially on the relations of contemporaries with the railways' expansion and development.

³⁷ 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."' *The Athenaeum, Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, No. 1798, Saturday 12 April 1862, pp. 502-4 (p. 503).

³⁸ 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."', *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457.

³⁹ Schivelbusch 1986, pp. 33-5.

B. British perception of railways, 1830s-1870s

This second part focuses on the evolution of the public perception of railways and railway stations in Britain from the 1830s until the 1870s, to understand by putting back in its cultural context the reception of *The Railway Station* and, in particular, of its architectural dimension. It aims at shedding a new light on the evolution of attitudes toward the railways and on the comments made about Paddington Station as Frith depicted it. As an initial comment to this enquiry, it must be said that evidence about railway stations is scarcer than accounts about the spread of railroads, which are numerous and often extensive.

1. Railways: desirable or contemptible?

The expansion of railways did not happen unnoticed, in the country, in towns and cities. The surveying and engineering work required all over the country to establish the new routes was for most people the first evidence of something unusual happening. This transformation was seen negatively, since there was no feeling of immediate improvement.⁴⁰ Opposition backed its position with ignorance and lack of knowledge, with superstition and associations of ideas which would deter most people to support the railway enterprise. Numerous publications, like the *Quarterly Review*, were against the railways.⁴¹ In 1878, Joseph Parsloe could report the stories told in these early times:

⁴⁰ Asa Briggs, *The Power of Steam: An Illustrated History of the World's Steam Age* (London: Michael Joseph, 1982), p. 93: 'The message of contemporaries [about railways] was often optimistic [...] Yet in every part of the world the development of railways alarmed people as much as it stimulated them. [...] The building of railways broke up the unity of cities and disturbed the peace of the countryside, and railway accidents were given more publicity than the ceremonial opening of railway stations.'

⁴¹ John Pendleton, *Our Railways: Their Origin, Development, Incident and Romance* (London, Paris, and Melbourne: Cassell, 1894), Vol. I, p. 26; John Francis, *A History of the English Railway: Its Social Relations and Revelations, 1820-1845* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1851), pp. 102-3.

a good commencement had now been made [in the 1820s], but the extension of the system had to be carried on in the face of the most surprising opposition, both on the part of eminent engineers as well as the public press. Pamphlets were written in which it was stated that railways would prevent cows grazing and hens laying, the poisoned air from the locomotive would kill the birds as they flew over the trains, and render the preservation of pheasants and foxes no longer possible; householders along the projected line were told that their houses would be burnt up by the fire from the engines; travelling by railway would be highly dangerous, country inns would be ruined, and boilers would burst and blow the passengers to atoms.⁴²

By contrast, when the London and Birmingham Railway was under survey in the mid-1820s and early 1830s, 'many of the old foes to railway construction had been converted to friends.' However, 'the spirit of opposition was by no means dead' since, in the early 1830s, 'there was distrust of the railway in towns'.⁴³ Pendleton gives the example of Northampton, which was passed through by the London and Birmingham Railway, provoking 'not only distrust but violent opposition.' As varied constituencies as aristocrats, farmers, bargemen, and innkeepers were involved in, and concerned by, the intrusive process.⁴⁴

Little by little, everyday experience and the trial of the new means of transport by ever-widening sections of society mitigated speculations about medical conditions and physical dangers railway travel would involve, notably because of steam locomotion and the speed it could reach.⁴⁵ Thus, the *Court and Lady's Magazine* was able to report on a special train from Bristol to London, carrying 'between 700 and 800 of the inhabitants of Bristol and its vicinity' who could afford the trip by a special half-price ticket offer from the directors of the GWR company 'to pass Michaelmas-day among their friends and see the sights of the great

⁴² Joseph Parsloe, *Our Railways: Sketches Historical and Descriptive, with Practical Information as to Fares and Rates, etc., and a Chapter on Railway Reform* (London: Kegan Paul, 1878), pp. 13-4. Pendleton 1894, Vol. I, p. 43 gives almost exactly the same lines as a quote from Smiles' *Life of George Stephenson*, first published in London in 1857.

⁴³ Pendleton 1894, Vol. I, p. 73.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4. Pendleton mentions the Countess of Bridgewater, who 'was alternately pathetic and angry about the proposed invasion. She would almost have preferred a band of Danish warriors, wild, rugged, and barbarous, abandoning their boats on the nearest river and striding over the land, to a horde of navvies digging away the beauty of her park.'

⁴⁵ Ralph Harrington, 'The Neuroses of the Railway', *History Today*, Vol. XLIV, No. 7, 1994, pp. 15-21.

metropolis.⁴⁶ Besides, one Swanquill Sylvanus, pen-name of John Hewitt (1807-1878), the antiquary responsible for the national collection of arms and armouries at the Tower of London, could write for the *New Sporting Magazine* some verses about his train journey on the way back from Ascot in the early 1840s, via Paddington station:

Whiz! fizz! and away we go in a brace - or rather a thousand million shakes;]
Over meadows and brooks, bogs, marshes, heaths, commons, thro' corses, and covers, and brakes.]
There's Hanwell, with its Lunatic Asylum and other agreeable objects, a most romantic situation,]
And there, there's the General Cemet'ry - what a pleasant road! we shall soon be at Paddington station.]
.....
Bump - thump - squeak - fizz! - Well, here we are at Paddington station without being blew to bits:]
And only one poor man run over, and a boy dislocated, and a lady frightened into convulsive fits.]
Here we are, safe and sound (for a wonder): and there's the gig, and the baskets, and bottles, and all]⁴⁷

In the longer term view, there is a sense of evolution from the trauma of the first years with railroads cutting into the landscape and urban areas, jeopardising to some extent private property, towards the 'habituation', with the whole railway phenomenon becoming banal, part of everyday life. Thus, 'in 1836 the people had been smitten with the railway fever, and railways became "a fashion and a frenzy." The locomotive, though it sounds a large morsel, was in everybody's mouth.'⁴⁸ And this was only a foretaste before 'the fiercer and more prolonged mania of 1845-1846.'⁴⁹ Indeed, by the middle of the 1840s, 'railway enterprise was [...] an established fact, and new propositions for development were constantly brought forward.' However, in March 1862, just before Frith exhibited his painting, *The Lancet* published new research on 'The Influence of Railway Travelling on Public

⁴⁶ 'The Great Western Railway', *The Court and Lady's Magazine*, December 1842, pp. 133-4 (p.134).

⁴⁷ Swanquill Sylvanus, 'The Ascot Cup Day', *New Sporting Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 7, July 1841, pp. 34-40 (p. 39).

⁴⁸ Pendleton 1894, Vol. I, p. 194.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

Health,' which emphasized muscular and nervous issues.⁵⁰ Thirty years later, on 27 September 1875, a Railway Jubilee was held at Darlington to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of the railways.⁵¹

Beyond the period evidence, the narrative of the perception of modernity focused on railways and train travelling is a contentious matter. There is uncertainty on the actual chronology of the assimilation of modern industrial devices such as the train into everyday life. Thus, Nicholas Daly still acknowledges 'the impact of the machine, or industrial modernity more generally, on the human' as 'a source of trepidation, or even terror, though also of fascination' as late as in the 1860s with focusing on a passage from Boucicault's (1820-1890) play *After Dark, A drama of London life*, published in 1868-1869, and also considers that, 'by [the mid-Victorian period], industrial technology was becoming part of the fabric of everyday life.'⁵²

Regional and social variations in engaging with the modern experience, and particularly the railways, could explain these differences in 'habituation'. Train stations could be a key instrument for people to get accustomed to the railways and for the new means of transport to become part of their routine. This is also what Frith's painting might have achieved in its own way. The following section will try to understand how this insertion of modernity into everyday life happened specifically around railway stations.

2. The transformative power of railway stations

The railway stations would be the place where this insertion of the modern into everyday life via a new means of transport would happen, within a growing urban environment. Railway stations developed in towns and cities to provide facilities and roofed accommodation for travellers waiting to get on the trains. They progressively took over the inns that had appeared in the 16th century and earlier to cater for

⁵⁰ Harrington 1994, p. 16.

⁵¹ Parsloe 1878, p. 16.

⁵² Nicholas Daly, *Literature, Technology and Modernity 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1 and 5.

carriage travellers. London was in a unique situation, standing alone at the heart of the roads and railroads of the country. Since crossing the City was not possible, developers would settle the head of their lines on land reclaimed on cultivated lands or lands nearby canals, purchasing in the periphery. The development and setting of railway stations right on the outskirts of the city had an impact on the urban and suburban environments at the junction where it stood. Some accounts of the development of the railway network in UK give a feeling of the transformation it entailed:

Although no more than thirty-three years have elapsed, since [the] extension [of the London and Birmingham Railway from Camden Town to Euston-square] was constructed, the transformation which has been effected in the locality is one that it is hard to realize. Since that date a new city has arisen on the site of fields and parks. The Swiss Cottage, now a main starting-point for omnibuses and cabs, pending the completion of the railway that runs beneath the Finchley-road, then stood alone in wide and shaded fields, a real point of excursion for the Londoners who sought a few hours of country air.⁵³

The Great Western Railway terminus was in this same situation, developed in Paddington, in the West End, on reclaimed land along the Grand Junction Canal. Built between 1851 and 1854 as the head station for the London-Bristol line, this building took the place of a haphazard gathering of structures built for the opening of the line on 31 May 1838. Since stations were a major investment but did not contribute by themselves to the shareholders' financial returns, they were not a priority in the development plan of a railway line. Paddington Station may have provoked little attention after its completion because 'the Great Western Railway avoided the controversy which attended the choice of site and construction of many other termini in the Capital.'⁵⁴

Given that actual contemporary arguments and explanations about railway stations are not very frequent, the information contained in Dionysius Lardner's

⁵³ *Personal Recollections of English Engineers, and of the Introduction of the Railway System into the United Kingdom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1868), [p. 28].

⁵⁴ Michael Tutton, *Paddington Station, 1833-1854: A Study of the Procurement of Land for, and Construction of, the First London Terminus of the Great Western Railway* (Mold: Railway and Canal History Society, 1999), p. 5.

Railway Economy, published in 1850, provides interesting insights about the perception of this building type still evolving at this time, although it precedes the completion of Frith's painting by more than a decade and Brunel's Great Western Railway terminal by at least a couple of years:

The ultimate object of the railway business being the transfer from place to place of persons and goods, and the phenomena attending this operation having been peculiarly imposing and unexpected, it has not unnaturally so engrossed public attention, that very large and important branches of the service are almost wholly left out of view. [...] The great theatres of these operations, preliminary and subsequent to the transport, as well as at certain epochs in its progress, are the STATIONS. [...] Nothing in the history of the past affords any parallel to such a spectacle.⁵⁵

These theatrical metaphors Lardner uses to characterize the railway station convey a very consistent message, complement the visual analysis completed earlier, and may possibly enrich our understanding of the representation of stations. Theatre could here be as well about 'an edifice specially adapted to dramatic representations; a playhouse', 'a temporary platform, dais, or other raised stage, for any public ceremony', or 'a place where some action proceeds; the scene of action,' like a stage, therefore accumulating meanings of spectacle and scientific rational process.⁵⁶ Lardner seems to provide the mid-19th-century state-of-the-art railway station with theoretical basics, identifying 'four distinct departments': 'the passenger station, appropriated to the embarkment and disembarkment' of passengers and goods, 'the goods station'; 'the depôt (sic) for the locomotive power' and 'the carriage depôt, appropriated to the cleaning, maintenance, and repairs of the carrying stock'.⁵⁷ Beyond this generic description of a station, the following theoretical description of a railway station suits the particular disposition of the Great Western Railway terminal at the time of Frith's painting being completed:

⁵⁵ Dionysius Lardner, *Railway Economy: A Treatise on the New Art of Transport, its Management, Prospects, and Relations, Commercial, Financial, and Social, with an Exposition of the Practical Results of the Railways in Operation in the United Kingdom, on the Continent, and in America* (London: Taylor, Walton, and Maberly, 1850), p. 122.

⁵⁶ 'Theatre, theater, n.', in J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, Second edition).

⁵⁷ Lardner 1850, p. 123.

The passenger station consists of two departments, which are separated from each other by the lines of railway and the numerous trains of carriages which always occupy them, so that, except to the privileged agents of the railway, these departments are inaccessible to each other. They consist of separate buildings, are supplied with separate approaches, and often lead into different lines of streets. These two departments are appropriated, the one to the passengers about to depart upon the railway, and the other to the passengers who have arrived.⁵⁸

However, Lardner does not go further in detailing the physicality of the railway station, rather he enters into details about the process in which a traveller engages when arriving in a station to take a train, or getting off the train, and how the parcels are dealt with. This emphasis on the procedures happening in a railway terminal not only suggests that the organisation of the business has been sorted and rationalized, providing another striking contrast with the traditional inns where the business was at a completely different scale and heterogeneous across the country. This procedural analysis also points toward a scientific attitude in front of the railway station, with a methodical description infused by a cold distance in front of the building: its parts are distinctly identified but the most important is what happens inside. The engraving of the *Illustrated London News* commented above captures this interest in the standard procedures, although it tells about the more chaotic reality of 19th-century transit.

There develops the impression that the station has become a banal phenomenon quickly after coming into operation. Lardner's description conveys an impression of routine. One could also perceive this sense of routine within contemporary periodicals. For instance, Craven, a pen-name for John William Carleton, author of *Recreations in Shooting*, writing on the racing opportunities in early spring, was less than cheerful about his experience of the customer service at Paddington station:

Monday was bitterly cold, and those who selected it for their descent into Somersetshire had a foretaste of what was in store for them on Landsdown on the morrow. If it was a renewal of their intercourse with

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

(and by) the Great Western Railway, they had also food for reflection and uneasy anticipation on the annihilation of the pride, pomp, and circumstance of that once imperial appliance of travel. No longer was the Paddington Station a type of a company flowing with milk and honey: all was spiritless and woe-begone. The solitary who dispensed the tickets received payment with such an air as Charon took toll on the shores of Styx, and the porters ushered you to your carriage with faces that would compliment a funeral. There was but one bright spot in the desert wilderness - the refreshment chamber at Swindown. What, ho! young sunny Hebe! a cup of thy nectar, which men call cherry bounce!⁵⁹

The analysis of the processes happening within the railway station entails a certain distance from its object, but the thorough knowledge of the mechanics of the place also allows for familiarity. Knowledge involves intellectual proximity. Therefore, the anthropomorphic metaphor developed to deal with the atmosphere of the building communicates a feeling of familiarity – possibly a step further after feelings of novelty and banality. According to this approach of railway stations, there are as many kinds of stations as there are of human characters and moods. Climatic conditions, station staff and building structures are, to various levels, responsible for these emotional features:

Railway stations differ in characteristics quite as much as men. There is the lonely, desolate station on the moorland, where “the dook preserves the game on both sides o’ the line;” and the stationmaster or signaller occasionally gets a peer’s dinner – a passing train having maimed a hare, or the telegraph-wire knocked a grouse, partridge, or pheasant helpless on the line. There are wild, blustering, wind-swept stations, like Dinting, in Yorkshire; and flower-bedecked stations, like Bakewell, in Derbyshire, or Flixton on the Cheshire Lines; and stations like Port St. Mary, with primitive wooden sheds and no platforms; and whimsical, ramshackle stations like some of those on the Irish lines. There are dismal and depressing stations both large and small; there are bright, light, picturesque stations both little and great; but it would be difficult to find on any line in the kingdom a station so capacious and so graceful as St. Pancras.⁶⁰

It is notable that Pendleton gives this emotional interpretation of railway stations well into the 1890s, more than four decades after the distanced analysis of

⁵⁹ Craven, ‘The Racing in April’, *New Sporting Magazine*, May 1849, pp. 305-18 (p. 310).

⁶⁰ Pendleton 1894, Vol. I, p. 231.

Lardner, and also that Pendleton's writing style is overall more personal than Lardner's, giving another explanation for the human metaphor. In turn, stations provoke a wide range of feelings for their users, different characters calling for different perceptions of the place:

To the nervous and irritable a railway station is an objectionable necessity, a place of torture, where there is not only the banging of boxes, the discourteous thrust of the crowd, the bumping and clattering of carriages, the shouts of porters, the blast of shunting horn, but the hideous yells and shrieks of the "steam devils," which the engine drivers liberate no doubt with inward chuckles, while preserving their grave and serious mien whenever they pull up at, or start out of, a station. The English engine-driver is absolutely without nerves. They have been completely shaken out of him, and he apparently takes placid delight in the locomotive's shriek and in letting off steam; while the passengers cease their converse, quiver with nervous shock, put their hands to their ears, or hold on the tops of their heads. But, apart from its incessant noises, there is something interesting in the station; or, rather, in the quickly-changing picture of human life it presents – the robustness, the feebleness, the pathos, the passion, the humour, the grief, the love, the hate, and the tragedy of it. Mr. Frith caught its earnestness and reality in his familiar picture "The Railway Station," which forms the frontispiece to Vol. I of this work. The figures look gawky, and the garb antiquated and old-fashioned to modern eyes; but there is truth and fidelity in this remarkable representation of early railway travelling, and Henry Graves, the noted printseller, the friend of Turner, Constable, and Landseer, thought so highly of it that he bought the picture, with the copyright, for £20,000.⁶¹

From the new, dangerous, and inhumane technical means of transport and its disruptive and rationalized premises to the familiar and dull encounter with and experience of the railway staff and travel, the evolution of the perception of the railway station as it appears from the sources collected above should not really surprise. This process seems to have taken place graphically too, with pictorial representations in periodicals, in specially published printed material about specific railway projects, before moving into the painting on canvas.

It is now time to take stock of the analysis carried out so far about the ways in which railway stations have been represented between the 1830s and the 1860s, and

⁶¹ Pendleton 1894, Vol. II, pp. 106-7.

the nature of their perception by contemporaries, to draw conclusions on the significance of Frith's painting.

C. Significance of The Railway Station

The Railway Station may be one of the most famous paintings of the Victorian period, because it stands as a highly striking example of narrative painting, so popular a genre in English art history, and of the Victorians' fondness for physical observation. *The Railway Station* belongs to a long tradition of urban narrative painting in England, which goes back to Hogarth. The snapshot of everyday life it provides has been thoroughly described, analysed and commented upon right from the time of its preparation. However, the built environment within it is worth further attention because its representation reveals a double cultural movement. In terms of visual arts, it stands for the insertion of a modern building within an artistic canon Frith has in some ways been part of. In terms of technology, it provides striking evidence of the assimilation of modern technology within contemporary everyday life.

1. Inserting new technologies within the visual tradition

In line with the developments of the reception of railways in Britain along the 19th century, Frith's painting seems significant in terms of architecture. It indeed provides an opportunity for further inserting into the English visual tradition the recently developed building type of the railway station. Frith records with *The Railway Station* an achievement of railway architecture, less than forty years after the first

authorization for the transport of passengers on a railway had been granted, in 1823.⁶² A long time had gone by since the initial patched-up inns were used as ticket offices and waiting rooms, and the first purposed-built constructions inspired by toll-houses previously designed for canals and toll roads on the Stockton and Darlington Railway opened in 1825.⁶³ It was indeed a remarkable achievement after a rather short history of railway development. Challenges were twofold at the time for both architects and engineers: functional and aesthetic. They had to solve a crucial issue of shapes, from the ornamental detail to the level of building and urban planning.

The Great Northern Railway Frith selected to set his scene is a great example of the late 1840s and early 1850s creative and technical ability to design new ornamental forms suited to iron constructions.⁶⁴ Almost two decades after Turner's (1775-1851) acknowledgment of railways' cultural importance for Britain in *Rain, Steam & Speed* (1844), the train he saw running across the countryside has entered the station and is ready to leave again for another journey. Frith greets the train with another major work of art. However, the train is not isolated anymore from humanity as it used to be in Turner's painting; it is alongside the platform, in one of the greatest stations of the country. During the first exhibition of the painting, *The Art Journal's* reviewer noticed that Paddington station was 'certainly the best suited to the purpose, as being in many of its details less unpicturesque than are those of our railway termini generally.'⁶⁵ As if by chance, Paddington Station is part of the same network as the train sketched out by Turner: the subtitle for *Rain, Steam & Speed* is *Great Western Railway*.

Frith took some distance from canonical references and practices in various ways. The time, money and energy Frith spent on the definition of the different characters were mandatory, to please his audience. However, he only focused his attention on a departure scene, eschewing the practice of the late eighteenth century which consisted in balancing a motif of parting with one of return. Return entails a

⁶² 'The Inception of the English Railway Station', *Architectural History*, Vol. 4, 1961, pp. 63-76 (p. 63).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.65.

⁶⁴ Muthesius 1970.

⁶⁵ "'Life at a Railway Station,'" by W. P. Frith, R.A.', *The Art Journal*, Vol. I, 1 May 1862, pp. 122-3 (p. 122).

swift clearing of the arrival platform as passengers and their hosts leave the station. Since travellers have to slow down before embarking, next to the train about to leave, partings may be visually and emotionally more fulfilling. Although Frith escaped the academic tradition of historical and mythological painting, he acknowledged it by the importance he gave to the human figure. Frith, and Louis Victor Flatow who bought the copyright of the painting in advance of its completion, deliberately used this collective longing for representation of the human figure and emotions, and for Frith to build his own personal fame and the public success of his painting.

2. Inserting new technologies in everyday life

Commenting on the progression of engineering in the construction of the railway network in Britain and Ireland, a civil engineer was able to remark in 1868 that, 'in 1833, works which are now regarded with comparative indifference, engaged the very anxious care of those who had the responsibility of designing them.'⁶⁶ Less than forty years after the first attempts to establish the first railway lines in the UK, a man of the trade was able to witness a change in public perception of the railways as assimilated by technicians themselves. Along these lines, Frith's painting and its critical reception alike are evidence of this 'comparative indifference' about the spread of once new technologies. Beyond the human dimension of the work, the focus adopted in this chapter to analyse *The Railway Station* gives further information about the possible meaning of the painting for Victorian contemporaries. With the gradual inclusion of railways in the collective imagination, irrational fears have disappeared and new buildings have been appropriated by collective habits and assimilated in the gaze. Visual arts play a significant role in this process of appropriation and assimilation.

Contemporary reviews of *The Railway Station* provide evidence of this transformation in the attitude toward the railways. This change was most noticeable

⁶⁶ *Personal Recollections of English Engineers, and of the Introduction of the Railway System into the United Kingdom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1868), p. 21.

in their most technical part, the shed, and took place alongside the transition from early representations to the oil painting. The growing familiarity with modern technical developments such as railways in the field of visual arts is evident in the *Athenaeum*'s review of *The Railway Station* in April 1862. After remembering what 'seers' could say about the earliest railways, mourning over the destruction of 'the picturesque,' the reviewer dismisses all these 'false prophets' to put forward examples of human engineering on show across the country, as if he were browsing an image collection such as the one compiled by John Cooke Bourne.

Before Frith, Cooke Bourne had created unique visual material about railways with *The History and Description of the Great Western Railway*, which was very successfully published in 1846, and has been widely reproduced: 'How many a magnificent viaduct spans the hollow valleys with an added grace; how many a mysterious tunnel-mouth gives an interest to the hill-side now the thing has become appropriate to the scene and familiar to us!'⁶⁷ If the reference to Cooke Bourne's publication is not explicit, the *Athenaeum*'s reviewer brings up Turner, 'a man beyond others competent to decide the point of natural beauty', who 'put railway bridges and other works into his drawings, wherever he met them, and always found a poetry that another generation may freely recognize as more common than the present believes it to be,' a feeling notably expressed in *Rain, Steam, and Speed*, 'one of the finest of his pictures'. With the beginning of the exhibition at the Haymarket, the *Illustrated London News* also accounts for this contemporary transformation of the English gaze on railways and their infrastructures, the main reason being that 'the railway has now infinitely varied relations with English life.'⁶⁸

Frith completes the representation of modern life he had already started with *Ramsgate Sands* and the *Derby Day*, which represented moments of enjoyment and entertainment. *The Railway Station*'s theme of departure adds to this modern narrative whose railways are the common element, the connecting line throughout space and time. Frith's work eventually deals with both ends of the train journey,

⁶⁷ 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."' *The Athenaeum, Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, No. 1798, Saturday 12 April 1862, pp. 502-4 (p. 503).

⁶⁸ 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."' *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457.

from the departure at the railway station to the arrival, at the seaside, in *Ramsgate Sands*, or at the racecourse, in the *Derby Day*. The railway station stands for contemporary 'mechanism and industry'.⁶⁹ This narrative dimension is important since Victorians approached paintings as pages to be read, as stories to be enjoyed. The *Athenaeum* and the *Illustrated London News* bear witness, through the content of their reviews, of the genuine engagement of Frith with the modernity of English everyday life. The *Athenaeum* contrasts 'the station, the telegraph and the train' with the 'old time' because they 'have each a poetry of their own.' The reviewer exclaims 'In a railway station how much of our lives is centred!', understanding that 'instead of breaking up a home circle,' all three 19th-century innovations 'have helped to bind it together,' and 'instead of defacing the land, they have given a vitality to its aspect.'⁷⁰

Frith takes on modernity also in the way he approaches his subject. With the meticulousness of his representation, he engages with and reflects his contemporaries' interest in the narrative power of the depicted image. He increases the proximity with his potential audience thanks to the selection of the point of view, on the platform, chosen from everyday life' scenery although rarely, if ever, selected until then. Starting from this very common point of view, Frith builds up an innovative representation of the crowd, conceived as a scrutinized object, meant to draw the attention of the crowd itself, transformed in an observing subject.

In 1878, *The Railway Station* may not have attracted much attention because the painting was by then quite old and, in a way, commonplace by the cultural standards of the time. Railways and train travel were by then part of everyday life and popular culture, with serialized fictions and theatre plays featuring train stations and wagon scenes, and such exciting incidents as rescues on the rail tracks.⁷¹ They were propagated not only in Britain but also in the US and France at least from the late 1860s onwards. Subsequently, it was not until the 1930s that Virginia Woolf approached London Kings Cross as a sulphurous hellish environment in her last

⁶⁹ Taylor 1862, p. 5.

⁷⁰ 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."' *The Athenaeum, Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, No. 1798, Saturday 12 April 1862, pp. 502-4 (p. 503).

⁷¹ Daly 2004, pp. 10-33.

novel and William Gerhardt imagines ‘Euston as a mephitic antechamber to hell’.⁷² During the International Exhibition, Marius Vachon, a French art critic, takes no notice of Frith’s celebration of the railway station’s structure or its players, bidding farewell on a stage-like platform, and rather, focuses on the patchy finish in the making of the *Railway Station*, and he blames Frith, among several other artists, for having sent ‘only works of second class, whose truly poor quality amazes.’⁷³

The long lasting debate among art historians and Turner’s admirers and detractors about the meaning of his painting is too lengthy and out of our focus to be recalled here.⁷⁴ Though, it may also prompt us towards a specific issue: what was Frith’s objective when selecting a railway station as the third setting for his famous large scale crowd paintings? Beyond the fame and the pecuniary profit contemplated with the conception of the work, the physical proximity between train, passengers, and observer as a subject matter for a grand painting may well illustrate the transformation of the gaze happening over the 19th century. Frith’s characters face spectators as on a theatre stage, to demonstrate that a railway station, at first sight insignificant for nurturing emotions, is actually a place for tragic moments and turning points in people’s lives.⁷⁵ *The Railway Station* may arguably be the proper successor of Turner’s *Rain, Steam and Speed* as analysed by Ian Carter: it is ‘about loss, but also about progress [...], about the casualties of progress and the impossibility of not changing.’⁷⁶

⁷² Ian Jeffrey, ‘Along Imaginary Lines – The Train in Modern Art and Literature’, in *Train Spotting* 1985, pp. 20-36 (p. 21).

⁷³ Vachon 1878, p. 6: ‘que des œuvres de second ordre, dont la médiocrité même surprend.’

⁷⁴ Carter 1997, pp. 3-12.

⁷⁵ ‘Mr. Frith’s “Railway Station.”’, *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457.: ‘Take that railway platform, now alive with its anxious crowd, of both sexes, of all ages, of all conditions, striving, struggling, jostling each other for place or precedence, and then anon deserted, still, and silent as death, is not that an apt illustration of the stage of life?’

⁷⁶ Carter 1997, pp. 3-12 (p. 4).

3. The politics of the railway station

The Railway Station stands as an iconic representation of Victorian taste with the attention paid to the crowd in the station. It also provides an astonishing painting of a landmark building in London, and beyond, throughout the Empire, serving hereby as evidence of a transformation of the gaze on the built environment. However, since the painting was selected to be brought on display in the international context of the Paris *Exposition Universelle* in 1878, it is worth thinking about the significance of the work in terms of political and national ideas. My analysis so far has not addressed political matters, and especially not nationalism. Rather, it connects *The Railway Station* to politics and nationalism in oppositional terms. There are two ways to relate it with political matters: the first one is the actual theme of the painting, the location and technologies it represents; the second one is the location of the painting within the *Exposition Universelle* itself.

A national lens has often been used to study railways. From a nation-unifying network in Canada to the setting of different gauges in either side of a border to prevent invasion by rail, the literature which has questioned the relations between railways and national and imperialist political agendas is large and varied, culminating in a collection of essays like *Railway Imperialism* which offers to look at the development of railways infrastructure from the point of view of the entrepreneurs rather than from the political power's point of view.⁷⁷ This stream of scholarship departs from the historical tradition which favours the association of official meanings with railway development, such as 'Helsinki's great terminal of 1904 [as] the first real expression of the Finnish independence movement', or 'Milan Central [...] as a monument to Mussolini's Fascist hegemony'.⁷⁸

This association between technology and political ideology has not spared the UK. In the first half of the 19th century, a comment Francis Whishaw made about the Great Western Railway, 'by far the most gigantic work of the kind, not only in Great

⁷⁷ Clarence B. Davis and Kenneth Wilburn, Jr, eds, *Railway Imperialism* (New York: Greenwood, 1991).

⁷⁸ Steven Parissien, *Station to Station* (London: Phaidon, 1997), pp. 14-6.

Britain, not only in Europe, but, we venture to say, in the whole world,'⁷⁹ might be read as a statement of national pride and imperialism. Conversely, railways have been approached as a global phenomenon which impacts on contemporary societies in similar ways across the world: 'To adherents of progressive thought in the first half of the nineteenth century, the railroad appeared as the technical guarantor of democracy, harmony between nations, peace and progress.'⁸⁰ Thus, very early on in the development of railways across Europe, some would imagine this technology could be a useful means of transport, and beyond, of binding European people together in a single identity:

Commercial prosperity will necessarily result from the rapid communication with all parts of the empire, which the completion of these great arteries will open; and from commercial prosperity will infallibly flow increase of population, and extension of boundary. The benefits of these railways, in a political point of view, will also be considerable; since speedy intercourse between the different parts of an empire has a natural tendency to consolidate and keep it united. Should railways become as extensive on the Continent as they are in England, the political consequences will be of still greater importance. [...] when Europe has been intersected by railways it will present to the eye of the beholder the august spectacle of one vast and mighty republic, firmly bound together by these iron bands?⁸¹

An organic metaphor is again at the core of this optimistic understanding of railway expansion. Starting in major railway stations, the tracks become arteries, potentially and actually pumping essential life into all regions throughout the continent. This interpretation might sound very universalist, but it also relates to an imperialistic discourse which places London as the centre of the network of railways, indeed, as the heart pumping life in and out of all these arteries:

The passenger traffic in and out of London daily is amazing in its bulk; and the number of travellers, whether on suburban journeys, or further

⁷⁹ Francis Whishaw, *The Railways of Great Britain and Ireland Practically Described and Illustrated* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1840), p. 141.

⁸⁰ Schivelbusch 1986, p. 70. For an account of the critical approach to this progressive trend of thought, see Carter 2001 and Nicholas Faith, *The World The Railways Made* (London: Pimlico-Random House, 1990).

⁸¹ *Drake's Road Book of the London and Birmingham Railway, Illustrated by an Accurate Map of the Line, and by Numerous Engravings* (London: Hayward and Moore, [1839]), pp. 4-5.

away north, south, east, and west, is always increasing. The great city is not only the metropolis – the chief city of the country, but she is practically the mother city of the world, and is ever sending her own or her adopted sons to the ends of it. Babylon, Rome, and Paris become insignificant in contrast to London, with her might, her culture, her ceaseless toil and endeavour, and her enormous wealth. She is the great vigorous heart of a vast empire, and beats day by day to mighty purpose. The railways are her arteries, and along them she sends the life-blood of the nation to work and duty, to striving for riches or fame, to invention, exploration, and trade enterprise – and sometimes in stern necessity to war.⁸²

This description of the railways is associated with a vision of English imperialism compared with both Rome and Babylon. However, the organic metaphor of the railways as arteries within the urban life and its development may minimize the national and exclusive connotations otherwise attached to the means of transport, since it assumes railways are a common feature of modern empires, as arteries are universal within human bodies.

Alongside these ideologically-tinted interpretations of railways, Frith's painting is rather domestic, in line with the point developed earlier about the relation between the work, its theme, and its contemporary culture. Thus, the different groups on the platform are mostly about private life and family events. This dominating note is only mitigated by the detectives catching the thief in the far right of the canvas, and the soldier with some young recruits hidden in the background. In 1878, if Frith's painting was included within an analytical framework which sees railways as an expression of imperialism, *The Railway Station* contradicts, or at least does not emphasize the arrangement of the Exhibition into national galleries and those discourses which are keen on identifying national schools of art.

From an aesthetic point of view, Brunel's train shed does not fit in any historical classification of architectural styles. It does not blatantly represent any national identity because it is mainly not about form but about function. Therefore, the painting does not contribute to fuelling any idea of a national identity in the British galleries. If the shed is to be a symbol of any sort of collective identity, this is one which goes beyond borders and involves a shared ensemble of standards,

⁸² Pendleton 1894, Vol. I, p. 491.

constraints – uniform time and gauge not the least among them – and values. ‘In *Europe*, the railroad system *facilitates* traffic; in America, it creates it’: slightly later literature about railways development published in Germany demonstrates this cultural community beyond national borders thanks to the opportunities offered by the new means of transport.⁸³

Théophile Gautier bears witness of this modern identity developing on the Exposition’s precincts, describing railway stations as

the modern industrial palaces where this century’s religion flourishes, the religion of the railways. These cathedrals of the new humankind are meeting points for nations, centres through which everything goes, hearts of gigantic stars whose iron arms extend all over the world.⁸⁴

Gautier’s metaphoric description of the role taken by railways and their stations acknowledges shared references which extend beyond national divides and partake of a religious faith. In 1846, for the opening of the first gare du Nord in Paris, he reported for *La Presse*, explaining: ‘*Chaque croyance sait réaliser la forme de son temple. En comparant les églises bâties récemment, on voit bien que la religion du siècle est la religion du railway.*’⁸⁵ Incidentally Gautier conveys the role of Britain in the history of railways with selecting the original English in his French sentence. Beyond this conscious reference, the religious understanding of the railway station architectural type undermines any national pretence and on the contrary emphasizes a feeling of shared cultural experience across a whole continent.

By 1878, Frith was among various artists across Europe who had engaged with the development of railways which had already significantly transformed both urban and rural environments. This sharing of artistic interest in this new means of transport challenges the national tradition in the discourses of art history with the

⁸³ Max Maria von Weber, *Vom rollenden Flügelrade* (Berlin, 1882), p. 66, quoted in Schivelbusch 1986, p. 89.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Michel Ragon, *L’architecture des gares: naissance, apogée et déclin des gares de chemin de fer* (Paris: Denoël, 1984), p. 12. My translation: ‘les palais de l’industrie moderne où se déploie la religion du siècle, celle des chemins de fer. Ces cathédrales de l’humanité nouvelle sont les points de rencontre des nations, le centre où tout converge, le noyau de gigantesques étoiles aux rayons de fer s’étirant jusqu’au bout du monde.’

⁸⁵ Quoted in Ragon 1984, p. 24. My translation: ‘Every faith achieves the creation of a specific temple shape. By comparison with churches recently built, we can see that this century’s religion is the religion of the railways.’

representation of a railway station. For instance, as early as the mid-1860s French painters were settling about the rue des Batignolles, in Paris, a newly developed area of the capital, on the approaches to the new gare St-Lazare, not long after Frith had completed *The Railway Station*. By 1878, Edouard Manet and Claude Monet had come close to or entered the space of the railway station. Indeed, in 1872, Manet began his painting *Le Chemin de fer* which was to be displayed at the Salon of 1874.⁸⁶ At the beginning of 1877, Monet settled close to the gare St-Lazare to complete a set of eleven views of the station's train shed.

The gare St-Lazare these painters studied and represented was the main station for the Western Railway from Paris to Rouen, Le Havre, and Normandy, which had been funded by British capital, engineered by British experts, and equipped with locomotives and material by British manufacturers.⁸⁷ As a consequence of these various aesthetic experiences about the gare St-Lazare, the 1878 Universal Exhibition's audience may have been already aware of and familiar with, to various extents, the artistic representation of railway stations. This aesthetic familiarity would have undermined the nationalistic connotations of the railway station as an object of pictorial representation. Plus, the approximation in the rendering of the train shed somewhat contradicts the usually identified role of world's fairs in 'transferring technologies and allegories of imperial triumph across national boundaries'.⁸⁸ Instead of a heroic vision, Frith places a variety of intimate, family related scenes at the forefront of his crowd, relegating the ordered element in the confusion of the characters, towards the edge of the platform against the train coaches.

⁸⁶ Juliet Wilson-Bureau, *Manet, Monet. La gare Saint-Lazare* (Paris and Washington: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Yale University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁸⁷ Paul Atterbury, 'Steam and Speed: Industry, Transport and Communications', in Mackenzie 2001, pp. 146-71 (p. 159).

⁸⁸ Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), pp. 134-5.

D. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at analysing the perception of architectural and urban environments by contemporaries of 19th-century world exhibitions with a focus specifically on William Powell Frith's *The Railway Station*. The little interest the pictorial representation of the railway station attracted provided a favourable case to interpret this engagement with the architectural environment, that is by contrast.

The first part was to examine the way Frith's painting makes use of the structure and space of Paddington Station, and then to compare it with precedents of pictorial representations of railway stations in Britain. If railways were extensively illustrated for special publications and in newspapers, their stations seem to have attracted comparatively less attention. Besides, this pictorial coverage mostly relied on printing techniques. Frith's work seems to be, if not the first, at least one of the first major examples of illustration of railway stations in oil on canvas. Beyond the change of scale and status allowed by this technical variation, Frith also renewed the visual approach to railway stations with an original composition which gives the building a significant share of his picture. When we turn to the critical reception of the painting, there is a prominent feeling of indifference in front of the representation of the building in quantitative terms. However, qualitatively, a feeling of fascination with this modern sort of building pervades various comments about the painting, a feeling which was perceptible in visual material produced before Frith executed his painting.

The second part accounted for the evolution of railways' perception in the UK from the 1830s to the 1870s. Evidence from both primary and secondary sources suggest overall a transformation of sentiment concerning railways, from fear and curiosity to indifference, with contrasted reactions at regional level, and according to constituencies. Hence, while the new means of transport seems to have become rather common by the middle of the 19th century, it would still be an object of physiological and medical enquiry. The relative indifference toward the railway station might be explainable with the challenging and still very unusual experience of travelling by rail, of which the railway station would only be a sort of antechamber, only a space of transition. Meanwhile, this space would attract interest for the new

settings and business procedures it entailed, until all this novelty became familiar, and thence unnoticeable, as part of travellers' daily routine.

By eliciting the significance of Frith's painting from the analysis of its representation of architecture and its cultural and visual environment, this chapter has also been interested in emulating David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry's aim 'to clarify the ways in which English art was woven into the cultural history of which it was a part, how it contributed to the expression of contemporary concerns, and how it referred to and set itself against the processes out of which it grew.'⁸⁹ From the data collected to understand how Frith's work would fit within its cultural context, this chapter hypothesized that it took place in a double contemporary movement of an injection into both the spaces and architecture of modern life within the visual arts, at the same time as these modernising elements were assimilated into contemporary everyday life. This hypothesis aspires to further our understanding of 19th-century British art and its modernity by relying on British visual and cultural sources, and not necessarily going to references in French art.

Frith's painting is iconic in the both development and study of 19th century British visual culture, and its deliberate iconographical choices present an opportunity to dissect its meaning in an innovative way – therefore the argument of this chapter might have a wider value, once tested against the visual representation of other 19th-century pictorial innovations. In any case, it provides an incentive for further art historical research about both well-studied and less-studied material with two specific characteristics which are not new but necessary: going beyond well-known approaches and analyses of a well-known material – the traditional interest of both the history and historiography in the representation of human characters to engage with Frith's painting is but one example – to go back to its very originality and question it afresh very closely, and fuelling the research with immediately contextual material. In doing so, we get an opportunity to understand art works better in their contexts – including those of display and in our own.

⁸⁹ David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry, eds, *English Art 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 3.

V. French Criticism of the British Fine Arts Display

Following up on the close examination of Frith's painting and the issues surrounding its subject matter, this last chapter aims at assessing art criticism for itself and the ways in which it engaged with the national organisation of the displays in the 1878 Exposition, or conversely projected a national grid of analysis on these displays. Like in previous chapters, the analysis is about perceptions of what key concepts like modernity, nation, style, tradition mean to different groups and individuals. This is this difference in the assumptions individual critics carry with them which shape their engagement with the fine arts display and direct their eye in one direction or another.

A couple of years after his first article in the *Revue des deux mondes*, Robert de la Sizeranne published *La Peinture anglaise contemporaine* in 1895, which H. M. Poynter translated in English three years later as *English contemporary art*. This book provided 'an original theory on British art, both carefully worked out and pertinent', 'not an arranged version of thoughts conceived elsewhere but a French analysis of English art.' Was this truly 'the first time a Frenchman develop[ed] an original theory on British art'? Had no one been able before 1895 to understand English art with 'rest[ing] neither on complacent admiration nor on renouncement of criticism'?¹ Indeed, earlier on, the 1878 Paris *Exposition Universelle* had proved to be an event which, over a limited period, revealed contemporary trends not only in every artistic expression of various countries, but also in the reception and assessment of this expression, with the writing and publication of abundant art criticism it prompted. And this itself came after both 1855 and 1867 Paris Exhibitions.

This chapter aims at examining the critical reception of the British display of fine arts for the 1878 Paris *Exposition Universelle* in the palace on the Champ de Mars. The first part deals with the wider context of this critical reception, namely the

¹ Olivier Meslay, 'Tea in the Salons', in Béatrice Crespon-Halotier, *Les peintres britanniques dans les salons parisiens des origines à 1939 : répertoire* (Dijon: Echelle de Jacob, 2003), pp. 23-35 (p. 30).

general attitude to Britain in France in the 1870s. Then, the focus moves towards individual profiles of art critics included in this survey, and the methods they followed to analyse the British display. Scrutinizing next the actual content of critical comments enables us to assess the extent to which art criticism mapped onto general attitudes to Britain in France. Finally, I consider the closeness or remoteness between French criticism on the British fine arts display and French criticism on the architectural presentation Britain offered. Questions of national identity, national school, pervade this analysis. How did critics read meaning from the displays put up by the various countries? How did they cope with national discourses that framed the displays, from the very lay-out of the whole *Exposition* to its appropriation by foreign countries?

The review of the fine arts exhibition prepared by Victor Cherbuliez and published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* will be useful to that effect.² During the *Exposition*, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* published in successive dispatches extensive reviews of the fine arts on display, later collected and published in a single volume under the direction of Louis Gonse, with Edmond Duranty reviewing the exhibitions of foreign paintings.³ Clovis Lamarre and Léon Pajot also wrote a comprehensive guide book about the British participation in general.⁴ Marius Vachon dedicated 9 pages to British paintings in his book on foreign paintings in the Exhibition.⁵ In 1882, Ernest Chesneau published a volume titled *La Peinture anglaise*, translated by Lucy N. Etherington, and published in London in 1885 by Cassell under the title *The English School of Painting* with a preface by John Ruskin, and already in its 4th edition by 1891. This will be helpful as a backdrop to compare and contrast with different methods and points of view phrased during the 1878 Exhibition, while it gives a retrospective glance on the topic from the early 1880s.⁶

² Victor Cherbuliez, 'La peinture à l'Exposition universelle', *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVIII, 3^e pér., XVIII^e année, livraison du 1 août 1878, pp. 616-634; Vol. XXVIII, 3^e pér., XVIII^e année, livraison du 15 août 1878, pp. 858-882.

³ Louis Gonse, dir., *L'Art moderne à l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Quantin, 1878).

⁴ Clovis Lamarre and Léon Pajot, *L'Angleterre et l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Delagrave, 1878).

⁵ Marius Vachon, *Les peintres étrangers à l'exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1878).

⁶ Ernest Chesneau, *La peinture anglaise* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1882).

Most significant in the years leading to the 1878 *Exposition* was the contribution of Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893) who taught aesthetics at the Ecole des Beaux-arts from 1864, as successor to Viollet-le-Duc and for the following twenty years. As such, he had a significant influence on the public debate about contemporary fine arts. Taine held concepts of race, environment and time as key factors to explain fine arts in their evolution and diversity, with circumstantial elements overall more fundamental than race. In 1864 he published a collection of his lessons where he gave a definition of the artwork which stands as a valuable background to the critical material which is under scrutiny in this chapter. According to Taine, ‘the aim of the artwork is the revelation of some essential or prominent character, more fully and more clearly than real objects can do.’⁷ This revelation entailed the contribution of the artist in modifying the real object to promote its prominent features.

In the introduction for his ‘summary’, de la Sizeranne gave a firm ground and legitimacy for studying British painting in the middle of the 1890s. The author emphasized the more recent appeal of British art to French artists and consequent connections the latter had created and nurtured with their English counterparts, thus Britain influenced France instead of the traditional way round. The nickname of ‘French Burne-Jones’ given to Puvis de Chavannes was a good example of these renewed connections between both countries.⁸ This followed on such previous experience as Géricault’s visit to London in 1808 and his appreciation of Constable’s manner.⁹ De la Sizeranne himself acknowledged the significance of universal exhibitions for the discovery of British fine arts abroad, and in France in particular:

In our *Salons*, if Mr Burne-Jones sent some canvases, which were far from ranking among his best, his colleagues are careful not to imitate this example, and the day may be far off when they come *en masse* to expose themselves to the ‘*point de vue latin*’. It is only in universal exhibitions, from 1855 to 1889, that we have been able to have some inkling of the

⁷ Hippolyte Taine, *De l'idéal dans l'art : leçon professées à l'Ecole des Beaux-arts* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1867), p. 2: ‘l'œuvre d'art a pour but de manifester quelque caractère essentiel ou saillant, plus complètement et plus clairement que ne le font les objets réels.’

⁸ Robert de la Sizeranne, *La peinture anglaise contemporaine* (Paris: Hachette, 1922), pp. 6-7.

⁹ Tullo Massarani, *L'Art à Paris* (Paris: Renouard, 1878), tome II, p. 65.

art of the Pre-Raphaelites or of the academic painters from across the Channel.¹⁰

British artworks have traditionally appeared in French annual Salons, although in various proportions. Their display within the context of universal expositions met with contrasting opinions in the art criticism of the day, and from one event to the next. The presentation by the UK of a national exhibition of paintings in the 1855 Paris *Exposition Universelle* prompted Edmond About to notice that ‘English painters, unlike their Belgian counterparts, are not used to send their works to our exhibitions. We only knew their canvases thanks to prints.’¹¹ This publicity of British canvases through prints stimulated much curiosity and critical interest, since the Exhibition gave the opportunity to appreciate them first hand, not only in terms of composition and drawing, but also for their hues and scale.

Almost thirty years later, Ernest Chesneau remembered that the English displays in 1855 and 1867 had provoked ‘an unexpected and striking impression, rather than a pleasant one’.¹² According to Chesneau, British art had been well received in Paris in 1855 because it struck the right chord of French amateurs’ taste and sensibility, by contrast with what French artists were creating at the time. He explained that ‘it is the anecdotal and small dimension of this [...] art, the literary attraction and not the picturesque attraction that seduced then, and again, in 1867 and 1878.’¹³ From both Exhibitions, Chesneau had still in mind ‘a blinding cacography, a

¹⁰ De la Sizeranne 1922, p. 4: ‘Dans nos Salons, si M. Burne-Jones a envoyé quelques toiles, qui étaient loin de compter parmi ses meilleures, ses confrères se gardent d’imiter cet exemple, et le jour est loin sans doute où ils viendront en masse s’exposer aux jugements du “point de vue latin”. C’est seulement aux Expositions universelles, de 1855 à 1889, qu’on a pu soupçonner quelque chose de l’art des préraphaélites ou des académisants d’outre-Manche.’

¹¹ Edmond About, *Voyage à travers l’Exposition des beaux-arts (peinture et sculpture)* (Paris: Hachette, 1855), p. 4: ‘Les peintres anglais n’ont pas, comme les belges, l’habitude d’envoyer leurs œuvres à nos expositions. Nous ne connaissons leurs tableaux que par la gravure.’

¹² Chesneau 1882, p. 172: ‘Il faut bien l’avouer : pour des yeux habitués à la sobriété croissante de la couleur dans notre école de peinture, habitués d’autre part à l’harmonie des maîtres dont les chefs-d’œuvre peuplent nos musées, le regard, en pénétrant dans les galeries consacrées à l’école anglaise dans nos trois grandes Expositions internationales de 1855, 1867 et 1878, nous communiquait une impression inattendue, saisissante, plutôt qu’une impression agréable.’

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 181: ‘C’est le côté d’exception si particulier à l’art anglais qui, en 1855, a séduit nos amateurs ; ils y ont trouvé des saveurs imprévues toutes nouvelles et, dans leur indulgence, il s’est rencontré quelque chose d’analogue aux appétits qui, enfants, nous font mordre à belles dents aux fruits verts. C’est le côté anecdotique et petit de ce même art, l’attrait littéraire et non l’attrait pittoresque qui séduisit alors et de même, en 1867 et en 1878, la masse des visiteurs.’

staggering racket of colours: not a single nuance, everywhere strong tones set side by side with a unique barbarism, blues and greens, purples and yellows, reds and pinks, placed most usually by chance'.¹⁴ Edmond About and Eugène Jouve gave two eloquent examples of this feeling of shock tainted with frustration which Chesneau recalled having seized French art critics in the middle of the 1850s.

'The English school does not miss anything, but genius': About was extremely forthright in his analysis. He concluded with asserting without hesitation the fundamental originality of the English school of painting, fully remote from the French school, and commercially successful at home.¹⁵ About's entire investigation centred on the dichotomy between genius and spirit. Indeed, if genius was missing, by contrast, British painters loaded their compositions with too much spirit. For instance, when he examined Daniel Maclise (1806-1870), About thought that 'it is by the spirit that art perishes in Britain, and the beautiful has no more dangerous enemy than this damned spirit.'¹⁶ In order to introduce the Pre-Raphaelites, About followed on the general criticism over the very unique handling of colours by British artists.¹⁷ The French art critic deemed William Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* (oil on canvas on wood, 125 x 60 cm, 1853-54, Keble College, Oxford; Figure 55) and *Our English Coasts, 1852 ('Strayed Sheep')* (oil on canvas, 43.2 x 58.4 cm, 1852, Tate, London; Figure 56)

two precious paintings, in that sense that they show us what aberrations the taste of a painter can stoop to. This skilfully hideous painting should have a place on its own. There should have been a cabinet of horrors created for it, as this has been done at the end of the wax galleries of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 113: 'C'était dans les salles anglaises une cacographie aveuglante, un tapage de couleurs étourdissant: pas une nuance, partout des tons francs mis côte à côte avec une barbarie sans exemple, des bleus et des verts, des violets et des jaunes, du rouge et du rose, placés au hasard le plus souvent'.

¹⁵ About 1855, p. 5: 'l'école anglaise [...] ne manque de rien, que de génie.'

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14: 'C'est par l'esprit que l'art périt en Angleterre, et le beau n'a pas d'ennemi plus dangereux que ce maudit esprit.'

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25: '... la couleur trouve si peu de faveur en Angleterre, que les rois du jour sont les peintres préraphaélites, dont le chef est un jeune homme de vingt-quatre ans, M. Millais.'

Madame Tussaud, this eternal object of admiration for the London strollers.¹⁸

In the meantime, Eugène Jouve sent letters on the Exhibition, later compiled as a book, to the regional daily *Courrier de Lyon* which provided in particular local readers with a comprehensive account of the industrial arts of relevance to their activity. Several letters dealt with the fine arts exhibits following the national pattern set by the galleries themselves, which the journalist was sensitive to since he examined industrial arts in terms of its commercial competition with his home manufacturers. When he approached the artworks, probably acknowledging the amateur character of his appraisal, Jouve decided to appreciate the exhibits

from the point of view of the crowd, of these thirty-two or thirty-five millions of uninitiated people who, without concern for the material means of the studio, the making or the chic, the school rivalries or friendships, without even distinguishing surnames, only see the result offered to their judgement: thought dressed in an aesthetic form, more or less true, more or less beautiful.¹⁹

In 1878, Marius Vachon was to adopt a similar critical stance, arguing that art can be a matter of appreciation by all spectators from all walks of life.

All in all, Jouve might have been even harsher than About was in his assessment of the British display, since, to him, ‘the nationality of British art is sadly only recognizable by its flaws, and these flaws are serious and numerous.’ These flaws were grouped under three main characteristics: ‘the falsity of colour’, ‘the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27: ‘Le Christ à la lanterne, de M. Hunt, et les Moutons égarés, du même artiste, sont deux tableaux précieux, en ce sens qu’ils nous montrent à quelles aberrations le goût d’un peintre peut se laisser aller. Cette peinture savamment hideuse devrait avoir une place à part. On aurait dû créer pour elle un *cabinet des horreurs*, comme on a fait au bout des galeries de cire de Mme Tussaud, cet objet éternel de l’admiration des badauds de Londres.’

¹⁹ Eugène Jouve, *Lettres sur l’Exposition universelle de 1855* (Lyon, 1855), p. 332: ‘... je me placerais, je le dis sans vergogne, au point de vue de la foule, de ces trente-deux ou trente-cinq millions de profanes qui, sans s’inquiéter des moyens matériels de l’atelier, du faire ou du chic, des rivalités ou des camaraderies d’école, sans même faire acception de noms propres, ne voient que le résultat offert à leur appréciation : la pensée revêtue d’une forme artistique, plus ou moins vraie, plus ou moins belle.’

often excessive search for the finish, the polish' and 'the Anglo-Saxon stiffness'.²⁰ Focusing on the 'worker-painter' Millais, Jouve thought all three works: *The Return of the Dove to the Ark* (oil on canvas, 87.6 x 54.6 cm, 1851, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Figure 57), *The Order of Release* (oil on canvas, 102.9 x 73.7 cm, 1853, Tate, London; Figure 58), and *Ophelia* (oil on canvas, 76.2 x 111.8 cm, 1851-2, Tate, London; Figure 59) 'missed the expression of the human figure' and he blamed 'the inexistent thought' and 'the trivial inanimate figures of the characters'.²¹

Twelve years later, reviewing the foreign fine arts displays within the 1867 Paris *Exposition Universelle* for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Paul Mantz put forward several elements which might have explained that 'by unfortunate circumstances, England, so interesting in 1855, seem[ed] to have dropped a bit.'²² Mantz approached British painting with the assumption that this 'national art' was made of personal individualities rather than of general principles which would organize the artistic life of the country in a consistent and perennial way. As a consequence of the importance of 'individual caprices', changes between 1855 and 1867 in the British fine arts galleries should have come as no surprise.²³ The death of significant artists like Charles Leslie (1794-1859), William Mulready (1786-1863), William Dyce (1806-1864), and the transformation of the artists who had once been part of the Pre-Raphaelite movement are but couple of elements which might explain this change in the British display and its critical reception.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 539: 'La nationalité de l'art britannique ne se reconnaît guère malheureusement qu'à ses défauts ; et ces défauts sont graves et nombreux. [...] Le plus commun, le plus national est la fausseté du coloris, tantôt exagéré, tantôt fade, et presque toujours criard et discordant ; puis, la recherche souvent excessive du fini, du poli, engendre la sécheresse ou la mollesse du modelé ; et enfin la raideur anglo-saxonne se trahit, dans la plupart des sujets par je ne sais quelle gaucherie qui sent le modèle plus que le naturel.'

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 548 : 'Malgré le pathétique des trois situations représentées par M. Millais, la pensée en est nulle, et pis encore les triviales figures inanimées de ses personnages nuisent seules à l'illusion de la nature matérielle'.

²² Paul Mantz, 'Les beaux-arts à l'Exposition universelle. – Belgique, Hollande, Danemark, Suède, Norvège et Russie', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XXIII, (1 July 1867), pp. 7-30 (p. 8): 'par une fâcheuse aventure, l'Angleterre, si intéressante en 1855, semble avoir un peu baissé'.

²³ Paul Mantz, 'Les beaux-arts à l'Exposition universelle. – Angleterre – Espagne – Portugal. – Italie. – Etats-Unis', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XXIII, (1 July 1867), pp. 209-230 (p. 209): 'un art où le caprice individuel tient tant de place est nécessairement un art changeant, et on ne doit pas être trop surpris que la physionomie de l'école ne soit plus tout à fait, à l'Exposition de 1867, ce qu'elle était à celle de 1855.'

In artistic terms, the displays of British fine arts in the 1855 and 1867 Paris universal exhibitions had informed the appreciation of the new display put together at the end of the 1870s. Typically, in his review of the international painting galleries on the Champ de Mars for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Duranty explained briefly but none the less clearly the main trends which characterized British fine arts entries from one decade to the next in the third quarter of the century: ‘in 1855, English painting provoked a great fuss, but in 1867 it did none.’²⁴ For Duranty, these contrasts were the consequence of the evolution of British painting with the Pre-Raphaelites’ impact and subsequent vanishing influence after their striking apparition in the 1850s, while no strong movement or style had been able to mature and repeat the same shock by the late 1860s.

A. General attitudes to Britain in France in the 1870s

The unity of visual arts which several critics advocated as an introduction to their review of fine arts in international Exhibitions might have been supported, if not prompted, by literary criticism. Indeed, some authors had a consciousness of bonds gradually growing tighter between authors of different countries, and also between their readerships. Goethe was instrumental in coining this idea early in the 19th century. Philarète Chasles (1798-1873), a famous French specialist of European literatures and professor at the *Collège de France*, took up this point in a posthumous volume about English literature.²⁵ Of special interest here, Chasles argued in pictorial terms that Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s work, taken as an example of this unity of European literature, featured ‘the same fine and brilliant, but slightly dry, coloration,

²⁴ Emile Duranty, ‘Exposition universelle. Les écoles étrangères de peinture’ (3^e article), *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XVIII, (1 September 1878), pp. 292-320 (p. 292): ‘L’exposition anglaise fit grand bruit en 1855, mais en 1867 elle n’en fit point du tout.’

²⁵ Philarète Chasles, *Voyages d’un critique à travers la vie et les livres: l’Angleterre littéraire* (Paris: Charpentier, 1876).

the same definition of touch which used to be seen as the unique characteristic of the French genius.’²⁶

Some attention to the general attitudes to Britain in France in the 1870s gives an opportunity to contextualise this discussion of the criticism of British paintings in 1878 and to understand its significance, either by its reflecting broader viewpoints on British culture, or by contrast if it stood out from the general understanding of ‘the other’ across the Channel. In any case, one can say right from the outset that French attitudes toward Britain were tinted with passion, as the vocabulary clearly demonstrates from the exploration of contemporary dictionaries, which might be deemed superficially mundane and thoroughly illuminating at the same time, in the way they reveal, although possibly with delays and a conscious neutralized tone, broader interests and movements of opinion. Feelings about Britain as expressed in France may be divided in three broad themes, namely political comments, social commentaries, and discussion of industrial and commercial matters.

‘The years from 1871 to 1878 formed a period of transition in European and world politics.’²⁷ Especially remarkable was a change of personnel. Before 1871, policies were essentially defined in cabinets composed of members of the aristocracy, and most business focused not on Europe, even for the British government, but India. By the end of the 1870s this composition had changed, to include more bourgeois members and policies increasingly had to deal with colonial expansion.²⁸ Both Britain and France were at the forefront of this evolution, by contrast with central European countries like Germany and Austria-Hungary which were to retain the older patterns. Both countries were also isolated on the international stage throughout the 1870s, although for different reasons: France was forcibly isolated because of its internal instability which in turn placed her in a situation of international weakness reinforced by diplomatic contradictions throughout the period; by contrast, the UK was voluntarily isolated, by tradition and

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2: ‘M. Bulwer, l’un des romanciers à la mode en Angleterre, a le même scepticisme, le même goût pour les saillies, le même coloris brillant et fin, mais un peu sec, la même netteté de touche, que l’on regardait comme la propriété exclusive du génie français.’

²⁷ Charles Bloch, *Les Relations entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne (1871-1878)* (Paris: Les éditions internationales, 1955), p. 9: ‘Les années de 1871 à 1878 constituent une période de transition dans la politique européenne et mondiale.’

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

with confidence, relying on internal stability with the opening up of the democracy, both a steady economic development and commercial growth, and interested before anything else in the international 'balance of powers'.²⁹

France and Britain could become in turn allies or enemies depending on the subject matter under consideration. At the beginning of the 1870s, French public opinion had been disappointed that Britain did not intervene during the Franco-Prussian War. In front of the newly-created German Reich, France had been hoping for a rapprochement with Britain after 1871. However, the liberal government of Gladstone had no concerns over Bismarck's rule of Germany, and Britain was therefore indifferent. Meanwhile, French conservatives like Adolphe Thiers hoped for better relations with Russia. On the contrary, French progressive republicans dreamt of closer bonds between Britain and France. Through most of the 1870s, French conservatives and British liberals were at least in agreement and shared similar views on the benefits for commerce of lowering tariff barriers, and free trade.³⁰

In the middle of the 1870s, the Eastern Question prompted France to try a moderation in the relations between Russia and Britain to prevent an armed conflict between both countries which would have benefited the status of Germany at the centre of Europe. With the victory of the Republican Party at the September 1877 French general election, French foreign policy changed dramatically, with the new government seeking support both inside and outside the country. William Henry Waddington (1826-1894) became Foreign State Secretary in December 1877 and promoted a disinterested foreign policy prompted by the interest in engaging with all foreign powers, potentially to form future alliances. In the late 1870s, the Oriental Question was still a topic of great interest and concern. Indeed, newspapers that featured reports about the Paris *Exposition* also contained accounts of European troops' movements. The genuine intentions of Great Britain were a particular source of speculation in the French public opinion. Thus, a Paul Véret gathered his thoughts in a booklet published in 1878 about the possible deeper intentions of Britain in

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

³⁰ Bloch 1955, pp. 15-17.

relation to its involvement in the Crimean War alongside French troops against Russia.³¹

This issue was still so significant towards the end of the 1870s that the first 1878 *Exposition* dispatch by the *Revue des deux mondes* indeed started brushing a picture of the moment with considering the European situation, in other words, expressing mixed feelings between the prosperity of civilisation and a threatening future, with the uncertainty of diplomacy potentially throwing the continent into war again because of the Oriental Question.³² The reviewer found a certain irony in the similarity in the circumstances surrounding both Exhibitions in 1878 and in 1855. Exhibitions were a display of civilisation in its most cosmopolitan dimension, with work and industry putting their best on show in a ‘great peaceful meeting of nations’ as an expression of the Genius of Peace triumphant over the Genius of War.³³ In a later dispatch, the same author acknowledged that the exhibition was one unique opportunity to forget about international tensions: ‘yes decidedly, this is a diversion of a strange and sumptuous originality’.³⁴

The overall feeling attached to the role of Britain in contemporary European diplomacy was one of suspicion, as most commentators appreciated the bigger picture of commercial routes the British Empire had to keep both open and reasonably secure around the world, and especially in the Middle East, to maintain its rank and operations as a world power. Examining in 1877 the recent history of Turkey and the period toward the end of the French Second Empire, Ferdinand Morlet thus described ‘England, hiding its perfidious projects within the folds of its ingratitude, [being] on the look-out for the moment when it could wallow in the

³¹ Paul Véret, *Questions sur les conséquences présumées de la guerre d’Orient au départ des troupes françaises pour la guerre de Crimée en 1854* (1878).

³² Charles de Mazade, ‘Chronique de la quinzaine’, *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVII, 3^e pér., XLVIII^e année, livraison du 1 mai 1878, pp. 228-238.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 228: ‘voici l’exposition universelle de 1878, ce grand rendez-vous pacifique des nations qui s’ouvre demain à Paris, aux premières heures de mai, comme si de rien n’était, comme s’il n’y avait point une âcre odeur de poudre dans l’air ! Le génie de la paix et le génie de la guerre sont en présence.’

³⁴ Charles de Mazade, ‘Chronique de la quinzaine’, *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVII, 3^e pér., XLVIII^e année, livraison du 15 juin 1878, pp. 945-956 (p. 945): ‘Si les réunions brillantes, si les opulents spectacles de l’industrie, reine de la paix, suffisaient pour faire oublier les problèmes qui agitent les peuples, l’exposition serait l’unique événement aujourd’hui. [...] Oui assurément, c’est une diversion d’une originalité étrange et somptueuse’.

spoils of those who had saved her in Crimea.’³⁵ Britain was blamed for her mercantilism, while Russia was blamed for her pan-Slavism, Austria-Hungary, for her ‘Magyarism’, and Germany, for her pan-Germanism.³⁶ Colonial expansion and competition between European powers, especially Britain and France, notably nurtured this kind of negative, yet nationalised feeling.

As a consequence of the Turkish affair, Britain appeared as an opportunistic country, able to take profit from the situation: ‘The only incontestable superiority of the Englishman is his ability to take profit of events; – he is aware of that, and he by the way only leads in that direction.’³⁷ However, throughout the 1870s, French financial and business milieus were keen to develop good relations with the UK rather than with Russia. Plus, evidence of strategic weakness of the Russian army during the Turkish crisis supported this lack of interest in Russia and a greater concentration to form an alliance with Britain.³⁸

For some, Britain was a political reference. The distinction between radicalism and the British identity had notably to do with the specific type of political government of Britain, the ‘self-government’ which most French sources mentioned in the original English. The ‘self-government’ that a parliamentary regime enabled (thanks to the limitations it places around the executive power) was a repeated motif in French literature about Britain.³⁹ Indeed the fascination for the British government stemmed from recent political history. Historians had to consider the great contrast between a succession of continental revolutions on one side, and various projects of political reform introduced by the executive power and validated by Parliament on the other, such as the Reform Act 1832, the reinstatement of the income tax in 1841, or the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.⁴⁰ British political circumstances were assessed from the French point of view as a situation of

³⁵ Ferdinand Morlet, *La Turquie démasquée et la réhabilitation de l’Europe* (Paris: Manginot-Hellitasse, 1877), p. 26: ‘L’Angleterre, cachant ses perfides desseins dans les replis de son ingratitude, épiait le moment où elle pourrait se vautrer dans les dépouilles de ceux qui l’avaient sauvée en Crimée.’

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134: ‘La seule supériorité incontestable de l’Anglais est de savoir profiter des événements ; – il en a conscience, et il ne tend du reste qu’à cela.’

³⁸ Bloch 1955, p. 22.

³⁹ Jacques Fernand, *Œuvres* (Paris: C. Vanier, 1878), p. 22.

⁴⁰ Victor Duruy, *Abrégé de l’histoire universelle* (Paris: Hachette, 1878), p. 631.

‘maturity’ because their political regime had seen no major upheaval since the Great Revolution of 1688, and in the meantime the ‘triumph of liberties, these glorious liberties’.⁴¹

In the first half of the 19th century, the celebrations surrounding the coronation of Queen Victoria set the stage for a representation of British society to itself and to the world, with numerous foreign guests and reporters attending the event. Louis Blanc (1811-1882) described the atmosphere of London on 28 June 1838, along with the décor and the masses. This gave the author an occasion to distinguish British and French crowd. He contrasted the ‘multitude of Paris, so impressionable, so communicative, so loaded with electric fluid, spiritual in its enthusiasm, rebellious up to its impulses, and which is, once thrown in public, only one spirited passionate man’ and ‘the compact and tight mass [of Englishmen], but in which each individual kept its physiognomy, its personality. No intellectual exchanges, no fusion between souls.’⁴²

Forty years later, as the exhibition was open to visitors from all over the world, a royalist journalist such as Lucien Burlet pondering on the future of the Third Republic wondered why monarchy had been able to thrive in Britain thanks to the Great Charter, by contrast with the repeated challenges to monarchy France had been through since the end of the 18th century. From the French point of view, the constitutional monarchy found its very origin in the 1215 Magna Carta, ‘modified by common law and Parliament ordinances.’⁴³ Very logically, this situation had to do with the ‘manifest superiority of the English character over ours [the French].’⁴⁴ To Burlet the success of the Charter over the long term and the preservation of the monarchical regime was a consequence of ‘common sense, gravitas, and even

⁴¹ Fernand 1878, p. 19: ‘le triomphe des libertés, ces glorieuses libertés’.

⁴² Louis Blanc, *Histoire de dix ans : 1830-1840* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1877), tome 5, p. 319: ‘cette multitude de Paris, si impressionnable, si communicative, si chargée de fluide électrique, spirituelle en son enthousiasme, frondeuse jusque dans ses entraînements, et qui, jetée sur la place publique, n’est qu’un homme passionné ayant de l’esprit ; les Anglais [...] formaient une masse compacte et serrées, mais dans laquelle chaque individu conservait sa physionomie, sa personnalité. Pas d’échanges intellectuels, pas de fusion entre les âmes.’

⁴³ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 3: ‘Le gouvernement est une monarchie constitutionnelle ; le fondement en est la grande charte concédée par Jean sans Terre en 1215, modifiée par la coutume et les ordonnances du Parlement, mais respectée dans son essence.’

⁴⁴ Lucien Burlet, *L’avenir de la Troisième République* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), p. 9: ‘nous expliquons cela par la supériorité manifeste du caractère anglais sur le nôtre.’

dignity.’ This mind-set, which was presumably at odds with ‘arts of imagination’, was also meant to frame creativity, logically more abundant in natural sciences.

‘The fog of London’, the ‘perfidious Albion’, the ‘green Erin’, ‘John Bull’, were so many different estranging clichés coming from various sources and time periods, associated with the British Isles in the collective French imagination in the late 1870s. However, journalist and writer Xavier Aubryet (1827-1880) described French and British people like two Parisian households living next door to each other, just separated by a line of bricks that let the sound through, gathered on the balcony, and opposed on the landing. Surprisingly, like these households, both countries are very close physically yet very different: ‘these are two absolutely dissimilar social milieus: two types profoundly independent; – one would think they are *the adjoining antipodes*.’⁴⁵ This metaphor illustrates well the ambiguity of the relations between British and French culture and people.

Indeed, national clichés may also be acknowledged in the very art criticism of the exposition, as a backdrop to prompt further comments on the exhibits. Thus, Clovis Lamarre and Léon Pajot based their review of the British fine arts galleries on two prejudices, namely that Britain had had no painters, and that Britain could have no painter.⁴⁶ Moreover, they took the catalogue of the galleries as evidence against another cliché, according to which British people could not be an appropriate public for visual arts because they were a ‘people of traders and mechanics’. By contrast, the said catalogue provided ample proof that British people could be patrons of the arts, since so many works in British galleries were on loan from private collections.⁴⁷

Amid the political and economic transformations which took place up to the third quarter of the 19th century, in the French imagination, British people carried with them an image of moderation which was contrasted with French – supposedly

⁴⁵ Xavier Aubryet, *Chez nous et chez nos voisins* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), p. 231: ‘ce sont deux milieux sociaux absolument distincts : deux types profondément indépendants ; – on dirait *les antipodes mitoyens*.’

⁴⁶ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 156: ‘Nous avons répondu à ceux qui disent que l’Angleterre n’a pas eu de peintres ; réfutons maintenant ceux qui prétendent qu’elle ne saurait en avoir.’

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157: ‘Un peuple de commerçants et de mécaniciens, nous dit-on, n’aime que les lourdes locomotives, les navires cuirassés aux flancs noirs ; il ne peut distinguer l’aiguille de Cléopâtre d’une cheminée d’usine. [...] Ouvrez le catalogue de l’exposition anglaise, à part de rares exceptions, tous les tableaux, toutes les sculptures exposées appartiennent à des collections particulières ; les Anglais encouragent leurs artistes en achetant leurs ouvrages’.

radical – aspirations. Consciousness of this contrast in moods on either side of the Channel provoked the belief that both peoples could not possibly live together. Moderation was seen as a positive characteristic while radicalism could not be anything good to either individuals or society as a whole.⁴⁸ Physionomical and physiological stereotypes of the other nation were inevitable.

There seems to be a general trait that saw most Frenchmen visiting Britain desperate to ‘watch’ and find abroad similarities with locales and customs back home, and no less desperate to avoid specificities.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, ‘the great charm of England – for the traveller who wants to renew themselves – is indeed the way it does not remind one at all of France’.⁵⁰ By contrast with the supposed natural French inclination for searching out similarities, Aubryet emphasized ‘the complete change of scenery, the feeling of foreignness’ which a visit to Britain could provoke.⁵¹ Beyond this contrast of environment, the British identity was assumedly striking for its individuality, the individualism and uniqueness of its members. Indeed, Aubryet made a point about the ‘autonomy’ of Britain in the face of all continental influences. Britain resisted, was ‘impervious to all imports [from France, from Italy, from Germany] because Britain tolerate[d] by amateurishness’ (*‘par dilettantisme’*).⁵²

The relation to the countryside was also a distinctive characteristic between French and British people. Throughout the 19th century, Britain had experienced a second industrial revolution which prompted massive population movements and estrangement from rural life and landscape. Writing in the first half of the century, French historian Jules Michelet was able to contrast the situation of the land ownership: ‘France’s soil belongs to fifteen or twenty millions of peasants who cultivate it; England’s soil, to an aristocracy of thirty-two thousands people who have

⁴⁸ Amédée Goubet, *Fables locales* (Cannes: H. Vidal, 1878), ‘L’Anglais’, pp. 78-80 (p. 80): ‘Gens modérés et radicaux / Ne sauraient vivre en mêmes eaux : / L’un est mendiant, l’autre est riche ; / L’un a l’honneur, l’autre s’en fiche ; / L’un amasse et construit partout : / L’autre dissipe et détruit tout.’

⁴⁹ Aubryet 1878, p. 229.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 232: ‘Le grand charme de l’Angleterre, – pour le voyageur qui veut se renouveler, – c’est, en effet, de ne rappeler en rien la France’.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-233: ‘sensation de dépaysement complet’.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

it cultivated.’⁵³ Michelet established a straightforward connection between that situation and the contrast of behaviours in French and British people where English people would be mobile, ‘migrating where profit is’, and where French people would be tightly connected to the land, by ‘marriage, to life, to death.’⁵⁴

Feelings and perceptions pertaining to British people can be captured from scholarly publications but also from elements of popular culture which often contain a great measure of humour but nonetheless bespeak clichés and stereotypes deeply rooted in social imagination. British people did not seem much appreciated by their French counterparts, if it is to be assessed from a popular song published in 1878 around the time of the Exposition. It recounts the events of the Hundred Years War with its accompanying series of reprehensible deeds by English troops possibly gave rise to reminiscences and stories: ‘I am very determined / To wage war on him [the Englishman] again. / I cannot speak highly of his achievements, / He has devastated the Gallic country.’⁵⁵

The same source also does express, although on a humorous tone, a French feeling of inferiority complex in front of Britain doubled with a feeling of jealousy.⁵⁶ This combination of feelings bespoke an awareness of the industrial might of Britain, especially with the unique development of forges and furnaces. In order to balance this impression, the French beholder could fall back on the strength of the national industrial activity back at Le Creusot which rivalled the British activity: ‘I went, the other day / By pleasure-boat to London; / I saw there during my stay, / Really enough to confuse me: / Noise, fire, like in Hell, / Power-hammers to pack down the iron, / And blast furnaces to melt it. / English people, at Le Creusot, I have seen all that!’⁵⁷

⁵³ Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Lévy, 1877), p. 3: ‘La terre de France appartient à quinze ou vingt millions de paysans qui la cultivent ; la terre d’Angleterre à une aristocratie de trente-deux mille personnes qui la font cultiver.’

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3: ‘Les Anglais, n’ayant pas les mêmes racines dans le sol, émigrent où il y a profit. Ils disent le pays ; nous disons la patrie. Chez nous, l’homme et la terre se tiennent, et ils ne se quitteront pas ; il y a entre eux légitime mariage, à la vie, à la mort. Le Français a épousé la France.’

⁵⁵ Hippolyte Poulain, ‘Les Anglais’, in *Chansons: Les peuples, par les membres du Caveau* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), p. 11 : ‘Je suis bien déterminé / A lui faire encor la guerre. / Je ne puis vanter ses exploits, / Il a ravagé le pays gaulois.’

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11 and 13.

⁵⁷ Poulain 1878, pp. 11-12: ‘Je suis allé, l’autre jour / Par un bateau-mouche à Londres ; / J’ai vu là, dans mon séjour, / Vraiment de quoi me confondre : / Du bruit, du feu, comme en enfer, / Des marteaux-pilons pour tasser le fer. / Et des hauts-fourneaux pour le fondre. / Anglais, au Creusot, j’ai vu tout cela !’

This consideration of British industrial might was not a specific interest of the 1870s but a long-term trend at least from the very end of the 18th century. This is what the accounts of the French national industrial exhibitions bespeak. Back in 1819, the idea had been expressed, even if this was actually abandoned, to gather British industrial products at the Paris Saint-Martin abbey at the same time as the national industrial exhibition. The idea was proposed again several times in the 1830s and 1840s until Britain eventually decided to set up the first modern international exhibition in 1851. The acute awareness of British commercial and industrial abilities was a crucial drive in the organization of French industrial exhibitions. In this context, British products were used as a benchmark for the appreciation of French ones, every assessment boiling down to the ability or inability of French items to emulate and compete with their British equivalents.

French exhibitions were an opportunity for national industry to catch up with the advancement and innovation that British entrepreneurs had been able to introduce in their industrial activities and outputs during the French Revolution and subsequent wars on the continent. The Continental System had at one point acted as an incentive for the modernisation of French production capacities. As years passed, there was evidence of a growing national confidence in French industry in front of its British competitor. This change was given an eloquent illustration with the 1819 proposal to purchase British products in order to put them on display in Paris at the same time as the French exhibition so that the public could assess the then-current situation by themselves.⁵⁸

By the 1820s French national industrial exhibitions revealed the transformations manufacturers had undergone to adapt to modern competitive circumstances dominated by the innovative edge of Britain in the international market of commodities; able to produce great quantities of first-class quality

⁵⁸ Noël Regnier, *L'industrie française au XIXe siècle* (Paris: L. Sault, 1878), p. 118: 'Les fabricants français pourraient, grâce à une disposition aussi nouvelle étudier à loisir les articles anglais similaires et en tirer d'utiles leçons, et les visiteurs moins directement intéressés seraient à même de se convaincre, par leur yeux, de la supériorité d'un grand nombre de produits français et de l'exagération avec laquelle on accordait trop facilement aux Anglais une suprématie industrielle, contestable sur certains points.'

products at both an affordable and a profitable price.⁵⁹ Relations between French and British industries were such a catalyst in the organisation of industrial exhibitions that the issue served as a prompt for creative enterprises such as a theatre play by French playwright Emmanuel Théaulon (1787-1841) in 1827 titled *John Bull au Louvre* with comic comedian Brunet (alias Jean-Joseph Mira (1766-1853)) playing the part of a British leather tradesman to packed houses at the *Théâtre des Variétés*.⁶⁰

The equation of Britain with mercantilism was mentioned earlier in the political considerations related to the Oriental Question. There was indeed entrenched in 19th-century French literature and public opinion at large the feeling that the British were the skilled people for trade and commerce. Where French people would stop after some successful ventures, British people would move on to complete further ones and accrue more even profit and wealth: 'The Frenchman who earned in commerce or otherwise some thousand pounds of rents, believes he is rich, and does not do anything anymore. The Englishman, by contrast, sees his acquired wealth as a means to become wealthier; he perseverates until death in work.'⁶¹ Michelet emphasized the commitment to work and the disinterest in leisure which were the stimulus for British successes and wealth.

Political and social stereotypes seen earlier also influenced the French vision of Britain in terms of economy and industry. Aubryet pointed out the close affinities between architecture and nature in Britain, by contrast with French customs.⁶² More decisively, Taine had uncovered what he perceived as the British inability to generate 'general ideas' by contrast with the French habit, and the national preference for a 'practical moral' rather than for 'established dogma'.⁶³ The intellectual divide

⁵⁹ Regnier 1878, pp. 199-200.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁶¹ Michelet 1877, p. 105, n. 1: 'La France n'a pas l'âme marchande, sauf ses moments anglais (comme celui de Law et celui-ci), qui sont des accès rares. [...] Le Français qui a gagné dans le commerce ou autrement quelques mille livres de rentes, se croit riche, et ne fait plus rien. L'Anglais, tout au contraire, voit dans la richesse acquise un moyen de s'enrichir ; il persévère jusqu'à la mort dans le travail.'

⁶² Aubryet 1878, p. 238.

⁶³ Hippolyte Taine, *L'idéalisme anglais. Etude sur Carlyle* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1864), p. 90: 'l'aptitude aux idées générales y [en Angleterre] est moindre [qu'en France] et la défiance contre les idées générales y est plus grande ; on y rejette de prime abord tout ce qui de près ou de loin semble capable de nuire à la morale pratique ou au dogme établi. L'esprit positif semble en devoir exclure toutes les idées allemandes ; et cependant c'est l'esprit positif qui les introduit.'

between French and British people was at least as old as the French Revolution, with ‘the idea of duty, the religious spirit, the government of oneself, and the authority of the austere consciousness’ as key concepts British people valued but could not find in French culture.⁶⁴

Commentaries on the national characteristics of the British people which developed throughout the 19th century extended right into the realm of the 1878 Exposition. Thus the musical rhyme mentioned earlier combined the cheerfulness associated with the opening of the event and the difficulties encountered by both British and French forces in the Crimean war:

At our Exhibition, / The most beautiful conquest, / This great nation / Comes to take part to our feasts. / I will forget the inhumane day, / When the Englishman could extend a hand to us, / It is over... we would be very silly, / To hold a grudge against the people on a gala day, / Of glory they used to dream / At Balaclava; / Hurrah for the Englishman, because he was there!⁶⁵

There was a hint of bitterness filtering through the analysis of the reciprocal influences between France and Britain as seen by Jules Michelet. The French historian was indeed sceptical about any move which would see both cultures blending into an indistinct and bland ensemble, be it in politics, in the arts or in fashion. The possibility that France would mimic Britain in arts and fashion was an ‘incredible and laughable thing’.⁶⁶ Taking his cues from two unidentified contemporary novels, Michelet complained that French characters displayed less flattering characteristics or personal stories than their British counterparts, the most prominent difference being in their disparity of wealth, with British characters

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165: ‘[...] il n’a vu que le mal dans la révolution française. Il la juge aussi injustement qu’il juge Voltaire, et pour les mêmes raisons. Il n’entend pas mieux notre manière d’agir que notre manière de penser. Il y cherche le sentiment puritain, et comme il ne l’y trouve pas, il nous condamne. L’idée du devoir, l’esprit religieux, le gouvernement de soi-même, l’autorité de la conscience austère, peuvent seuls, à son gré, réformer une société gâtée, et rien de tout cela ne se rencontrait dans la société française.’

⁶⁵ Poulain 1878, p. 13: ‘A notre Exposition, / La plus belle des conquêtes, / Cette grande nation / Vient prendre part à nos fêtes. / J’oublierai le jour inhumain, / Où l’Anglais pouvait nous tendre la main, / C’est fini... nous serions bien bêtes. / D’en vouloir au peuple un jour de gala. / De gloire il rêva / A Balaclava ; / Hurrah pour l’Anglais, car il était là !’

⁶⁶ Michelet 1877, p. 268: ‘nous l’avons adopté, ce même élément anglais, chose incroyable et risible, dans l’art, dans la mode. Cette raideur, cette gaucherie, qui n’est point extérieure, ni accidentelle, mais qui tient à un profond mystère physiologique, c’est là ce que nous copions.’

attracting more attention because of their outstanding prosperity. The writer expressed his hopelessness at the poverty of France in the material realm, whereas the country and its people had been able to produce quantity of 'invisible products'.⁶⁷

B. Context and methods of French art critics

Within and beyond the general context of the mixed attitudes to Britain in France in the 1870s, art critics had to position themselves broadly and also, naturally, in aesthetic terms. Indeed, 'to the reporters and critics sent to review the exhibitions fell the tasks of formulating aesthetic doctrine and assessing the place of contemporary art in the new industrial world.'⁶⁸ It is the aim of what follows to examine how different critics who covered the 1878 *Exposition* understood their immediate context and how they expressed this understanding in their method of enquiry. A major factor which influenced the way and the extent each writer engaged with the exhibits was the nature of the publication they wrote for: this ranged from the light portable volume intended to be used as a guidebook to the lengthy review article published in several parts.

This review does not aim to be a comprehensive survey of all art criticism published in France about the British paintings galleries but it gives an opportunity to examine the extent to which art criticism mapped onto, or differed from, the general national stereotypes, and to scrutinize the way individual art critics enforced or tried to emancipate themselves from the national pattern and national discourses presumably conveyed via national galleries. This review includes eight different art critics who were born between 1813 and 1850, arranged chronologically, with Charles Blanc – born in 1813 – opening the series and Marius Vachon – born in 1850 – closing it; in between, all critics were born in the 1820s and 1830s. Tullo

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 268-70.

⁶⁸ Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, ed., *The Art of All Nations, 1850-73: The Emerging Role of Exhibitions and Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. xxx.

Massarani is a special case in the group since, although his review was published in Paris, he was Italian.

In 1878, Charles Blanc (1813-1882) was the most experienced and probably the most famous art critic in Paris and beyond. He had by then been long-established in the Paris art world, contributed to numerous newspapers and most notably created the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* back in 1859. Strongly republican, during the short-lived Second Republic, and again in the early years of the Third Republic, Blanc had earned the responsibility for the ministerial portfolio of the administration of the fine arts. During the Second Empire, he had taught comparative history at the *Ecole spéciale d'architecture*. More recently, he had been elected to become a member of the *Académie française*.

As he started his review of European fine arts in the Exposition, Blanc began with challenging the widely-accepted theory of climates, which took for granted a logical relation between physical circumstances and creative abilities and conception of art in general, as exhibits in the painting galleries were proving it both right and wrong, therefore casting doubt on its relevance and strength. More specifically, Blanc argued that ancient history provided sufficient evidence to understand and conclude that favourable climatic conditions are a necessary element for the 'genius of art' to thrive, but more recent historical developments, for instance in Egypt or in Greece, also made it clear that a favourable climate was not enough for that thriving. For Blanc, 'it takes a nation for art to blossom within it, something else than the favourable influences of the temperature.'⁶⁹ However, Blanc offered here a racial, indeed a genetic interpretation and meaning of the national idea, arguing that 'a young man who would be born in Russia of Italian blood would struggle far less to become a sculptor than a young man of Russian blood born in Florence'.⁷⁰

Like most other critics, Blanc was interested in the way contemporary artists engaged with their environment. Carrying out an assessment of the situation of modern art, in an unusual juxtaposition, he mourned both Ingres as an 'energetic

⁶⁹ Charles Blanc, *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: Renouard, 1878), p. 311: 'il faut une nation, pour que l'art fleurisse dans son sein, autre chose que les influences favorables de la température.'

⁷⁰ Blanc 1878, p. 311: 'un jeune homme qui serait né en Russie de sang italien, aurait beaucoup moins de peine à devenir sculpteur qu'un jeune homme de sang russe, né à Florence'.

temperament' with 'unflinching convictions', a 'soul of a strong calibre', and Delacroix as 'a winged nature'.⁷¹ Blanc was after subject matters which would offer 'the style', artists who would be able 'not to offer the tedious pleonasm of reality, but on the contrary can set us free from it, to carry us in the regions where poesy gives flesh to its dreams, an air of truth to all its lies.'⁷²

Louis Enault (1824-1900) was a barrister in Paris, originally from Normandy. He expressed royalist sympathy and was especially popular under the reign of Louis-Philippe.⁷³ He left France after the 1848 Revolution, touring Europe in England, Scotland, Ireland and Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and further afield in the Middle East. Enault sometimes published under a false name, Louis de Vermont, and more rarely Snor-Luce.⁷⁴ He came back to France with Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's arrival to power, and became a prolific writer, publishing both documentary narratives and novels from the early 1850s onwards.⁷⁵ Introduced at the imperial court, Enault wrote in various newspapers and sustained his popularity with abundant publications which gained him a cross in the Legion of Honour.⁷⁶ He expressed his first take on art criticism with reviewing the *Salon* of 1852, made public the following year.

In 1877, Enault published a volume dealing with industrial arts throughout Europe, relying on the displays in the international industrial exhibitions in Vienna in 1873, London in 1862, and Paris in 1867. This discussion encompassed various practices such as sculpture, jewellery, iron mongering, textile industry, and ceramics.⁷⁷ In his introduction to this long study focusing on individual companies, Enault expressed ideas betraying his feeling of a competitive situation between

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177: 'Les tempéraments énergiques, les artistes aux convictions farouches, les âmes d'une forte trempe, comme Ingres, les natures ailées, comme Eugène Delacroix, ont disparu'.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 178: 'Très rares sont les artistes à la recherche de sujets qui comportent le style, ceux qui, au lieu de nous offrir le pléonasm fastidieux de la réalité, nous en délivrent au contraire, pour nous transporter dans les régions où la poésie donne un corps à tous ses songes, un air de vérité à tous ses mensonges.'

⁷³ Eugène Mouton, *Un demi-siècle de vie, 1848-1901* (Paris: Delagrave, 1901), p. 295.

⁷⁴ Georges d'Heylli, *Dictionnaire des pseudonymes* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1887), p. 454.

⁷⁵ Maurice Tourneux, 'Enault (Louis)', in *La Grande Encyclopédie : inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, Tome 15 (Paris: Lamirault, 1885-1902), dir. by André Berthelot, p. 991.

⁷⁶ H. de Villemessant, *Mémoires d'un journaliste. Troisième Série: A travers le Figaro* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1873), pp. 50-59; James de Chambrier, *La Cour et la société du Second Empire. Deuxième série* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1904), p. 317.

⁷⁷ Louis Enault, *Les arts industriels : Vienne, Londres, Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1877).

European countries such as Britain, Germany and France. Indeed, in order to introduce his subject, he did not hesitate to brush a swift picture of the situation of arts over the continent:

Industrial arts may be today the strongest hold of our glory, if not its most brilliant. This glory is, in any case, the least contested one. Everywhere else we find competition. Here it disappears. Belgium has painters of real skilfulness; Germany has clever and subtle draughtsmen; England has incomparable watercolourists; Italy has sculptors who can knead marble with hands full of life, if not always inspired.⁷⁸

As a result of the 1878 Exposition, Enault prepared a review of the fine arts, not only painting but also sculpture.⁷⁹ From the outset, he explained his readers what aims he had set himself in this critical venture. Enault intended to be selective, so that he would not replicate the official catalogue, and he adopted a sympathetic approach, focusing on the works he favoured most: ‘we wanted to point out [...] to our readers the displayed works [...] which seem to us the most deserving attention, and say our opinion on them, with the sincerity and independent frankness which have always been ours.’⁸⁰

Tullo Massarani (1826-1905) had many and strong connections with intellectuals in Paris although he was himself Italian. Born in Mantua, Massarani was an Italian senator based in Milan, and was well-known as a painter, aesthete and art critic. His writings are characterized by their cosmopolitanism, as they tried to enhance Italian relations with Germany and France.⁸¹ He was a correspondent of the *Institut de France*. In 1878, he was distinguished by his role in the Exhibition, not only as the Italian representative for, but also as the president of, the international

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1: ‘Les arts industriels sont peut-être aujourd’hui la part la plus solide de notre gloire, sinon la plus brillante. Cette gloire est, dans tous les cas, celle que l’on nous conteste le moins. Partout ailleurs nous trouvons la concurrence. Ici, elle s’efface. La Belgique a des peintres d’une réelle habileté ; l’Allemagne, des dessinateurs ingénieux et subtils ; l’Angleterre, des aquarellistes incomparables ; l’Italie, des sculpteurs qui pétrissent le marbre d’une main toujours pleine de vie, sinon toujours inspirée.’

⁷⁹ Louis Enault, *Les Beaux-arts à l’Exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: E. Gros, 1878).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2: ‘nous avons voulu ceci et pas autre chose : indiquer à nos lecteurs celles des œuvres exposées, soit par nos compatriotes, soit par les artistes étrangers, qui nous paraissent le plus dignes de leur attention, et dire notre opinion sur elles, avec la sincérité et la franchise indépendante qui ont toujours été le caractère de notre critique.’

⁸¹ ‘Massarani (Tullo),’ in Berthelot 1885-1902, p. 370.

jury for awards for the 'Group 1, Art works.' As a consequence, Massarani found himself in a dual position as an official of the Exhibition and, at a professional and personal level, as a connoisseur and art critic. As an official, it was his duty to keep a neutral approach to all displays under his scrutiny, and this prudence shows to some extent in his critical work, with the way he cautiously phrased some opinions.

In an attempt to provide an introductory survey to the material in the exhibition galleries with a history of painting since the classical Antiquity, the Italian writer actually started a reflexion on contemporary art and its objectives in relation to tradition, and religion and politics in particular.⁸² He argued that religion had been an important source of inspiration for artists, especially from the end of the Antiquity to the 12th century, but that 19th-century artists were more influenced by their contemporary environment and culture: 'All in all, it is life, vibrant life, which is the inexhaustible source, it is the human soul which is the inexhaustible subject.'⁸³ Following an interpretive pattern shared by other critics, Massarani explained his readers that history of art evolves along the same lines as the history of liberty, of the 'ideal' and quoted Pierre-Joseph Proudhon to support his point.

In accordance with his editorial project, in other words a comprehensive survey of fine arts in the Paris exhibition in two volumes, Massarani grouped artists in his comments mostly according to subject matters and provided a structuring question. He did not go through the exhibits following the alphabetical order of the artists' names available from the exhibition catalogue, and tried instead to create an inspiring and swooping narrative about art in general. In his analysis, he acknowledged two major components to look for in paintings in general, and in northern European painting in particular. To the Italian critic, art was a combination of 'natural' characteristics which are local, or national, typical of artists' original environment and culture, and qualities which have been collected from the study of foreign artistic achievements, 'traditions and school reminiscences' from 'the most experienced'.⁸⁴

⁸² Massarani 1878, tome I, p. 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, tome II, pp. 17-20 (p. 20): 'En somme, c'est la vie, la vie vivante, qui est la source inépuisable, c'est l'âme humaine qui est l'inépuisable sujet.'

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

By the time of the 1878 Exhibition, Victor Cherbuliez (1829-99) was already well known for his novels and his regular contributions to the *Revue des deux mondes*, first serialized as novels and then chronicles about contemporary political circumstances in foreign countries such as Germany and Spain. His intellectual training had led him from a French Protestant family emigrated from Geneva to Germany to France.⁸⁵ According to Ernest Renan, who answered Cherbuliez's reception speech at the *Académie Française* in May 1882, this dual academic background was a blessing because it demonstrated that 'ideas [were then] a shared elaboration of all civilized nations' which 'each country appropriates to themselves in relation to their taste and their genius.'⁸⁶ Renan is also an interesting source when he characterized Cherbuliez as a 'liberal, fair, humane' thinker, eschewing cruelty and harshness.⁸⁷ Indeed, these qualities might also translate into his criticism of the fine arts in general, and of the British display in particular.

The critical method of the Swiss-born author appears clearly in the early 1870s as part of the review of the Salon of 1872.⁸⁸ Writing nine letters to an anonymous correspondent who has fled Paris for Florence to contemplate a Titian at the Palazzo Pitti, Cherbuliez shared his thoughts on this first Salon after the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune. His approach was one of a critic who deliberately embraced his time and its arts, and followed a path which balanced progressive and conservative choices. His line of argument unfolded in particular to convince the most conservative observers to engage more proactively with contemporary arts: 'Loving the past is good, but one should never become a prisoner of their memory.'⁸⁹ At the same time was an acknowledgement that not all periods produced literature

⁸⁵ R. Limouzin-Lamothe, 'Cherbuliez (Victor)', in *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, dir. by M. Prevost and Roman d'Amat (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1959), Tome Huitième: Cayron-Cléry, col. 1003.

⁸⁶ *Discours de réception de M. Victor Cherbuliez ; réponse de M. Ernest Renan* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882), p. 69: 'Les idées sont maintenant l'élaboration commune de toutes les nations civilisées ; mais chaque pays se les approprie selon son goût et son génie.'

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 64: 'Vous avez choisi exprès d'être démodé, je veux dire libéral, juste, humain. De notre temps, la dureté est une qualité si prisée ! Que n'avez-vous fait comme tout le monde, raillé la chevalerie, fait des gorges chaudes de la générosité ?'

⁸⁸ Victor Cherbuliez, *Etudes de littérature et d'art* (Paris: Hachette, 1873).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 228: 'Il est bon d'aimer le passé, mais il ne faut jamais devenir le prisonnier de sa mémoire'.

and art of equal value, but also a reminder to the reader that all periods have nurtured both mediocrity and excellence.⁹⁰

Specifically considering the art of his time, Cherbuliez pondered on the idea of high art – ‘*le grand art*’ – which his correspondent mourned. Joshua Reynolds appeared then as an iconic figure, embodying the debate between the Grand Manner; focused on religious and mythological scenes, and a modern approach, favouring more modest, approachable and familiar motifs. In this dispute, Cherbuliez clearly stood against the Grand Manner, which he deemed inappropriate for his days. To him, the greatness of the style was not an effect of the subject matter, but a logical consequence of the artist’s ability: ‘[great art] very plainly consists in the faculty of conceiving things as a whole, and therefore of subordinating every detail to the whole’.⁹¹ Alongside the subject matter, the practical expertise was of no interest to Cherbuliez for whom what really mattered was ‘art, the character, the composition, the effect’.⁹² Overall, he concluded about the 1872 Salon: ‘my idea... is that real artists do great art, whatever subject matter they deal with.’⁹³

Born in Normandy, Ernest Chesneau (1833-90) became a civil servant at the Louvre Museum and was involved in the creation of the *Union centrale des arts décoratifs*, the creation of which had been stimulated by the example of the South Kensington Museum. He wrote numerous art chronicles for periodicals and newspapers such as the *Revue des deux mondes*, *Le Constitutionnel*, and *L’Opinion nationale*, as the manager of its arts section. In 1867, he was responsible for writing up the official report from the jury for the fine arts section of the Paris *Exposition universelle*.⁹⁴ He also published several books on contemporary arts in France and Britain, beginning with *La peinture en France au XIXe siècle* in 1862, a collection of portraits of French artists from Jacques-Louis David up to the 1855 Paris Universal Exhibition.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231: ‘[Le grand art] consiste tout simplement dans la faculté de concevoir les choses comme un tout, et partant de subordonner tous les détails à l’ensemble’.

⁹² Cherbuliez 1873, p. 239: ‘N’attendez pas... que je m’étende sur les questions de pratique, que je vous entretienne d’empâtements et de frottis, ce ne sont point mes affaires. Le métier m’intéresse moins que l’art, le caractère, la composition, l’effet’.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 252: ‘Mon idée... est que les vrais artistes font du grand art, quelques sujets qu’ils traitent’.

⁹⁴ M. Prevost, ‘Chesneau (Ernest)’, in Prevost and d’Amat 1959, Tome Huitième: Cayron-Cléry, col. 10037-8.

Also in 1862, Chesneau visited the London International Exhibition which prompted his book *L'art et les artistes modernes en France et en Angleterre* published in 1864. It is particularly interesting here because it is only the second one Chesneau published, and with its international content, it gave him an early opportunity to make his views on the visual arts clearer. This 1864 publication was the place for Chesneau to clarify and develop his method as an art critic. Discussing his colleague Champfleury's rediscovery of the 17th-century Le Nain brothers, he strongly underlined that an art critic's role is not to justify artists' flaws.⁹⁵ Instead, the art critic ought to be balanced, with showing and explaining on an equal ground both qualities and weaknesses. As he focused on painting in England, Chesneau worded clearly his aesthetic stance: 'art has no other aim than itself; [...] art is neither the truth, nor the right, nor the good, nor useful, nor any of the moral absolutes: art is sufficient unto itself, it focuses on itself, it is and it only is art.'⁹⁶

Most importantly in this discussion on the French critical reception of British art, Chesneau argued that any national art is 'the result of its people's aesthetic abilities' developed further and diversified by some individuals, and that 'no comparison is possible between British art and French art; let's not be afraid or dream fancifully of rivalry.'⁹⁷ In a later publication, he argued, by contrast with a nationalistic vantage point on arts which would necessarily be divisive and exclusive, for 'an important truth, [...] which] has emerged little by little from international

⁹⁵ Ernest Chesneau, *L'art et les artistes modernes en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Didier, 1864), pp. 31-32: 'La critique ne saurait être un constant panégyrique, ou alors elle cesse d'être et se transforme en duperie. Elle n'a de vertu qu'à la condition de dire toute la vérité d'abord, et comme elle est juge en même temps que témoin, il lui appartient, après avoir exposé son propre témoignage, de se montrer indulgente ou sévère. Auprès des qualités, elle doit montrer les défauts, les expliquer, les excuser quelquefois, mais ne jamais les justifier.'

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-5: 'l'art n'a d'autre but que lui-même ; [...] Il n'est ni le vrai, ni le juste, ni le bien, ni l'utile, ni aucun des absolus moraux : il se suffit, se concentre en soi, il est et il n'est que l'art.'

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20: '... comment nier que l'art d'un peuple soit en réalité autre chose que le résultat des facultés esthétiques de ce peuple, concentrées plus spécialement chez un individu de la même race, en qui elles sont affinées, développées par elles-mêmes, et aussi combinées avec ses qualités individuelles ? [...] C'est là ce qui nous a fait dire, ce qui nous fait répéter sous toutes les formes : Nulle comparaison possible entre l'art britannique et l'art français ; ne redoutons ni ne faisons ce rêve chimérique de la rivalité.'

exhibitions [...], sanctioned by evidence from great periods, [...] in the days of the Renaissance, unrecognized from then on: this is the unity of Art.’⁹⁸

Chesneau claimed to be scientific, remote from concerns of taste and preference, and justified this methodological shift for two distinct reasons: firstly, he argued using one’s personal taste shaped within a French education and culture would not be appropriate to formulate an acceptable analysis of an artistic production coming from a different cultural environment, which necessarily carried its own set of references and values; secondly, scientific analysis such as carried out by a chemist does not comply with subjective criteria such as likes and dislikes, pleasure and disgust, but must be completed consistently and comprehensively. In a long-drawn-out metaphor, Chesneau likened English art to an almost unknown monster.⁹⁹ Although arguing in favour of a scientific method for criticism, Chesneau did not actually provide one to overtake the usual aesthetic approach relying on personal cultural reference. Chesneau is explicit that he does not intend to rank which is the best between the French and the English contemporary art since the only thing they have in common is ‘the tool: canvases, colours and brushes.’¹⁰⁰

Edmond Duranty (1833-80) was a fervent champion of Impressionism. He reviewed the exhibits of foreign paintings at the Exposition for the *Gazette des Beaux-arts* and this was later published as part of a collected volume about the fine arts at the Exposition.¹⁰¹ By the time of the 1878 *Exposition*, Duranty had had extensive experience of British art, having first visited Britain in May 1866, when he was particularly impressed by the enormity and darkness of London, and also by the fashionable aspect of Londoners in Hyde Park.¹⁰² Duranty had particularly noted the importance of Constable, whom he coined ‘the forerunner of our artists in love with

⁹⁸ Ernest Chesneau, ‘La correspondance illustrée’, *La Correspondance Illustrée*, July 1870, Numéro spécimen, p. 1: ‘Une vérité importante, longtemps oubliée, s’est peu à peu dégagée des expositions internationales qui ont eu lieu, depuis vingt ans, à Londres et à Paris. Cette vérité, consacrée par le témoignage des grandes époques, par l’histoire du génie grec au temps de Périclès, et du génie latin au temps de la Renaissance, méconnue depuis : c’est l’Unité de l’Art.’

⁹⁹ Chesneau 1882, p. 177.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 177: ‘Ils [l’art anglais et notre art] ne se mesurent pas au même compas, par cette raison qu’ils appartiennent à des ordres de manifestations qui n’ont de commun que l’outil : toiles, couleurs et brosses.’

¹⁰¹ Gonse 1878.

¹⁰² Louis Edouard Tabary, ‘Duranty et l’Angleterre’, *Revue de littérature comparée*, juillet-septembre 1955, pp. 360-4 (p. 360).

nature and concerned with *impressions* rather than with recipes of execution.¹⁰³ Duranty shared with Constable a dear interest in, and attention to, nature and reality which characterized his works, and inspired artists working around the Barbizon forest and those painters associated with Impressionism.

Along his critical career, Duranty consistently disapproved of French academicism and the official Salon; by contrast he praised the artistic teaching provision in practice in Britain. The French critic indeed especially commended the British galleries in the 1878 *Exposition*, and valued the very distinctive aspect of British painting.¹⁰⁴ Like Massarani's critical voice, Duranty's stood out in the way it aimed at creating a narrative which would go beyond the plain enumeration of names and works' titles following the catalogue listing. However, Duranty did not start his narrative from the inspiration the paintings' subject matters could give, but instead created a sort of history of the present time with placing the various names in perspective and thereby drawing a map of the artistic world with the various groups and generations of artists and contrasting influences and inspiration. Keeping his effect as a climax for the whole review of the exhibits, he concluded with an unambiguous overall appreciation:

above everything else English art towers, so original, so delicate, so intimate, and so audacious in truth, always expressive and significant, full of a high intellectual dandyism, full of a refined sensitivity, of acute grace and tenderness, often stretching the rope to excess, and penetrated with a historical sentiment which makes it connect modern things with past's elevated accents and strong allures, look for the alliance of naïve and noble as well on a bench in Chelsea gardens as in philosophies on love and ruins; an art of penetration, elegance, poesy, absolutely knotted to the nation's umbilicus; an art where melancholy joins shine, and singularity does precise reality, and which, without doing pastiches, has

¹⁰³ Duranty quoted by Tabary 1955, p. 361: 'le précurseur de nos peintres épris de la nature et préoccupés d'*impressions* plus que de recettes d'exécution.'

¹⁰⁴ Marcel Crouzet, *Un Méconnu du Réalisme : Duranty, 1833-1880. L'homme ; le critique ; le romancier* (Paris: Nizet, 1964), pp. 375-6.

been able to transfuse the 15th- and 16th-century gravitas and candour to its duchesses, its bourgeois, its sailors, its *clergymen* and its *babies*.¹⁰⁵

Clovis Lamarre (1836-?) was a *docteur ès lettres*, a professor, a *sous-préfet des études*, then an administrator at the collège Sainte-Barbe, near the Panthéon in Paris, about which he published a history in 1900, the *Histoire de Sainte-Barbe, avec aperçu sur l'enseignement secondaire en France de 1860 à 1900 (pour faire suite aux trois volumes de J. Quicherat)*.¹⁰⁶ In 1878, in the specific context of the *Exposition*, Lamarre was particularly noticed for writing a series of guides dealing with exhibiting foreign countries, with the help of special collaborators according to the subject matter. The whole series of twenty volumes has been known as *Les pays étrangers et l'Exposition de 1878*. Among these, Clovis Lamarre requested the help of Léon Pajot, apparently a former pupil of the Ecole des Chartes, and an archivist and palaeographer, to compose a volume about the British participation in the Exhibition.¹⁰⁷

When it came to examining oil paintings, Lamarre and Pajot started with a sort of prologue about the history of British painting to counteract well-entrenched prejudices. They noted mischievously: 'French people go repeating that England has no school of painting; it would be better to say that no Frenchman has written its history.'¹⁰⁸ To them, this history started in 1725 with the work of William Hogarth which neither imitated any great continental painter nor evidenced much interest in the classical heritage, focussing instead on contemporary English society and its

¹⁰⁵ Duranty 1878, pp. 318-319: 'Par-dessus tout culmine l'art anglais, si original, si délicat, si intime et si audacieux dans la vérité, toujours expressif et significatif, plein d'un haut dandysme intellectuel, plein d'une sensibilité raffinée, d'une grâce et d'une tendresse aiguës, tendant souvent la corde à l'excès, enfin pénétré d'un sentiment historique qui lui fait relier les choses modernes aux accents élevés, aux allures fortes du passé, chercher l'alliance du naïf et du noble sur un banc des jardins de Chelsea aussi bien que dans les philosophies sur l'amour et les ruines ; un art de pénétration, d'élégance, de poésie, absolument noué à l'ombilic de la nation ; un art où la mélancolie se joint à l'éclat, et la singularité à la réalité précise, et qui, sans faire de pastiches, a su transfuser la gravité ou la candeur du XVe et du XVIe siècles dans ses duchesses, ses bourgeois, ses marins, ses clergymen et ses babies.'

¹⁰⁶ Emile Chasles, *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Groupe II. Classe 7. Rapport sur l'enseignement secondaire* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1882), p. 170; Otto Lorenz, *Catalogue général de la Librairie française depuis 1840, Tome Dixième* (Paris: Otto Lorenz, 1887), p. 80.

¹⁰⁷ Lamarre and Pajot 1878.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146: 'Les Français vont répétant que l'Angleterre n'a pas d'école de peinture ; il serait mieux de dire qu'un Français n'en a pas écrit l'histoire.'

customs. This characterization prompted French reviewers to compare Hogarth with Cham and Gavarni, since Hogarth was not overall a genuine painter.¹⁰⁹ Then came Joshua Reynolds, vastly influenced by Italian painting but clearly English by his motifs and colour; Gainsborough, remarkable for his ‘inspiration’ both in the arts of portraiture and landscape painting; Lawrence, remarkable but also criticized for his excessive ‘elegance’ and ‘distinction’ and his lack of ‘simplicity’. Unsurprisingly, they expressed an impression of weakness in history painting, but with Hilton and West, balanced by the strong tradition of genre painting inaugurated by Hogarth and taken up by Wilkie.

Entering the 19th century, Lamarre and Pajot swiftly brushed over a succession of landscape painters which honoured British painting, before introducing the Pre-Raphaelites with a dissimulated awkwardness in engaging with the topic. Instead of throwing themselves fully into commenting upon the work of the ephemeral grouping, they rather quoted John Ruskin and Prosper Mérimée at unusual length. When they started perusing the British fine arts galleries per se, both authors took the artists alphabetically, following the catalogue, ‘to make the visit and research easier for readers’, and stopping by the most striking paintings and painters.¹¹⁰ Remarkably, comments about individual British artworks were also often paired with references to French works back in the Luxembourg Museum of contemporary French art which the visitor of the Exposition and reader of the guidebook was expected to be familiar with.

Marius Vachon (1850-1928) was a publicist and an art critic, politically engaged in the left, as demonstrated by over ten years of involvement in the management of the progressive newspaper *La France* as its general secretary.¹¹¹ He also contributed to *Le Temps*, with articles focusing in particular on decorative

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹¹⁰ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 176: ‘nous avons suivi l’ordre du catalogue pour rendre la visite et les recherches plus faciles à nos lecteurs’.

¹¹¹ Charles Lalou, political director of *La France*, ‘Lettre au directeur du *Gaulois*,’ *Le Gaulois*, 17^e année, 2 March 1883, No. 229, p. 1: ‘La France reste et restera ce qu’Emile de Girardin l’a faite, un journal de progrès, de liberté et de démocratie, un journal combattant à outrance l’autoritarisme et la réaction monarchique. La seule modification apportée dans le personnel et le fonctionnement du journal consiste en la suppression de la rédaction en chef. Le secrétariat général de la France reste confié à M. Marius Vachon, notre collaborateur depuis douze ans.’

arts.¹¹² In 1888, he was assigned by the government the preparation of a report on the state of industrial education in France, with comparing it with the situation in Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. As a consequence of this comparative study, Vachon underlined the importance of both local societies promoting industrial arts, and industrial museums.¹¹³ Later on, he became an inspector of professional education and advocated for greater decentralisation and freedom in the provision of industrial and technical education throughout the country.¹¹⁴

Although Vachon was a generation younger than Louis Enault, both art critics shared the same vision of universal exhibitions as battlefields or settings for international competition.¹¹⁵ Commenting on the very late notice of participation of German artists in the art galleries, Vachon described the 1878 Exhibition as an ‘enclosed field, where opponents are going to fight on equal terms, with the wide world for judge, of skilfulness, good taste, science, talent and genius.’¹¹⁶ However, this feeling of competition also came alongside an atmosphere of fraternity between German and French artists, especially as praises were sent towards the artistic status of Paris:

The participation of German artists to the 1878 Universal Exposition is an act of fraternity and deference which we can proud ourselves on... A few days ago, the National Academy of Painting in Berlin nominated unanimously M. Bonnat as an honorary member. France is for them the alma parens. Almost all their current masters are former pupils of our French master.¹¹⁷

¹¹² *Le Figaro*, 16 March 1928, No. 76, p. 2.

¹¹³ ‘Missions artistiques’, *L’Art pour tous*, 27^e année, February 1888, No. 664-5, [p. 1]; ‘Musée artistique, industriel et commercial, de Saint-Etienne’, *L’Art pour tous*, 27^e année, November 1888, No. 682-3, [p. 2].

¹¹⁴ *Le Gaulois*, 17^e année, 29 September 1898, No. 6143, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Vachon 1878.

¹¹⁶ Marius Vachon, ‘Les artistes allemands à l’Exposition universelle’, *Gazette des lettres, des sciences et des arts*, 2^e année, 10-16 March 1878, No 46, pp. 5-6: ‘L’Exposition universelle est un champ clos, où les adversaires vont lutter à armes égales, avec le monde entier pour juge, d’habileté, de bon goût, de science, de talent et de génie.’

¹¹⁷ Vachon March 1878, pp. 5-6: ‘La participation des artistes allemands à l’Exposition universelle de 1878 est un acte de confraternité et de déférence dont nous devons nous féliciter. [...] Il y a quelques jours, l’Académie nationale de peinture de Berlin nommait à l’unanimité membre honoraire M. Bonnat. La France est pour eux l’alma parens. Presque tous leurs maîtres actuels ne sont-ils point des élèves de nos artistes français ?’

Vachon linked British fine arts and British society at large with explaining the diversity of British fine arts as a cultural characteristic which was consubstantial to the English personality. Englishness itself was strikingly recognizable, even in its acknowledged diversity. For Vachon, Englishness had to do with ‘this clear taste for the British soil’ and this specificity was undiminished in nationals involved in colonial or expatriate ventures was a striking feature.¹¹⁸ The publicist was confident about his characterization of the Englishman – ‘He is independent!’¹¹⁹ – and expressed a particular enthusiasm about British art which relied on, and developed, from this independent spirit, this freedom in creativity. He took pleasure in enumerating what truly ‘entertains so strongly and attracts invincibly’ in British people and which translated in visual arts: ‘this character of vivacity, of unforeseen, of racy fantasy, of picturesque and naïve simplicity, this indefinable and singular charm.’¹²⁰

C. French critics in front of British paintings in 1878

As just seen, the French reception of the British fine arts in the 1878 Paris Exposition was grounded on an already significant body of literature, and knowledge and appreciation of British art in the previous decades. International Exhibitions had played a noteworthy role in raising French awareness of British arts, but this had already been developed beforehand, amidst various political and cultural encounters as between neighbours at least from the very beginning of the 19th century. As a result of these repeated contacts, a shared gaze developed about British art, made of astonishment for the handling of colour (Chesneau, About, Jouve) and the general

¹¹⁸ Vachon 1878, p. 2: ‘ce goût de terroir britannique accentué.’

¹¹⁹ Vachon 1878, p. 3: ‘Il est indépendant.’

¹²⁰ Vachon 1878, p. 3: ‘C’est cette indépendance de caractère, cette mobilité d’esprit et de sensations qui donnent à la physionomie des Anglais ce cachet de vivacité, d’imprévu, de fantaisie piquante, de simplicité pittoresque et naïve, ce charme singulier et indéfinissable qui plaisent si fort et attirent invinciblement vers eux. Toutes ces qualités, nous les retrouvons dans leurs œuvres artistiques.’

level of finish (Jouve), fascination for the literary associations (Chesneau), disappointment about the weakness in history painting and compositional skills (Jouve).

It is now time to turn towards the French critical coverage of the display of British paintings in the 1878 Paris Exposition itself. Charles Blanc opens this review as he was among the oldest critics to visit and write about the exhibition. His emphasis on the weakness of the British drawing tied in with broader cultural comments seen above on the distaste of British people for theory and their tendency towards pragmatism. And indeed, Blanc, like other critics directly acknowledged and endorsed general clichés on Britain. Louis Enault was no different in his discussion of the British ability for detailing. Victor Cherbuliez fully subscribed to the theory of climate to explain the specificity of artistic creation, and also emphasized the importance of taste. Tullo Massarani similarly emphasized the significance of the cultural context for artistic characteristics.

Ernest Chesneau's approach might have been the most unsettling because, in his enquiry, the characteristics he discovered in British painting did not match general clichés about British people, whereas he advocated for a painting which engaged with its time. Edmond Duranty suggested a kind of sociological analysis of the British art scene by gathering painters in distinct groups. Browsing the galleries for their practical guidebook, Clovis Lamarre and Léon Pajot offered a 'polyphonic critique' mixing their own and others' opinions. Marius Vachon favoured the good qualities of British paintings and was self-admittedly 'indulgent'. Thanks to their various methodological choices and diverse points of view and approach to British paintings, this selection of critical review offers an interesting ensemble of meaning elaborated as a result of the display of British paintings in the 1878 Exhibition.

Looking at Millais, Watts, Prettie, Oules and Leighton, Charles Blanc pointed out portraits as 'the most prominent pieces of the British display'¹²¹ alongside various groupings of artists, Blanc singled out in particular four specific painters: Millais, Burne-Jones, Herkomer, and Alma-Tadéma. John Everett Millais was the paragon of British landscape painting, with *Over the Hills and Far Away*

¹²¹ Blanc 1878, pp. 335-6: 'les morceaux les plus saillants de l'exposition britanniques sont des portraits'.

(RA, 1876), ‘a piece of such an unexpected truth and at the same time so striking’.¹²² But Millais also provided Blanc with enough evidence to state that ‘the whole English School [...] miss[ed] an essential quality, the science of drawing.’¹²³ Edward Burne-Jones’s *The Beguiling of Merlin* (oil on canvas, 186 x 111 cm, 1872-7, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight; Figure 60) stood out as ‘the most surprising painting coming from London’ containing ‘a quintessence of ideal, a sublimated poesy which reaches the heart’.¹²⁴ Blanc declared Hubert von Herkomer’s *The Last Muster* (oil on canvas, 214.5 x 159 cm, 1875, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight; Figure 61) as ‘the masterpiece of the English School’ because of the combination of individual types it gave an opportunity for.¹²⁵ Alma-Tadema was an obvious draw for Blanc, as he explained that he ‘owed abundant homage and honours to this painter in love, like [him], with Egyptian, Greek and Roman Antiquity’.¹²⁶

To Charles Blanc, ‘enticing colours’ were characteristic of British painting because they were used to camouflage the weakness of painters in ‘the science of drawing’. Incidentally, the character of the colours used by British artists constituted the most powerful clichés about Britain and its culture in general, and it stood at odds in particular with the theory of climates which Blanc had discussed to start his review of fine arts at the *Exposition*. Relying again on historical references, Blanc compared colours used in British paintings to the ones seen in medieval book miniatures. Acknowledging another general French stereotype about British people seen earlier on, Blanc argued that beautiful portraits in the English School were ‘not surprising since England is the country of individualism and originality.’¹²⁷ Considering works by Morris, Morgan, MacWhirter, Aumonier, W. Macbeth and

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 329: ‘morceau d’une vérité si imprévue et en même temps si criante’.

¹²³ *Ibid.*: ‘à l’ensemble de l’Ecole anglaise, [...] il manque une qualité essentielle, la science du dessin.’

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 334-5: ‘A mon sens, la plus étonnante peinture qui nous soit venue de Londres, est celle de Burne Jones, *Merlin et Viviane*. Il y a là une quintessence d’idéal, une poésie sublimée qui m’appréhende au cœur.’

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 336: ‘le chef-d’œuvre de l’Ecole anglaise [...] est un groupe de portraits : je parle des *Invalides de Chelsea*. Non, jamais on ne trouvera, ni dans l’art ni dans la nature, une pareille réunion d’individus’.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 334: ‘nous devons bien des honneurs et bien des hommages à ce peintre amoureux, comme nous, de l’antiquité égyptienne, grecque, et romaine.’

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 335: ‘Qu’il y ait de beaux portraits dans l’école anglaise, cela n’est pas surprenant, puisque l’Angleterre est le pays de l’individualisme et de l’originalité.’

Boughton, he was very pleased that ‘very rarely English people do purely imitative art; their landscapes are almost always expressive’ and valued both the ‘background of sentimentalism in the whole English painting’ and the fact that they were ‘not ashamed of it’ by contrast with the French context.

Louis Enault’s review of the fine arts in the Exposition was organized with following the order of paintings (and sculptures) as they had been arranged on display in the galleries; he browsed works room after room to compile mostly positive appreciations. As a result, Enault’s coverage is not as systematic nor comprehensive as other critics’ reviews and he never grouped artists or artworks together to express the broader points about British painting in general and always limited himself to comments about individual works. Enault’s work is therefore rather impressionistic, especially by contrast with other writers such as Duranty and Chesneau who made a point to completely reorganize displays and artists’ names into their own unique critical narratives.

All in all, Enault stopped by the works of only seventeen artists to collect his thoughts for readers to enjoy (Alma-Tadema, Brett, Butler, Calderon, Cope, Davis, Goodall, Landseer, Leslie, Millais, Orchardson, Pettie, Poynter, Sant, Storey, Wallis, and Watts). There is very little general theory of art in his comments; only when looking at George D. Leslie’s (1835-1921) *Pot-pourri* (oil on canvas, 99 x 99 cm, 1874; Figure 62) did he explain that ‘our [French] national genius [is] made of light, and [...] clarity before anything else’.¹²⁸ However, work after work, a critical pattern emerged, from the first work Enault brought George Augustus Storey’s (1834-1919) *Scandal*, ‘a piquant canvas full of cute details’. to the attention of his readers.¹²⁹ In his eyes, as in his colleagues’, this attention to detail was a double-edged sword: looking at John Brett’s (1831-1902) *Mount’s Bay, Cornwall* (oil on canvas, 116.5 x 214 cm, 1877, Johannesburg Art Gallery;), Enault was impressed by ‘the mountains [...] made stone by stone, and stones dealt with by atom and by molecule’.¹³⁰ However, looking at Millais’s *Chill October* (oil on canvas, 141 x 186.7 cm, 1870,

¹²⁸ Enault 1878, p. 23: ‘notre génie national, fait de lumière, et qui veut avant tout la clarté.’

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22: ‘un tableau piquant plein de jolis détails’.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24: ‘l’amour du détail est poussé jusqu’à ses dernières limites. Les montagnes y sont faites pierre par pierre, et les pierres traitées par atomes et par molécules.’

collection of Sir Andrew Lloyd Weber), he thought that the painter ‘took too much care of the detail’, and consistently, in Brett as in Millais, Enault wished for ‘more breadth overall’ and the artist would see things ‘from further up the ensemble of things.’¹³¹

Although it was rather brief, Enault’s criticism still touched upon different points discussed by other reviewers. A discussion of the merit of the different genres was a must: Alma-Tadema was able ‘to harmonize genre and history’ while Poynter’s *Proserpine* (1868-9) ‘made history painting fall on the level of the genre scene’.¹³² The author’s phrasing explicitly betrays his awareness – and acknowledgement? – of the hierarchy of genres, but he did not hold it against the British painters, arguing that ‘this pretty creature [Poynter’s *Proserpine*] shows an adorable expression.’ And he concluded: ‘this is enough for me. [...] Poynter shows me a charming head; I am content and clears him of the rest.’¹³³

Cherbuliez argued that his contemporaries were far too much concerned with their very own comfort for fine arts to remain on a good level or improve to any better standard of achievement. He blamed altogether the lack of style in architecture, the lack of character in sculpture and the too frequent insignificance of history painting. Cherbuliez finished his reprimand with remembering the living conditions of Periclean Athenians, without even alluding to their artistic achievements which had been a canon for centuries in Europe, in architecture, sculpture and painting. He emphasized comparisons between the great antique forerunners and their unworthy insignificant 19th-century followers. It is worth noticing that this gap in time and, most essentially, in values, between ancient and modern, with this pursuit of material satisfaction and the oblivion of more spiritual and intellectual matters, was, to the author, not specific to one country or another, but

¹³¹ *Ibid.*: ‘on aimerait plus de largeur dans l’ensemble’; ‘p. 31: ‘comme tous les peintres anglais, celui-ci s’occupe trop du détail et ne voit point d’assez haut l’ensemble des choses.’

¹³² Enault 1878, p. 34: ‘Il [Alma-Tadema] marie également le genre à l’histoire’; p. 30: ‘[l’œuvre] fait descendre la peinture d’histoire au niveau du tableau de genre’.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 30: ‘Mais cette jolie créature [...] est d’une adorable expression. C’est assez pour moi [...]. Poynter me montre une tête charmante ; je suis content et le tiens quitte du reste.’

a situation shared by all Europeans, beyond national boundaries and cultural distinctions.¹³⁴

After having noticed that the English exhibition had been the best attended, Cherbuliez did not challenge national divisions whatsoever in the painting galleries and on the contrary explained that great painters needed to blossom ‘a favourable sky, a fortunate climate, some native characteristics, the habit of transforming an idea into an image’, ‘a specific national genius’, a society which is after something else than comfort and wealth, and a society which respects creativity.¹³⁵ In his search for the ‘*œuvres de style*’ Cherbuliez especially singled out Watts and Burne-Jones because they astonished a non-British audience. The reviewer did not really look into much detail in the British displays but rather used some works as an excuse to offer his readers various thoughts on the state of the arts in Britain at the time.

Looking at paintings by James Sant (1820-1916) (*Adversity*) and Ernest Crofts (1847-1911) (*The Morning of the Battle* (oil on canvas, 99.3 x 177.8 cm, 1876, Museums Sheffield); Figure 63), Cherbuliez regretted the lack of individuality in British artists, which was to him the consequence of the authoritative influence of public taste, rather than of the control of the artistic education by the government as it might have been in France. Uniquely, Cherbuliez denied Leslie and Boughton the status of painter, because their works looked like ‘coloured lithographs.’¹³⁶ By contrast, he focused at length on Millais, ‘who really has the temperament of a painter, a very personal way to look at, and interpret, things, much character and resolution’ as illustrated in his *Portrait of the Duke of Westminster* (1878),¹³⁷ and

¹³⁴ Cherbuliez 1878, p. [616].

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 875: ‘C’est quelque chose sans doute que les grandes responsabilités, mais ce n’est pas assez pour produire de grands peintres. Il faut en plus le concours d’un ciel propice et d’un climat heureux, certaines dispositions natives, l’habitude de transformer sa pensée en image, le besoin de la regarder, de la voir, de la traduire par des lignes, par des accords de tons et de couleurs ; il faut aussi un certain génie national, une société qui n’envisage pas la perfection du confort comme la première condition du bonheur et la richesse comme la plus évidente des supériorités, une société qui respecte les droits et les fantaisies du talent, et qui l’autorise à mépriser les conventions, quelquefois même les convenances.’

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 877: ‘[...] MM. Leslie et Boughton ne sont pas des peintres. Leurs tableaux, d’une couleur mince, sans éclat, sans reflets, sans dessous, font l’effet de lithographies coloriées.’

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*: ‘Il y a cependant un artiste anglais, M. Millais, qui a vraiment le tempérament d’un peintre, une façon à lui de voir les choses et de les interpréter, beaucoup de caractère et de résolution.’

Herkomer's *Last Muster* (1875; Figure 61), although Herkomer was 'not an Englishman, [but] a German settled in England.'¹³⁸

To Tullo Massarani, British art did exist, and it was the outcome of a unique combination of diverse cultural elements which made it a very distinctive phenomenon; this 'very marked originality' was indeed the most salient feature of British painting.¹³⁹ To set off the merits of British painting, Massarani associated both 'great sonorities of light' and 'blazing pumps of the cult' with European continental painting. By contrast, if British painting missed these two features, it could rely on a distinctive set of cultural characteristics, such as 'the intensity of public life', 'the strength of character', 'the melancholic and suave poesy of the countryside', 'the ideality deriving from the religious feeling', 'business and politics', 'family's sweet and moralizing intimacies'.¹⁴⁰ Since Massarani argued that contemporary art was mostly grounded in its contemporary cultural environment, he noted in particular the critical significance of John Ruskin's publications in setting the tone for most of the 19th-century's developments in British painting towards a greater attention to nature.

Building on the influence of Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites, Massarani pointed out the obvious interest of British artists in reality. However, to the Italian critic, the level of detailing of most depicted scenes was not detrimental, but on the contrary a sort of stepping stone to reach a poetic – even a universal level of engagement with reality.¹⁴¹ Massarani was in agreement with most critics in praising the quality and pleasant character of British rural paintings. He valued the indeterminacy of some motifs, and the opportunity given to viewers to speculate about the outcome of any given scene. Landscape and seascape paintings were given great attention and Massarani created a connection between this representation of the natural world and the depiction of animals, both genres he saw as parts of the same

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 878: 'Ce peintre n'est pas un Anglais, c'est un Allemand établi en Angleterre.'

¹³⁹ Massarani 1878, tome II, p. 64: 'Que les forces ne manquent guère à la peinture anglaise, c'est ce qu'on voit aussitôt par ce seul fait, que le plus saillant de ses caractères est une originalité bien prononcée, permettant de la discerner à première vue de tout l'art occidental.'

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63: 'les grandes sonorités de la lumière', 'les pompes éclatantes du culte', 'l'intensité de la vie publique', 'la force du caractère', 'la poésie mélancolique et suave de la campagne', 'l'idéalité qui dérive du sentiment religieux', 'les affaires et la politique', 'les intimités douces et moralisatrices de la famille'

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

national character. Representations of society life were also a significant element of the exhibit of British paintings, and Massarani noticed history painting was well developed, relying on different time periods, but the Italian writer regretted that it lacked ‘monumentality’.¹⁴²

Chesneau’s take is a particular one amidst the other reviewers considered here because, in his 1882 study, he did not focus exclusively on the British paintings displayed in the 1878 *Exposition*. On the contrary, he mixed memories of various expositions since 1855 and also references to works completed between 1878 and the publication of the book. Chesneau was interested in a contemporary painting that would engage with its time by depicting its culture, habits and manners, instead of always returning to old styles and fashions in perpetual successive revivals. As a consequence, he favoured broadsheet artists such as Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) and Paul Gavarni (1804-1866).¹⁴³ Painting one’s own time was a matter of ‘unmediated observation’ and ‘sincerity’.¹⁴⁴

Chesneau legitimated genre paintings favouring the observation of public and homely everyday life in Britain: subject matter chosen by painters echoes important realities of British contemporary society such as train station business and horse racing. The respectable aim of the British genre painters can be summarized as follows: ‘making palpable a frame of mind or of spirit’.¹⁴⁵ Chesneau regretted that British genre paintings were often too specific, too localized, and wished they had more general ambitions, a message that could be understood across national borders and cultural values. He recalled old Flemish painters (Rembrandt and Terburg) to enunciate ‘a law of generalization of the art work’:¹⁴⁶ ‘despite of precision in details, the work expresses feelings that are understandable for the spectator’.¹⁴⁷ This law was thought of by Chesneau as ‘the fundamental law of genre painting’.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Massarani 1878, II, pp. 79-81.

¹⁴³ Chesneau 1882, p. 174.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175: ‘observation immédiate’.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 271: ‘rendre sensible un état d’âme ou d’esprit’.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284: ‘cette loi de généralisation de l’œuvre d’art’.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290: ‘en dépit de la précision du détail, l’œuvre exprime bien un sentiment intelligible au spectateur’.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

Chesneau identified distinguishing ‘geniuses’: the Latin genius protecting French painting felt inclined towards abstraction, and the Ideal whereas the genius of the North which prevailed in England pushed creativity towards ‘precise details’ and ‘profusion’, the particular, the individual, the accidental.¹⁴⁹ Distinct local geniuses were made more obvious with different sets of laws, of regulations which French and English art – probably as any other national schools – are meant to follow.¹⁵⁰ Chesneau gives a list of formal characteristics that some – including himself – have been shocked about in their ‘artistic habits’: ‘violent harshness of colours’, ‘lack of balance in compositions’, ‘specific character of its motifs’.¹⁵¹ These characteristics might have been even more striking as they do not seem to match French interpretations of the English national character more generally.

Chesneau briefly wrote about history painting, as this was not a well-represented genre in Britain.¹⁵² In order to make the situation easily understandable for his readership, he used French references to assess the level of achievement and perfection reached by the English history painting: to him, ‘any attempt [...] has not even compared with David’s pupils’ achievements, which at least demonstrated their drawing skills’.¹⁵³ Frederick Leighton especially caught his attention as ‘certainly the noblest representative of the grand style in a country which has never had the sense of it.’¹⁵⁴ For most painters, the lack of ‘heroic inspiration’ was an essential issue.¹⁵⁵

In order to single out the British exhibits, Edmond Duranty also emphasized the originality of the display, ‘the national character’, ‘the clear-cut spirit’, and ‘the very peculiar aspect of its works’.¹⁵⁶ Beyond this general characterization which might sound rather common by comparison with the other critics under scrutiny here, Duranty demonstrated an acute grasp and knowledge of contemporary British art and painters by grouping these artists according to their main interests; he was more

¹⁴⁹ Chesneau 1882, pp. 175-176.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178: ‘violente crudité de son coloris’, ‘défaut d’équilibre en ses compositions’, ‘particularisme de ses motifs’.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 262-270.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 269: ‘souffle héroïque’.

¹⁵⁶ Duranty 1878, p. 298: ‘le caractère national’, ‘l’esprit tranché’, ‘l’aspect tout particulier de ses œuvres’.

interested in the nature of the subject matters than in the technical choices different artists could make to represent their motifs. However, Duranty went beyond Massarani's groupings and suggested what looks like an ensemble of social relations and networks. These connections could either be organized around significant characters or structured by institutional affiliations.

Duranty thus gathered Herkomer, Gregory, Small and Boughton around the 'Kensington School', officially known since 1863 as the National Art Training School before becoming the Royal College of Art in the early 1890s. These artists distinguished themselves by creating an 'independent and innovative art'. They were also associated with the London newspaper *The Graphic* which he saw as a 'curious school of lively studies on truth'.¹⁵⁷ Besides, Duranty distinguished another group of artists associated with the Schools of the Academy, such as Leighton, Poynter and Prinsep. The case of Poynter shows the limits of Duranty's explanation of the artistic life since Poynter had trained according to academic principles, but in 1875, he had been appointed as Director and Principal of the National Art Training School. It is nonetheless true that Poynter consistently advocated in favour of academic principles and that his display in Paris, like *The Catapult* (oil on canvas, 155.5 x 183.8 cm, 1868-72, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Figure 64) or *Israel in Egypt* (oil on canvas, 137 x 317 cm, 1867, Guildhall Art Gallery, London; Figure 65) supported Duranty's analysis and comments on a 'very serious art', or even 'a severe art dedicated to the study of the Antique'.¹⁵⁸

Moving away from these artists who 'miss charm, life and vivacity',¹⁵⁹ Duranty acknowledged the significance of Frederick Walker and George Mason, although they were both deceased by the time of the 1878 *Exposition*. The critic for the *Gazette* took Frederick Walker's *The Old Gate* (oil on canvas, 134.6 x 168.3 cm, 1869, Tate, London; Figure 66) as an iconic example of contemporary British art, thanks to its clear engagement with reality, the representation of 'a spectacle which can be seen every day and which the artist sings with complete sweetness and

¹⁵⁷ Duranty 1878, p. 300: 'curieuse école de vivantes études sur la vérité'.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*: 'le charme, la vie et la vivacité manquent à ces artistes'.

simplicity.’¹⁶⁰ For similar reasons, Duranty ‘liked the Scottish school, the school of seascapes and fishermen’, gathering Hook, Hemy, Hunter, MacCallum, and MacWhirter, because ‘they strongly rely on the earth, they hold reality hand-to-hand, sanely, in a manly way.’¹⁶¹ In relation with wider considerations examined earlier on in this chapter, Duranty thought the ‘national type’ of physiognomy could be clearly distinguished in British painting, and more so than in German painting, for instance, an element which contributed making British art more unique, and thereby more interesting.¹⁶²

In their portable guidebook, Lamarre and Pajot reviewed British artists alphabetically. They kept alternating positive and negative comments, to provide an even-handed review of the exhibits. Also remarkable was what we might call their ‘polyphonic critique’ where they introduced their own points of view, and also reactions from the public they might have had the opportunity to observe in the galleries. For instance, they witnessed the fact that Frederick Barnard’s (1846-1896) *The East of London on a Saturday Night* could ‘hold visitors’ although night effects were well known to spectators especially thanks to newspaper illustrations Barnard himself contributed around these years.¹⁶³ They also noticed that Philip H. Calderon was ‘one of the artists who hold the crowd and deserve the eulogy of the public and the delicates’.¹⁶⁴

Overall, Lamarre and Pajot stated a particular interest in, and specific concerns about, two points in particular: they were indeed, like their fellow art critics, impressed with the level of detailing and precision, notably in terms of historical accuracy; however, they also expressed doubts about the representation of

¹⁶⁰ Duranty 1878, p. 310: ‘un spectacle qu’on voit chaque jour et que l’artiste chante avec une douceur et une simplicité complètes.’

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 302: ‘J’aime les fermes accents de cette école, ses belles eaux brillantes, ses terrains couverts d’herbes sombres, ses rudes pêcheurs qui travaillent, ses maisons de bois, ses barques, ses ciels. Son pinceau n’a pas de tendresse, son âme n’est pas hantée par la rêverie, mais ses adeptes s’appuient fortement sur la terre, ils prennent corps à corps, sainement, virilement, la réalité.’

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 306-7.

¹⁶³ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 158: ‘M. Barnard arrête les visiteurs avec sa *Nuit du samedi dans l’Est de Londres* : une boutique de boucher est splendidement éclairée à gauche ; le mont-de-piété avec ses trois boules surplombe au premier plan. Mais ces effets de nuit sont vulgarisés par la chromolithographie’.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 160: ‘M. Calderon, [...] est un des artistes qui retiennent la foule et méritent l’éloge du grand public et des délicats’.

human figures and the choice of composition. They thus valued Edward Armitage's (1817-1896) *Serf Emancipation: An Anglo Saxon Noble On His Death-Bed Gives Freedom to His Slaves* (oil on canvas, 1877, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) since it belongs to the genre of history painting, 'a rare thing in England' but they objected the 'earthly tints' and the 'characters who seem to be copied after a mannequin'.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, examining Sir John Gilbert's (1817-1897) *Richard II Resigning the Crown to Bolingbroke* (oil on canvas, 1875, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), they 'applaud[ed] the truth to costumes which look like miniatures escaped from a manuscript' but they wished the painter had 'animat[ed] these pallid features and given the appearance of a poet to the one who loved poesy so much.'¹⁶⁶

Ultimately, in front of Edward J. Gregory's (1855-1909) *Dawn* (oil on canvas, 146 x 115 cm, 1876, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro; Figure 67), Lamarre and Pajot seemed to be in complete support of British painting's coloration, judging that Gregory 'could take place among our most able impressionists', and rating his 'perfect science of the colour, an exquisite hand ability', but they also acknowledged that the same time that 'lots of visitors [saw] there some eccentricity or clumsiness'.¹⁶⁷ However, this impression is challenged by the examination of Crofts's *The Morning of the Battle* (1876; Figure 63) whose 'period music instruments, soldiers' liveries' colour were too studied' while 'on [the] soldier's face, nothing gave out the misfortunes of the Russian campaign' and they wondered why Napoleon 'turn[ed] his back to the viewer in the middle ground whereas there was a drummer stretched across the foreground'.¹⁶⁸

Vachon was comparatively and self-admittedly rather 'indulgent' with British art. The only faults or weaknesses he might have been ready to acknowledge, such as

¹⁶⁵ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 158: 'C'est là de la peinture d'histoire, chose rare en Angleterre. Mais pourquoi tous les personnages sont-ils vus de profil ? Pourquoi ces teintes terreuses, ces personnages qui semblent copiés sur un mannequin, non sur un modèle vivant ?'

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 165: 'j'applaudis à la fidélité des costumes qui semblent des miniatures échappées d'un manuscrit ; mais la lecture de Froissart, qui fut le favori du roi déchu, permettait d'animer ces traits blêmes et de donner l'air d'un poète à celui qui aimait tant la poésie.'

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 166: 'il y a là une science parfaite de la couleur, une habileté de main exquise ; cependant bien des visiteurs voient là une excentricité ou une maladresse.'

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162: 'les instruments de musique du temps, la couleur des livrées de soldats sont trop étudiés mais sur la figure des soldats, rien n'indique les malheurs de la campagne de Russie et les adieux de Fontainebleau ; enfin, pourquoi Napoléon nous tourne-t-il le dos au deuxième plan, tandis qu'un tambour étale sa caisse au premier ?'

‘exaggeration’ and ‘eccentricity’, were not crucially detrimental and he promptly found that they were balanced by some ‘indisputable and serious qualities which works reveal.’¹⁶⁹ Vachon bespoke the contemplation of English paintings as an aesthetic experience which unfolds in two stages: the first moment of the sequence involves a feeling of surprise, focusing mostly on the manner, ‘*les procédés*’; the second moment sees this first impression overtaken by the sentimentality which the subject matter is meant to fuel. Vachon had particularly in mind George Henry Boughton’s (1833-1905) *The Bearers of the Burden* (1875), Thomas Sidney Cooper’s (1803-1902) *On a Dairy Farm, Minster Marshes, East Kent* (oil on canvas, 122.4 x 214.3 cm, 1877, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Figure 68), John Everett Millais’s (1829-1896) *Chill October* (1870) and *Over the Hills and Far Away* (1876), Frederick Morgan’s (1856-1927) *Haymakers* (1876), John Dawson Watson’s (1832-1892) *The Gleaner’s Harvest* (1875) and Frederick Walker’s (1840-1875) *The Old Gate* (1869; Figure 66).¹⁷⁰ He valued in their works ‘a deep feeling, poesy, life, in a word, true art’ which was true to the great British masters of landscape painting, Constable, Wilkie, and Turner.¹⁷¹

Vachon did not avoid nor escape the comparison between British and French artists. The feeling of surprise British painting was meant to prompt at first sight in the viewer was a consequence of its noticeable difference from French painting. In his assessment, Vachon looked for the universal appeal of works as the highest possible quality, and therefore damned the British painters, by contrast with their French counterparts, for instance on the subject of landscape painting with reference to Jules Breton and Jean-François Millet: ‘[both] possess a superiority over [British artists], at least if it is to be judged from the canvases on display on the Champ de Mars. Their creations are less particular than those of their British counterparts and

¹⁶⁹ Vachon 1878, p. 3: ‘Il y a bien souvent de l’exagération, de l’excentricité même ; le but est parfois dépassé ; mais on se sent facilement porté à l’indulgence pour ces erreurs et ces défauts, en considération des qualités incontestables et sérieuses que les œuvres révèlent.’

¹⁷⁰ Boughton is a particular figure in this grouping, with his American-English experience. See, for instance, Alice Meynell, ‘An American A.R.A.’, *Magazine of Art*, Vol. 5, January 1882, pp. 397-401 (p. 397): ‘Boughton is in his art distinctively an American under foreign influences. Something of England has, indeed, found its way into his subjects [...]. But in execution he is distinguished by a certain charm and elegance which we are constrained to consider rare amongst ourselves.’

¹⁷¹ Vachon 1878, p. 4: ‘un sentiment profond, de la poésie, de la vie, de l’art véritable, en un mot.’

therefore more truly human and more grandiosely true.’¹⁷² As a consequence of this lack of universal appeal, Vachon refused to place Millet and Breton on a par with Boughton, Fahey, Watson, and Morgan.

However, Vachon does provide an example of these art critics who did not rate all French artists as the best. It is rather that French critics’ assessment used French works as a benchmark against which they tested English artists’ works and skills. Thus, Vachon singled out Frederic Leighton (1830-1896) with his *Music Lesson* (oil on canvas, 104 x 101 cm, 1877, Guildhall Art Gallery, London; Figure 69). Although the British public enjoyed Leighton’s work, Vachon rather thought he exaggerated William Bouguereau (1825-1905): ‘the artist [Leighton] overdoes Bouguereau’s processes, whom he is markedly close to: the same cold and monotonous rightness, without relief or light.’¹⁷³ By contrast, Vachon could not stop praising the extensive display of works by Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912): ‘everyone who has visited Paris Salons knows these superb and attractive compositions, which stand out thanks to their marvellous colouring, faultless drawing, powerful imagination, science, spirit, vigour and feeling’.¹⁷⁴

D. Relations between art and architectural criticism

Ultimately, since the fine arts were exhibited at the core of the palace on the Champ de Mars which also housed the international street alongside one of its internal ranges, visitors could have a mixed experience of the creative output of participating

¹⁷² Vachon 1878, pp. 4-5: ‘Millet et Breton possèdent une supériorité sur [les artistes anglais], tout au moins en ce qui concerne les tableaux exposés au Champ-de-Mars. Leurs créations sont moins particulières que celles de leurs confrères anglais et partant plus véritablement humaines et plus grandiosement vraies.’

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 6: ‘L’artiste exagère les procédés de Bouguereau, dont il se rapproche sensiblement : la même correction froide et monotone, sans relief ni lumière.’

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7: ‘Tous ceux qui ont visité les salons parisiens connaissent ces compositions superbes et attrayantes, qui se distinguent par un coloris merveilleux, un dessin irréprochable, une imagination puissante, de la science, de l’esprit, de la verve et du sentiment, le tout formant une manière pleine de saveur et d’originalité qui satisfait les délicats les plus exigeants.’

countries. As a logical consequence of this situation, the critical coverage of the *Exposition* did not limit itself to fine arts but also extended to architecture, and this gives an opportunity to examine the way French criticism on British fine arts related with the French analysis on British architecture. This chapter is nonetheless shorter than the previous one as not all eight critics under scrutiny dealt with architecture: Louis Enault only browsed the fine arts galleries, commenting on both painting and sculpture, but not reporting further on the international street; similarly, Victor Cherbuliez kept to the fine arts galleries with reviewing exclusively painting. Chesneau also was only interested in British painting in the source used above to appreciate his critical approach. Besides, the intention here is not to repeat what is said about Charles Blanc's criticism of the British façades which are discussed thoroughly in a distinct chapter.

However, Charles Blanc is a key source to throw light on this question of the relations between fine arts and architectural criticism, since his volume actually started with a chapter about the architecture developed within the limits of the *Exposition*. As with his review of the fine arts, Blanc dealt with architecture in historical terms, taking a long view on the history of architecture to throw further light on the display and support his point on the matter, which was that Britons have never been capable of developing a national architecture: 'all buildings which, in England, are public and affect the monumental character, have been erected along templates coming from the outside, and more or less altered by the taste of the land.'¹⁷⁵ Blanc however conceded that English people owned one innovation, the Tudor style, but this was immediately to describe it as a 'style of decadence, where the rib vault caves in on itself, and which the ogee arch and the basket-handled arch distinguish.'¹⁷⁶

Blanc analysed in rather great depth the different components of several of the British façades on the international street. In doing so, it feels as if Blanc had

¹⁷⁵ Blanc 1878, p. 44: 'Tous les édifices qui, en Angleterre, sont publics et qui affectent le caractère monumental, ont été élevés sur des modèles venus du dehors, et plus ou moins altérés par le goût du terroir.'

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45: 'la seule innovation qui appartienne en propre aux Anglais, dans l'art de bâtir, est le style *Tudor*, style de décadence, où l'ogive s'affaisse sur elle-même, et que distinguent l'art en accolade et l'arc en anse de panier.'

developed in front of these structures the same sort of impression as in front of the British paintings: too much detail, too much refinement in the various elements; simultaneously, on a general level, a lack of design and interest in the overall composition. This is particularly clear in the evocation of the façade erected with the Doulton ceramic, where the critic did not make any mention of the technical aspects of the structure:

Surfaces, of a hybrid gothic style, that is to say of a Tudor style, mixed with Renaissance, are divided up by the lines and the differences of materials, broken by alternations of colours, split up by applications, in a small scale, of enamels and earthenware; small columns are divided by rings; sculpture is chiselled in minute detail; the terracotta is thoroughly rummaged; finally windows are sashes, and roses are placed under the rib arch.¹⁷⁷

This aestheticism also was evident in the William and Mary façade by Collinson & Lock, where Blanc disapproved the proportions.¹⁷⁸ Interestingly, and, rather intriguingly, as this was the first of the group from the main vestibule of the palace, Blanc completely overlooked the Queen Anne elevation erected with the Lascelles patent. Although it probably satisfied the French critic aesthetically thanks to its classical features and balanced proportions reminiscent of continental architecture, this very foreign influence would have also provided immediate evidence for his point about the impossibility for British people to create any original monumental architecture.

Tullo Massarani, in his two volumes on *L'Art à Paris*, provided a good ground to analyse the relations between the art criticism about the fine arts displays and the critical reception of the British architecture within the Exhibition. The Italian juror was impressed by the functional achievements of exhibitions throughout the decades but his main interest laid in the aesthetic dimension of architecture: 'what

¹⁷⁷ Blanc 1878, pp. 45-46: 'Les surfaces, d'un style gothique bâtard, c'est-à-dire du style Tudor, mêlé de Renaissance, sont morcelées par les lignes et par la différence des matériaux, rompues par des alternances de couleur, fractionnées par des applications, en petit, d'émaux et de faïences ; les colonnettes y sont divisées par des anneaux ; la sculpture y est ciselée dans le menu ; la matière céramique y est refouillée ; enfin les fenêtres sont à guillotine, et des rosaces sont inscrites sous l'ogive.'

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

does the artist think about it? Here is our business, here is our problem [...] it is first our duty to wonder: does our time have a style of its own? Can it have one? And what style should that be?’¹⁷⁹ To address the architectural exhibits on the international street and on the exhibition grounds, Massarani also questioned the relationship between contemporary arts and classical tradition. Taking Charles Garnier’s writings and achievement at the Opéra as supporting evidence, the Massarani argued that there was still room for original and innovative architecture on the basis of classical models, and deemed ‘metallic architecture’ as not a genuine one.¹⁸⁰ Along the same lines, he lamented the disappearance of the ‘architect artist’ squeezed between the ‘archaeologist’, too much reliant on original sources and therefore not creative enough, and the engineer, too preoccupied with technical considerations.

Using a traditional linguistic metaphor, Massarani argued contemporary architecture could still be creative and original by building on the classical heritage with using historical references as a repertoire of motifs: ‘I do believe that with the elements of an architectural style, as with the words of a language, one can very well say and do something new’.¹⁸¹ Massarani was also very much a man of his time when he discussed the qualities of the various types of architecture accumulated throughout the exhibition. He thus based his analysis on the idea that buildings reflect the character and tastes of their builders and inhabitants. For instance, large bay windows and corner towers were meant to be a consequence of the British nobility’s taste for, and interest in, the countryside and nature. Surveying the British façades, Massarani noticed that the general shapes of buildings, their plan and the distribution of rooms, the use of materials and ornaments played an important role in giving architecture its local flavour and making it representative of its local circumstances. Of particular interest to the Italian critic was the fact that elaborate detailing of architectural and decorative ornamentation in Britain was not only the

¹⁷⁹ Massarani 1878, tome I, pp. 67-68: ‘qu’est-ce que l’artiste en pense ? Voilà notre affaire à nous, voilà notre problème. [...] on est tout d’abord en devoir de se demander : Est-ce que notre époque a un style à elle ? Peut-elle l’avoir ? Et quel style devrait être le sien ?’

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-88.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 113: ‘Je crois, quant à moi, qu’avec les éléments d’un style d’architecture, de même qu’avec les mots d’une langue, on peut très bien dire et faire du nouveau’.

preserve of noble individuals but also a practice promoted by groups and collectives as patrons such as Doulton and Company.

Marius Vachon published his volume to focus exclusively on foreign painting in the Exhibition. As a consequence of this intention, there is no explicit mention of architecture at any point in the review of the British painting galleries. From some general statements of the British identity, one reader might have been able to draw parallels between English fine arts and architecture. In life in general, to Vachon, the Englishman was strikingly indifferent to prejudices, habits and fashion: ‘The Englishman is no slave of prejudice, habit does never enchain them, and fashion, which is everywhere else so whimsical and tyrannical, bends to all their fantasies, even the most bizarre.’¹⁸² As it served Vachon to situate his review of British paintings, this comment also echoes the general impressions of French people about British people mentioned in the first part of this chapter.

Lamarre et Pajot provided a rather detailed description of the British façades on the international street and their comments, like for the paintings earlier on, did tend to balance positive points and reservations in equal measure. For instance, looking at the first structure in the Queen Anne style, they valued the ‘elegant style’ but regretted the ‘sad aspect’ of the elevation.¹⁸³ The same situation arises in front of the pavilion for the Prince of Wales in the Elizabethan style which they enjoyed for its combination of red bricks and Bath stone, because it looked a bit like the Place des Vosges, but the ‘bizarrely’ cut gables attracted less enthusiasm, possibly because it was seen as a Dutch import.¹⁸⁴

In the same way as they pointed out names of French artists whose works were visible at the Luxembourg Museum of living artists for comparisons and contrasts, Lamarre and Pajot also noted similarities with elements of French

¹⁸² Vachon 1878, pp. 2-3: ‘L’Anglais n’est point l’esclave du préjugé, l’habitude ne l’enchaîne jamais, et la mode, qui est partout ailleurs si capricieuse et si tyrannique, se plie à toutes ses fantaisies même les plus étranges.’

¹⁸³ Lamarre and Pajot 1878, p. 144: ‘on trouve d’abord une maison en briques rouges du temps de la reine Anne ; le style est élégant, mais l’aspect en est triste.’

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 144: ‘Puis s’élève le pavillon du prince de Galles, qui nous reporte au temps d’Elizabeth ; les trumeaux sont de briques rouges encadrées de pierre de Bath ; c’est un peu l’aspect de notre place Royale. Mais la crête du mur est bordée de pignons aux formes bizarres, comme on en voit à Gand en Belgique ou en Allemagne à Greifswald : c’est là une importation d’architectes flamands. Ce pavillon est carré comme la Tour de Londres.’

civilisation when they examined the British façades. They compared for example the fourth façade erected by Cubitt & Co. following a design with a dark timber frame and plaster prepared by the Royal Commission's architect with the traditional houses one could find in the Brittany town of Morlaix.¹⁸⁵ This was followed by an overall description of the interiors of every structure to complement the reader's knowledge on what was to be seen on display, without any particular theoretical elaboration or argument in one way or another.

Duranty had a particular approach to architecture. Essentially, the critic for the *Gazette des Beaux-arts* was not, and was not meant to be, interested in architecture since his dispatches focused on the galleries of foreign paintings. Nonetheless, Duranty included a comment on the British façades in the international street, not for their architectural merits but for the decorative arts they housed. Precisely, the fine arts critic mentioned the last house of the British ensemble, the fifth house built by Collinson & Lock, of Fleet Street, London, after designs by T. E. Colcutt in the Old English style with white timber-framed and plastered outdoor aspect. Giving additional strength to his interpretation of, and explanation for, the colorations one could find in British painting was the reason for this incursion in the realm of architecture and decorative arts.

In his review of British paintings, Duranty summarized 'the acidic singularity of colorations', as if works were painted with pigments bound in vinegar, with a 'theme of English colorations': 'a yellow and red tonality, slightly sour, which red stirs up, grey tones down, and cherry-red and purplish nuances make iridescent'.¹⁸⁶ This theme was a long-term element in British painting which Duranty had identified

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-4: 'au lieu de copier quelque château anglo-normand, comme Douvres ou Norwich, on a reproduit une maison du vieux Londres. Dessinée par M. Gilbert Redgrave, architecte de la Commission Royale, elle a été construite par MM. Cubitt et Cie. Elle est faite de poteaux de charpente que relie d'autres pièces de bois ; les murs offrent ainsi l'aspect d'un dessin quadrillé ou d'arêtes de poisson (opus spicatum) ; les intervalles ont été hourdés et enduits de maçonnerie. Le plan général est celui d'une croix grecque : l'une des branches forme pignon sur la rue. Dans les aisselles, on a placé deux autres pignons en retrait ; le premier étage, supporté par des poteaux, avance en encorbellement sur le rez-de-chaussée. Ceux de nos lecteurs qui ont visité le vieux Morlaix (Finistère) et ont admiré ses maisons de bois, seront frappés de leur ressemblance avec ce *cottage* anglais. Ce bâtiment ne vient que le quatrième dans la façade anglaise, qui a 164 mètres de long.'

¹⁸⁶ Duranty 1878, p. 303: 'Une tonalité jaune et rousse, légèrement aigre, qu'avive du rouge, que du gris atténue, et qu'irisent des nuances vineuses et violacées, tel est le thème principal des colorations anglaises.'

before being aware of the 1878 display because it had to do with the relations of British art with Dutch painting. Furthermore, this ‘theme’ was a consequence of the physical environment of British art, which relates to the 19th-century commentaries collected in the first part of this chapter. Duranty referenced both natural phenomena – ‘the great misty clouds pierced by the sun, the meadows, the silt-laden waters’ – and cultural details – ‘brick buildings, Protestant wood panelling’ – as direct sources for this colour ‘theme’.¹⁸⁷

To support his interpretation of ‘British colorations’, Duranty listed specific artists and works he thought were the most convincing, either representing natural settings like Vicat Cole’s *Autumn Gold* (1871), George Henry Boughton’s *Snow in Spring* (1875), and Millais’s *Over the Hills and Far Away* (1876), or elements of civilization like Frederick Walker’s *The Old Gate* (1869; Figure 66), Millais’s *A Yeoman of the Guard* (oil on canvas, 139.7 x 111.8 cm, 1876, Tate, London; Figure 70) and George H. Mason’s *Even-Song*. The analysis of this ‘theme of English colorations’ reached its climax with the reference to the chromatic palette used for the parlour of the last façade, ‘winy, with curtains showing red flowers borrowed from Turkey, and with a yellow wall covering Persian-Japanese, an officially characteristic sample of British commodities which Duranty’s readers could experience for themselves rather handily during the time of the Exposition.’¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: ‘Ce thème est venu de la peinture hollandaise, il est aussi dans le goût national et dans le pays même. Les constructions en briques, les boiseries protestantes, les grandes nuées brumeuses et fumeuses transpercées de soleil, les prairies, les eaux limoneuses le donnent tout préparé.’

¹⁸⁸ Duranty 1878, p. 303: ‘Si nous entrons dans la maison décorée par MM. Collinson et Lock, nous le retrouverons en voyant que le parloir y est rouge-vineux, avec des rideaux à fleurs rousses empruntées à la Turquie, et avec une tenture jaune persano-japonaise ; ailleurs, le mobilier composé par M. Whistler sera jaune et roux ; les meubles de la jolie chambre exposée par Mlles Garrett seront recouverts en étoffe jaunâtre.’

E. Conclusion

Cherbuliez found an optimistic note in the fact that state patronage had been long trying to encourage values and ideals over commodities and interest for the financially comfortable. However, he was dismissive when it came to consider the actual outcome of state patronage: he regretted an overall ‘cold and sad painting’ in the official or governmental art.¹⁸⁹ In a speech at the Royal Academy on 4 May 1878, Earl Beaconsfield (Disraeli) regretted that the British government did not get more involved in supporting the arts, though he also admitted his doubts on the relevance or the efficiency of political decisions in this field of activity. He blamed caricaturists and commentators for always commentating on official decisions negatively or unfairly, either in order to take action, or not to do so. Thus, we can even find an example for this argument in the material under scrutiny: as late as the early 1880s Chesneau thought that ‘artists from Great Britain only care about the British public’, and that ‘their works rarely leave their island’.¹⁹⁰ This contradicted the declared aims of several stakeholders involved in the preparation of the British display of paintings for the 1878 Exhibition – as obvious when examining correspondence between the Prince of Wales and the RA.

In bringing together French critical material directly produced as a result of the fine arts displays in the 1878 Exhibition and contemporary commentaries about political, social, and economic issues, this chapter is able to establish that art criticism offers a specialised version of more general opinions about the characteristics of the other country. In only artistic terms, there was no doubting about the specificity of the British painting as seen in the eyes of contemporary commentators, regardless of their personal interests and method to approach the displays. Characteristics of colour, composition and drawing contributed to the originality of the individual pictures, while the individualities seemed to particularly stand out, set off by the conception of a more liberal and market-oriented society and art world.

¹⁸⁹ Cherbuliez 1878, p. 617.

¹⁹⁰ Chesneau 1882, p. 284: ‘les artistes de la Grande-Bretagne n’ont souci que du public de la Grande-Bretagne’.

On its own terms, this body of critical material also reveals the relative uniformity of the reporting on the displays. Although writers dealt with the exhibit at shorter or greater length, they either acknowledged, and followed the spatial arrangement of the picture hanging, or decided to rearrange the works in a way more suited to the purpose of their article. This chapter also drew connections with chapter 2 in comparing the criticism about paintings and about the British façades in the international street. Although not all critics did report on both displays, the ones who did seemed to be able to align both architecture and visual arts within a single consistent narrative, for instance in terms of harmony of the design and the detailing, and character of the colour scheme, in focusing particularly on the interior fittings.

Conclusion

Understanding the exhibits in the 1878 Paris *Exposition* through readings of the contemporary press, reconstructing the built environment – both represented and actual –, preparing the British fine arts display, and reacting to British painting in the fine arts galleries: these are the various art historical and architectural narratives that help investigate the conflicting claims of nationalism; the late nineteenth-century tensions between tradition and modernity; and the disparities between the intentions of the organisers and the perceptions of the visitors. These may be narrow case studies *in sui generis*, but they provide diverse ways to come nearer to the phenomenon of Universal Exhibitions and the various stakeholders they involved, thereby enabling the ‘repopulation’ of our understanding of the event. These narratives unfold and reveal the power relations and the intersecting, overlapping, and divergent agencies that are interested in directing their eyes and those of others in different directions: institutions, artists, Exhibition organizers, journalists, critics, and visitors.

Although the illustrated journalistic approach to the Exposition is in no way a reflection of the behaviour and experience of all and every visitor to the event, it may nonetheless provide some clues as to the actuality of visitors’ engagement with the displays and the messages these exhibits aimed to convey. The material published in the *Graphic* is especially interesting in the context of this thesis, and in relation to the history and historiography of Exhibitions, in the way it seems to both acknowledge and challenge the official promotion supervised by the organizers of the event. The delineation of the perimeter of the Exhibition is a physical presence that visitors might have felt directly in an urban environment, where limitations and controls were usually physically visible and experienced at the tolls located on the outskirts of the city. While it greatly contributed to this urban environment, the *Exposition* in its lifetime also strongly expressed the distinct character and personality of the particular space it created to whoever approached it, even before entering its confines.

In combining text and image, both illustrated series build their content around ideas of space, performance and authenticity. Pairing the two series makes clear the way in which the newspaper attempted to direct its readers' eyes along two diverging paths of distance discovery and enquiry into the particular environment of the Exhibition: the first one was more descriptive and objective, the second one was more narrative and subjective, and used the first ensemble of reports as a backdrop to set off its witty and critical take on the event. These reports clearly reveal the tensions between tradition and modernity that marked the *Exposition*, not only giving a neutral account that relayed the claims of modernity, innovation and progress the Exposition officially intended to convey, but also laying open to scrutiny and criticism the weaknesses and deceptions on which these claims were, to a greater or lesser extent, grounded.

The interest in the representation of the built environment and the power relations between various institutions and individuals involved in the creation of the British displays combined together in the specific study of the British façades for the International Street designed and erected at the heart of the 1878 *Exposition*. We were able to track the different moments of this relation between British and French commissioners as the original design was taken home and adapted to the specific circumstances of the British participation. As a result, issues of architecture as national representation and architectural style as national indicator were central to this discussion.

The way in which the original project of a single national façade became an ensemble of several façades makes this scheme particularly fascinating. In doing so, the British stakeholders made more complex the content of the message that could be conveyed through this particular device, directing the critical and public reception in various directions, as issues of taste, technology and professional success became entangled in the multiple symbolic and physical layers of the final display. As a result of this layering of meanings and messages, visitors were given the opportunity to engage with the presentation at different levels, in diverse terms, and to varied ends. Most strikingly, these façades embodied the tensions between tradition – in their style – and modernity – in their structural features.

The participation of the Royal Academy of Arts in the 1878 Paris *Exposition* sheds an interesting light on the life and status of the institution in the British art world in relation to an event usually seen as mundane or secondary. The organisation seemed outpaced and irrelevant to national artists and even to its very own members in a project intended to promote their works overseas in the key locations of the international art market. Although the RA could have gained from the situation to lead the preparation of the British participation by virtue of its royal patronage, and frame the national display in terms of its own intentions and ambitions, it missed the chance to adopt a clear and unambiguous position. Even though it was clear about its aims, promoting and raising the profile of the British fine arts abroad, with the organizers of the Exhibition on one side and with the native artists on the other, it was unable to define these power relationships to its own advantage. The result, on the contrary, was the affirmation of its peripheral and marginalized position in a fast-changing cultural environment.

Beyond these questions of institutional and individual ambitions, the situation of the RA and its involvement in the organisation of the British entries also emphasises the fact that Exhibitions and their content did not happen in isolation. Foreign authorities had to acknowledge the local circumstances of the national art scene and the conditions of the host country in terms of culture, knowledge and expectations. This combination of concurrent and often competing factors made the creation of a unified message even more difficult, and was exacerbated by the RA's apparent indifference to the particular context and demands of the Exhibition.

Moving on from this periphery, the thesis then continues with a case study not dealing anymore with the institutional preparations for the *Exposition*. By contrast, it focuses on a specific painting belonging to the British display, and the way contemporary audiences could react to, and make sense of, its content, especially of an architectural nature. William Powell Frith's *The Railway Station* is interesting in the way it gives a prominent place to the architectural setting of its scene. The originality of the point of view and of its framing allows for a spectacular, almost overwhelming, representation of the built environment of Paddington Station. The critical reception of the painting in the early 1860s mostly concentrated on the

figures in the scene and the narrative content it contained. The thoroughly modern train shed itself found no resonance in most writing on the work.

The crucial role of railway stations in helping with the ‘habituation’ of contemporaries to the phenomenon of modern transit might explain this comparative critical indifference. They were the place where the routine of travel was created, perpetuated, and regulated thanks to standard procedures. This mundanity might be important enough to explain the relative indifference to the structure of the shed protecting the groupings of travellers on the depicted platform of Paddington Station. Nonetheless, also by comparison and by contrast with a larger body of visual evidence, the painting may precisely draw its significance from the fact that it epitomises both the assimilation of a comparatively new contemporary building type within a broader visual culture and the insertion of a modern technology into everyday life. It bears witness to the change of perception of the railway journey from a dangerous and life-threatening undertaking to an essential commodity of modern life.

The analysis of a large body of criticism produced in France in reaction to the displays of British paintings in 1878 and also in previous Exhibitions provides some interesting conclusions. Overall, it is fair to say that French writers were hardly complacent and they did not spare their critical abilities when they approached works produced by British artists. The particularity of colours, composition, and drawing were unsurprisingly commented upon, and seen in the eyes of French writers as essential in the creation of a British national identity. The critics did not wait for, nor did they have to rely upon, the national classification imposed upon objects – including artworks – in the Exhibitions, to interpret British artworks as distinctively different from continental – especially French – art and ground their analysis in a nationalistic narrative.

This response of professional writers might not offer, however, a fair and comprehensive representation of the perception of British arts by lay visitors to the Exhibition. It might nonetheless draw our attention to the fact that, if the organizers had been able to arrange a consistent display and associated message to direct the gaze of the public – and Chapter 1 partly demonstrated that this was rather unlikely – this arrangement would have had to challenge the preconceived ideas of the members

of this audience. The diversity of points of view and critical comments gathered in that chapter indicates a good awareness of British artistic life from the other side of the Channel, and explains why the writers would not necessarily respond to the official message and replicate the agenda suggested by the organisers of the display. A brief survey of the general attitudes to Britain in France also seems to reveal that the art criticism echoes, if it indeed does not rely closely upon, the broader cultural stereotypes and prejudices in circulation in the years and the decades immediately before the event.

One of the fascinating dimensions of these case studies is how their content relates to broader contemporary narratives of art history and museum studies. The difficulties of positioning itself experienced by the RA, its members and British artists at large in relation to the opportunity offered by the showcase of the Paris exhibition is a challenge that can still be experienced nowadays, for instance in contemporary world exhibitions, art fairs, and curated shows in general. The ambiguous reception of Frith's painting points to the elusive nature of the interaction between an artwork and its public, while the analysis of the French criticism of British painting confirms the importance of the short- and long-term cultural context of the reception. The complex history of the elaboration of the British façades reminds us of the complexity of the issues surrounding architecture and the built environment at large, in the way they blend very dissimilar and nonetheless interacting areas of knowledge, which have an impact both physically and symbolically. Ultimately, as the newspaper series seem to open the door on the actual experience of the Exhibition, it also urgently underlines the elusive character of the audience.

The material gathered in this thesis demonstrates that power indeed does not rest in any single place, and does not radiate over its surroundings from a unique source. Keeping in mind the work of the various authors mentioned in the introduction, it appears that the Exhibitions and their displays gave numerous examples of power as touchstones between different agents. They prompted shifting situations of power relations, where one controlling organizer was in turn stripped of this power by other stakeholders who challenged the predetermined positions. These

moves and changes of roles and responsibilities took place before, during, and after the event.

As this thesis confirms an exhibition, like a text, is open to many readings. When, as in the case of the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition, the exhibition is driven by national ambition and an insistence on technological progress, then the multiple responses of the critics and audience are particularly rich in their diversity. As this thesis confirms, an exhibition, 'is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entered into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation'.¹ On the basis of the chosen case studies, *Directing the Eye* hopefully illuminates this proposition in the context of the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition.

¹ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text: essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 142-8 (p. 148).

Bibliography & Sources

- About, Edmond, *Voyage à travers l'Exposition des Beaux-Arts (Peinture et Sculpture)* (Paris: Hachette, 1855)
- Alford, C. Fred, 'What Would It Matter If Everything Foucault Said about Prison Were Wrong? Discipline and Punish after Twenty Years', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29, No. 1, February 2000, pp. 125-46
- 'The Algerian Court', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 448, Saturday 29 June 1878, p. 634
- 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 453, Saturday 3 August 1878, p. 122
- 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 454, Saturday 10 August 1878, p. 147
- 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 455, Saturday 17 August 1878, pp. 155-8
- 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 456, Saturday 24 August 1878, pp. 202-3
- 'All the World at Paris', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVIII, No. 459, Saturday 14 September 1878, p. 270
- Altick, Richard D., *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957)
- Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1875* (London: William Clowes, 1878)
- Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1877* (London: William Clowes, 1878)
- Annual Report for the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1878* (London: William Clowes, 1879)
- Anonymous, *La Belle Europe. Le temps des expositions universelles, 1851-1913* (Brussels: Tempora, 2001)
- Arch. nat., F¹² 3265, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Exploitation, Service de la presse : coupure de journaux
- Arch. nat., F¹² 3294/27, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat général, Direction de la presse
- Arch. nat., F¹² 3302, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Commissariat Général, Administration, Lois et Décrets d'organisation de l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1878, No. 1
- Arch. nat., F¹² 3491, Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris, Divers, Sections étrangères, Direction, organisation

- Archer, Professor, 'The Lambeth Potteries', *The Art Journal*, March 1874, pp. 66-67
- Arnold, Dana, ed., *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004)
- 'Art. IV.-- 1. Complément de L'Œuvre de 1830, Etablissement, dans les Pays Transatlantiques. Avenir du Commerce et de l'Industrie Belge. Bruxelles, 1860', *Quarterly Review*, Vol. 112, No. 224, October 1862, pp. 379-410
- Atterbury, Paul, and Louise Irvine, *The Doulton Story* (Stoke-on-Trent: Royal Doulton Tableware, 1979)
- Aubryet, Xavier, *Chez nous et chez nos voisins* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878)
- Aynsley, Jeremy, and Charlotte Grant, eds, *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London: V&A Publications, 2006)
- Bacha, Myriam, dir., *Les Expositions universelles de Paris de 1855 à 1937* (Paris: Action artistique de la Ville de Paris, 2005)
- Bailey, Peter, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Barlow, Paul, and Colin Trodd, eds, *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000)
- Barth, Volker, 'The Micro-History of a World Event: Intention, Perception and Imagination at the Exposition Universelle de 1867', *Museum and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1, March 2008, pp. 22-37
- Barthes, Roland, *Image Music Text: essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath* (London: Fontana Press, 1977)
- Benedict, Burton, ed., *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915* (London and Berkeley: Scolar Press, 1983)
- Bennett, Tony, 'The Exhibitionary Complex', *New Formations*, No. 4, Spring 1988, pp. 73-102
- Bennett, Tony, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- Bennett, Tony, *Pasts Beyond Memory* (London: Routledge, 2004)
- Berger, Georges, *Fondation d'un palais des arts...* (Paris: impr. de J. Claye, 1876)
- Berger, Georges, *L'École française de peinture, depuis ses origines jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*, leçons professées à l'École nationale des beaux-arts (1876-1877) (Paris: Hachette, 1879)
- Berthelot, André, dir., *La Grande Encyclopédie : inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts* (Paris: Lamirault, 1885-1902)
- Bills, Mark, and Vivien Knight, eds, *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006)

- Bitard, Adolphe, *L'Exposition de Paris (1878) rédigée par A. Bitard, avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux. Journal hebdomadaire* (Paris: Librairie illustrée and Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878)
- Bitard, Adolphe, *L'Exposition de Paris (1878) rédigée par A. Bitard, avec la collaboration d'écrivains spéciaux. Journal hebdomadaire* (Paris: Librairie illustrée and Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878)
- Black, Jeremy, *Eighteenth-Century Britain: 1688-1783* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)
- Blackburn, Henry, *An Illustrated Catalogue of Painting and Sculpture in the British Fine Art Section* (Paris and London: Galignani & Co. and Chatto & Windus, 1878)
- Blanc, Charles, 'Exposition universelle. Architecture. III. La rue des Nations', *Le Temps*, 20 juin 1878, Dix-huitième année, No. 6270, n.p.
- Blanc, Charles, *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: Renouard, 1878)
- Blanc, Louis, *Histoire de dix ans : 1830-1840* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1877)
- Bloch, Charles, *Les Relations entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne (1871-1878)* (Paris: Les éditions internationales, 1955)
- Boisseau, Tracey Jean, 'Once Again in Chicago: Revisioning Women as Workers at the Chicago Woman's World's Fairs of 1925-1928', *Women's History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2, April 2009, pp. 265-91
- Brettell, Richard R., *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Briggs, Asa, *The Power of Steam: An Illustrated History of the World's Steam Age* (London: Michael Joseph, 1982)
- Briggs, Asa, and Patricia Clavin, *Modern Europe 1789-1989* (London and New York: Longman, 1997)
- Brindle, Steven, *Paddington Station: Its History and Architecture* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004)
- 'The British Houses on the International Façade', *The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 4, 15 March 1878, p. 73
- Burlet, Lucien, *L'avenir de la Troisième République* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878)
- Candidus, 'A Codicil to "A Chapter about boutiques, &c."', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol. 23, No. 135, March 1841, pp. 328-339
- Carter, Ian, 'Rain, Steam and What?', *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1997, pp. 3-12
- Carter, Ian, *Railways and Culture in Britain: The Epitome of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)

- Casteras, Susan P., and Colleen Denney, eds, *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996)
- Certeau, Michel (de), *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)
- Chambrier, James (de), *La Cour et la société du Second Empire. Deuxième série* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1904)
- Chasles, Emile, *Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris. Groupe II. Classe 7. Rapport sur l'enseignement secondaire* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1882)
- Chasles, Philarète, *Voyages d'un critique à travers la vie et les livres : l'Angleterre littéraire* (Paris: Charpentier, 1876)
- Cherbuliez, Victor, 'La peinture à l'Exposition universelle', *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVIII, 3^e pér., XVIII^e année, livraison du 1 août 1878, pp. 616-634; Vol. XXVIII, 3^e pér., XVIII^e année, livraison du 15 août 1878, pp. 858-882
- Cherbuliez, Victor, *Etudes de littérature et d'art* (Paris: Hachette, 1873)
- Chesneau, Ernest, 'La correspondance illustrée', *La Correspondance Illustrée*, July 1870, Numéro spécimen, p. 1
- Chesneau, Ernest, *L'art et les artistes modernes en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Didier, 1864)
- Chesneau, Ernest, *La peinture anglaise* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1882)
- Chesneau, Ernest, *Les nations rivales dans l'art* (Paris: Didier, 1868)
- 'Chester Training College (From the Chester Courant)', *The Christian Remembrancer*, Vol. 4, No. 22, October 1842, pp. 448-454
- Coll., *Paris et ses expositions universelles : architectures, 1855-1937* (Paris: Editions du Patrimoine, 2008)
- Colvin, Sidney, 'Painting at the International Exhibition', *The Dark Blue*, Vol. 1, No. 5, July 1871, pp. 611-9
- 'Concrete Building Patents', *The British Architect*, 3 August 1906, p.78
- 'Concrete Slab Cottages', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1697, Saturday 14 August 1875, p. 731
- 'Contrasts', *The Illustrated Review: a fortnightly journal of literature, science and art*, Vol. 5, No. 74, May 1873, pp. 549-52
- 'Contribution to the International Exhibition, Philadelphia', *The Art Journal*, October 1876, pp. 309-16
- Corbett, David Peters, and Lara Perry, eds, *English Art 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Cowling, Mary, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

- Craik, George Lillie, *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, illustrated by Anecdotes* (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1881)
- Crary, Jonathan, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1999)
- Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1992)
- Craven, 'The Racing in April', *New Sporting Magazine*, May 1849, pp. 305-18
- Crespon-Halotier, Béatrice, *Les peintres britanniques dans les salons parisiens des origines à 1939 : répertoire* (Dijon: Echelle de Jacob, 2003)
- Cross, Sophia, 'The Country House is Just Like a Flag', in *Cultural Identities and the Aesthetics of Britishness*, ed. by Dana Arnold (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 53-66
- Crouzet, Marcel, *Un Méconnu du Réalisme : Duranty, 1833-1880. L'homme ; le critique ; le romancier* (Paris: Nizet, 1964)
- Curl, James Stevens, *Victorian Architecture: Diversity and Invention* (Reading: Spire Books, 2007)
- 'The Czarda, or Hungarian Café', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, pp. 535-8
- D'Souza, Aruna, and Tom McDonough, eds, *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006)
- Daly, Nicholas, *Literature, Technology and Modernity 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Darling, Elizabeth, and Lesley Whitworth, eds, *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- Davis, Clarence B., and Kenneth Wilburn, Jr, eds, *Railway Imperialism* (New York: Greenwood, 1991)
- Day, Lewis F., 'Victorian Progress in Applied Design', *The Art Journal*, June 1887, pp. 185-202
- Delassaux, Victor, and John Elliott, *Street Architecture, A Series of Shop Fronts and Façades, Characteristic of and Adapted to Different Branches of Commerce* (London: John Weale, 1855)
- Demeulenaere-Douyère, Christiane, dir., *Exotiques expositions : Les expositions universelles et les cultures extra-européennes. France 1855-1937* (Paris: Somogy, Archives nationales, 2010)
- Denis, Rafael Cardoso, and Colin Trodd, eds, *Art and the Academy in the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Discours de réception de M. Victor Cherbuliez ; réponse de M. Ernest Renan* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882)

- Doulton, James, 'Terra Cotta and Stoneware as Applied to Architecture', *The British Architect*, Vol. 3, No. 70, 30 April 1875, [p. v]
- Drake's *Road Book of the London and Birmingham Railway, Illustrated by an Accurate Map of the Line, and by Numerous Engravings* (London: Hayward and Moore, [1839])
- Duncan, Carol, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- Duranty, Emile, 'Exposition universelle. Les écoles étrangères de peinture' (3^e article), *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XVIII, (1 September 1878), pp. 292-320
- Duruy, Victor, *Abrégé de l'histoire universelle* (Paris: Hachette, 1878)
- Eastlake, Charles, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and other Details* (London: Longmans and Green, 1869)
- Enault, Louis, *Les arts industriels : Vienne, Londres, Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1877)
- Enault, Louis, *Les Beaux-arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: E. Gros, 1878)
- 'The English and Foreign Pictures at the International Exhibition', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, Vol. 13, No. 347, 21 June 1862, pp. 709-10
- 'English Houses at the Paris Exhibition', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1859, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 461
- The English Visitor's Guide to Paris and the Exhibition, with full information as to routes of travel, attractive scenery, places of interest, architecture, art, and science, in addition to a register of the principal manufacturers and merchants and a classified list of exhibitors* (London: Edward William Allen; New York: American News, [1878])
- Evrard, Guillaume, 'Producing and Consuming Agricultural Capital: The Aesthetics and Cultural Politics of Grain Elevators at the 1937 Paris International Exposition', in *Culture, Capital and Representation*, ed. by Robert J. Balfour (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), pp. 148-168
- Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 15 mai 1877* (Paris: Typographie Tolmer et Isidor Joseph, 1877)
- Exposition universelle internationale de 1878 à Paris, *Rapport au Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce sur la situation des travaux préparatoires au 1^{er} novembre 1877* (Paris: Typographie Tolmer et Isidor Joseph, 1877)
- Eyles, D., and Louise Irvine, rev., *The Doulton Lambeth Wares* (Shepton Beauchamp: Richard Dennis, 2002)
- Faith, Nicholas, *The World The Railways Made* (London: Pimlico-Random House, 1990)

- Fausser, Annegret, *Musical Encounters at the 1889 Paris World's Fair* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005)
- Fenton, James, *School of Genius: A History of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006)
- Fernand, Jacques, *Œuvres* (Paris: C. Vanier, 1878)
- 'The Forthcoming International Exhibition at Paris - Bird's-eye View of the City, Showing the Exhibition Buildings', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 431, Saturday 2 March 1878, p. 213
- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977)
- Foucault, Michel, *The Will to Knowledge, The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1978)
- Francis, John, *A History of the English Railway: Its Social Relations and Revelations, 1820-1845* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1851)
- "'Fraternity" - Under the Same Umbrella', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7
- Freeman, Michael, *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999)
- 'The French Exhibition,' *The Athenaeum*, 1494, 14 June 1856, pp. 750-1
- Frith, W. P., *My Autobiography and Reminiscences* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1887)
- Gamilly, Hector, 'Les façades caractéristiques de la section étrangère', *L'Exposition de Paris. Journal hebdomadaire*, No. 5, 4 mai 1878, pp. 34-5
- Gautier, Hippolyte and Adrien Desprez, *Les curiosités de l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Delagrave, 1878)
- Gellner, Ernest, *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)
- Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism* (London: Blackwell, 1983)
- Gerring, John, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Gilmore Holt, Elizabeth, ed., *The Art of All Nations, 1850-73: The Emerging Role of Exhibitions and Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)
- Girouard, Mark, *Sweetness and Light: The 'Queen Ann' Movement 1860-1900* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977; repr. 1990)
- Gonse, Louis, dir., *L'Art moderne à l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Quantin, 1878)
- Gosse, Edmund, *Sir Henry Doulton: The Man of Business as a Man of Imagination* (London: Hutchinson, 1970)
- Goubet, Amédée, *Fables locales* (Cannes: H. Vidal, 1878)

- The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVI, No. 420, Saturday 15 December 1877, p. 558
- ‘The Great Western Railway’, *The Court and Lady’s Magazine*, December 1842, pp. 133-4
- Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds, *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London: Routledge, 1996)
- Greenhalgh, Paul, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988)
- ‘Half-Timbered House at the Paris Exhibition’, *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 28 June 1878, p. 648
- ‘The Hall and the Hut’, *The London Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 1438, 31 August 1872, p. 136
- Hardie, Elspeth, ‘William Scott Morton’, *The Antique Collector*, Vol. 59, No. 3, March 1988, pp. 70-9
- Harrington, Ralph, ‘The Neuroses of the Railway’, *History Today*, Vol. XLIV, No. 7 (1994), pp. 15-21.
- Herbert, Gilbert, *Pioneers of Prefabrication: The British Contribution in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)
- Heylli, Georges (d’), *Dictionnaire des pseudonymes* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1887)
- Holme, Charles, ed. *The Royal Academy: from Reynolds to Millais* (London: The Studio, 1904)
- Hoock, Holger, *The King’s Artists: the Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003)
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000)
- ‘How to Enjoy the Exhibition’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, pp. 583-4
- Howell, Martha, and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001)
- ‘Huddersfield. New Public Offices’, *The British Architect and Northern Engineer*, Vol. 7, No. 22, 1 June 1877, p. 337
- Hunt, Robert, ‘On the Applications of Science to the Fine and Useful Arts’, *The Art Journal*, April 1849, pp. 128-9
- Hutchison, Sidney Charles, *The History of the Royal Academy, 1768-1986* (London: Robert Royce, 1986)
- Huyssen, Andreas, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1995)

- 'In the Aquarium', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 538
- 'The Inception of the English Railway Station', *Architectural History*, Vol. 4, 1961, pp. 63-76
- 'The International Exhibition at Paris in 1878', *The British Architect*, Vol. 8, No. 25, 21 December 1877, p. 310
- 'The International Exhibition', *London Society*, Vol. 20, No. 118, October 1871, pp. 289-98
- 'The Japanese Farm', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583
- 'A Japanese Fountain', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 447, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 610
- 'The Japanese Section', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 511
- Johnson, E. D. H., *Paintings of the British Social Scene from Hogarth to Sickert* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986)
- Jouve, Eugène, *Lettres sur l'Exposition universelle de 1855* (Lyon, 1855)
- Kaufman, Edward N., 'Architectural Representation in Victorian England', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 46, No. 1, March 1987, pp. 30-38
- Kérinou, François (de), 'Causerie sur l'Exposition. La rue des nations', *La Semaine des familles*, No. 10, Vingtième année, Samedi 8 juin 1878, pp. 146-8
- Kerr, Robert, *The Gentleman's House; or, how to plan English residences from the parsonage to the palace; with tables of accommodation and cost, and a series of selected plans; Second edition, revised, with a supplement on works of alteration, and additional plates* (London: John Murray, 1865)
- Klingender, Francis D., *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1968)
- Krantz, Jean-Baptiste, *Rapport administratif sur l'Exposition universelle de 1878 à Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881)
- L'Exposition de Paris. Journal hebdomadaire*, No. 4, 27 April 1878, p. 26
- L'Exposition en huit jours. Guide indispensable à tout visiteur* (Paris: Librairie de Dubuisson et Cie, 1878)
- L'Exposition illustrée de Philadelphie. The Philadelphia exhibition (illustrated)*, 1 April 1876, No. 1, p. 10
- Lalou, Charles, 'Lettre au directeur du Gaulois', *Le Gaulois*, 17^e année, 2 March 1883, No. 229, p. 1
- Lamarre, Clovis, and Léon Pajot, *L'Angleterre et l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Delagrave, 1878)

- Lamb, Walter Rangeley Maitland, *The Royal Academy: A Short History of its Foundation and Development* (London: G. Bell, 1951)
- Lambourne, Lionel, *Victorian Painting* (London: Phaidon, 1999)
- Langford, Paul, *Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Lardner, Dionysius, *Railway Economy: A Treatise on the New Art of Transport, its Management, Prospects, and Relations, Commercial, Financial, and Social, with an Exposition of the Practical Results of the Railways in Operation in the United Kingdom, on the Continent, and in America* (London: Taylor, Walton, and Maberly, 1850)
- Law, Graham, *Indexes to Fiction in The Illustrated London News (1842-1901) and The Graphic (1869-1901)* ([Brisbane]: Victorian Fiction Research Unit, The University of Queensland, 2001)
- Law, Graham, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000)
- Lawrence, Paul, *Nationalism: History and Theory* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005)
- Le Figaro*, 16 March 1928, No. 76, p. 2
- Le Gaulois*, 17^e année, 29 September 1898, No. 6143, p. 2
- Le Second siècle de l'Institut de France : recueil biographique et bibliographique des membres, associés étrangers, correspondants français et étrangers des cinq académies*, http://www.institut-de-france.fr/franqueville/affichage_fiche.cfm?page_acad=berger_geor.html (Accessed on 20/09/2009)
- Leighton, Mary Elizabeth, and Lisa SurrIDGE, 'The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction in the 1860s', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Autumn 2008, pp. 65-101
- Leoussi, Athena S., 'The Ethno-Cultural Roots of National Art', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 10. Nos. 1/2, 2004, pp. 143-59
- Les merveilles de l'exposition de 1878 : histoire, construction, inauguration, description détaillée des palais, des annexes et des parcs, les chefs-d'œuvre de l'art de tous les pays...* (Paris: Librairie illustrée et Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878)
- Les Merveilles de l'Exposition de 1878, ouvrage rédigé par des écrivains spéciaux et des ingénieurs, illustré de vues d'ensemble et de détail, de scènes, de reproductions d'objets exposés, etc.* (Paris: Librairie illustrée et Librairie M. Dreyfous, 1878)
- "Life at a Railway Station," by W. P. Frith, R.A.', *The Art Journal*, Vol. VII, February 1861, p. 61
- "Life at a Railway Station," by W. P. Frith, R.A.', *The Art Journal*, Vol. I, 1 May 1862, pp. 122-3
- Livret-Chaix, *Guide du visiteur à l'Exposition universelle de 1878 : itinéraire en huit et en quatre jours : objets remarquables à visiter* (Paris: A. Chaix, 1878)

- Lok, Corie, 'Technology as Hope: At a Time of Despair, the 1930s World's Fairs Glorified Technology as the Way of the Future', *Technology Review*, Vol. 108, No. 4, April 2005, p. 88
- 'London General Hospitals, with a Description of the New St Thomas's', *The London Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1866, 13 January 1866, pp. 29-30
- Long, Helen, *Victorian Houses and Their Details: The role of Publications in Their Building and Decoration* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2002)
- Lorenz, Otto, *Catalogue général de la Librairie française depuis 1840, Tome Dixième* (Paris: Otto Lorenz, 1887)
- Lundin, Anne, 'Little Pilgrims' Progress: Literary Horizons for Children's Literature', *Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Winter 2006, pp. 133-152
- Mackenzie, John M., ed., *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* (London: V&A Publications, 2001)
- Mandler, Peter, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006)
- Mantz, Paul, 'Les beaux-arts à l'Exposition universelle. – Angleterre – Espagne – Portugal. – Italie. – Etats-Unis', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XXIII, (1 July 1867), pp. 209-230
- Mantz, Paul, 'Les beaux-arts à l'Exposition universelle. – Belgique, Hollande, Danemark, Suède, Norvège et Russie', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e période, t. XXIII, (1 July 1867), pp. 7-30
- Massarani, Tullo, *L'Art à Paris* (Paris: Renouard, 1878)
- Mazade, Charles (de), 'Chronique de la quinzaine', *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVII, 3^e pér., XLVIII^e année, livraison du 1 mai 1878, pp. 228-238
- Mazade, Charles (de), 'Chronique de la quinzaine', *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. XXVII, 3^e pér., XLVIII^e année, livraison du 15 juin 1878, pp. 945-956
- McClellan, Andrew, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2008)
- 'Messrs. Doulton's Pottery', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1833, Saturday 23 March 1878, p. 304
- Meynell, Alice, 'An American A.R.A.', *Magazine of Art*, Vol. 5, January 1882, pp. 397-401
- Michelet, Jules, *Le Peuple* (Paris: Lévy, 1877)
- 'Missions artistiques', *L'Art pour tous*, 27^e année, February 1888, No. 664-5, [p. 1]
- Molinari Gustave (de), 'Visites à l'Exposition universelle. (Deuxième article - Voir le Journal des Débats du 29 mai). II. L'empire britannique', *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, Jeudi 6 juin 1878, n.p.
- Moonen, Charles, *Cook's Guide to Paris and its Exhibition, 1878* (London: Thomas Cook & Son, Simpkin, Marshall, [1878?])

- Morlet, Ferdinand, *La Turquie démasquée et la réhabilitation de l'Europe* (Paris: Manginot-Hellitasse, 1877)
- Morris, A. E. J., 'A Century of Concrete System Building', *Building*, 13 June 1975, pp. 107-9
- Morris, Ellen K., 'Symbols of Empire: Architectural Style and the Government Offices Competition', *JAE*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Politics and Design Symbolism, November 1978, pp. 8-13
- Moses, Lester G., *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996)
- Mouton, Eugène, *Un demi-siècle de vie, 1848-1901* (Paris: Delagrave, 1901)
- 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."', *The Athenaeum, Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science and the Fine Arts*, No. 1798, Saturday 12 April 1862, pp. 502-4
- 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."', *The Builder*, Vol. XX, No. 1003, 26 April 1862, p. 302
- 'Mr. Frith's "Railway Station."', *The Illustrated London News*, Vol. XL, No. 1142, Saturday 3 May 1862, p. 457
- 'Musée artistique, industriel et commercial, de Saint-Etienne', *L'Art pour tous*, 27^e année, November 1888, No. 682-3, [p. 2]
- Muthesius, Stefan, 'The "Iron Problem" in the 1850s', *Architectural History*, Vol. 13 (1970), pp. 58-63+128-31
- 'New Houses of Parliament', *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, Vol. 29, No. 830, 22 April 1837, p. 256
- Newall, Christopher, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Nora, Pierre, dir., *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984)
- 'On the Way to the Champ de Mars', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 511
- 'The Oriental Bazaar', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, pp. 511-4
- 'Our Artist Arrested', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583
- 'Outside the Exhibition - Where to Buy Tickets', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 444, Saturday 1 June 1878, p. 549
- 'Parian Cement', *The Literary Gazette*, No. 1690, 9 June 1849, p. 436
- 'Paris Exhibition', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, No. 1323, Vol. XXVI, 29 March 1878, pp. 384-6
- 'The Paris Exhibition', *British Architect*, Vol. 9, No. 10, 8 March 1878, p. 110

- The Paris Exhibition of 1878. An Illustrated Weekly Review of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Art*, No. 1, 22 February 1878, p. 7
- ‘The Paris Exhibition of 1878’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 431
- ‘Paris Universal Exhibition – Pavilion of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales’, *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, 22 March 1878, p. 290
- ‘The Paris Universal Exhibition – III’, *The Building News*, Vol. XXIV, Friday 31 May 1878, pp. 540-1
- ‘The Paris Universal Exhibition, V’, *The Magazine of Art*, January 1878, pp. 113-6
- Parissien, Steven, *Station to Station* (London: Phaidon, 1997)
- Parsloe, Joseph, *Our Railways: Sketches Historical and Descriptive, with Practical Information as to Fares and Rates, etc., and a Chapter on Railway Reform* (London: Kegan Paul, 1878)
- Payne, Alina A., ‘Architectural History and the History of Art: A Suspended Dialogue’, *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 58, No. 3, September 1999, pp. 292-9
- ‘A Peep at the World of Wonders Through the Railings’, *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 583
- Pendleton, John, *Our Railways: Their Origin, Development, Incident and Romance* (London, Paris, and Melbourne: Cassell, 1894)
- Personal Recollections of English Engineers, and of the Introduction of the Railway System into the United Kingdom* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1868)
- Pinot de Villechenon, Florence, *Fêtes géantes : Les expositions universelles, pour quoi faire ?* (Paris: Autrement, 2000)
- ‘Pity the Poor-Rate Payer’, *Tinsley’s Magazine*, No. 7, January 1871, pp. 656-68
- Pottle, Mark, ‘Hall, Sydney Prior (1842-1922)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52024> (Accessed on 19 September 2008)
- Poulain, Hippolyte, *Chansons: Les peuples, par les membres du Caveau* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878)
- Powell, Christopher G., *The British Building Industry Since 1800: An Economic History* (London: E. & F. N. Spon, 1996)
- Prevost, M., and Roman d’Amat, dir., *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1959)
- Pritchard, Michael, *A Directory of London Photographers, 1841-1908* (Watford: PhotoResearch, 1994, 2nd edn)
- ‘The Queen Anne and Other Forms of Free Classic Architecture. Architectural Association’, *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1673, Saturday 27 February 1875, pp. 179-81

- 'The "Queen Anne" Revival in Ireland. Architectural Association of Ireland', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1682, Saturday 1 May 1875, pp. 395-6
- R. E. D., 'Art in France', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 17, No. 89, August 1910, pp. 308-9
- Ragon, Michel, *L'architecture des gares: naissance, apogée et déclin des gares de chemin de fer* (Paris: Denoël, 1984)
- Rapport, Michael, *Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
- Rees Leahy, Helen, 'Walking for Pleasure? Bodies of Display at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition in 1857', *Art History*, Vol. 30, No. 4, September 2007, pp. 545-65
- Regnier, Noël, *L'industrie française au XIXe siècle* (Paris: L. Sault, 1878)
- Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1880)
- Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878, to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty*. Vol. I. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1880)
- 'Review: Examples of London and provincial street architecture', *The Art Journal*, Vol. VII, 1 April 1861, p. 128
- Reynolds, A. M., *The Life and work of Frank Holl* (London: Methuen, 1912)
- RIBA, *Directory of British Architects, 1834-1914* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001)
- Rodger, Richard, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- Roget, John Lewis, *A History of the 'Old Water Colour Society' now the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours. With biographical notices of its older and of all deceased members and associates...* (London: n.l., 1891)
- Rossetti, W.M., 'The Belgian Gallery', *The Academy*, No. 155, 24 April 1875, pp. 434-5
- Royal Academy of Art Council Minutes*, C, 1876 to 1877, XV
- Royal Academy of Arts Archive, RAA/SEC/5/2/1
- Rudelle, Odile, *La République absolue, 1870-1889, Aux origines de l'instabilité constitutionnelle de la France républicaine* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1982)
- Rydell, Robert W., John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America: World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000)

- Rydell, Robert W., *World of Fairs: The Century-of-Progress Expositions* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993)
- Saint, Andrew, 'Shaw, Richard Norman (1831-1912)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36050>, accessed 16 February 2007]
- Saint, Andrew, *Richard Norman Shaw* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010)
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986)
- Schroeder-Gudehus, Brigitte, and Anne Rasmussen, *Les Fastes du progrès : le guide des expositions universelles, 1851-1992* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992)
- Shanes, Eric, *The Genius of the Royal Academy* (London: John Murray, 1981)
- Shaw, Richard Norman, *Sketches for Cottages and Other Buildings Designed to be constructed on the patent cement slab system of W. H. Lascelles, 121, Bunhill Row, Finsbury, London, E.C., from sketches and notes by R. Norman Shaw, R.A.; drawn by Maurice B. Adams, A.R.I.B.A.* (London: William Henry Lascelles, 1878)
- Simpson, J. A., and E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, Second edition)
- Sinnema, Peter W., *Dynamics of the Pictured Image: Representing the Nation in the Illustrated London News* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998)
- Sizeranne, Robert (de la), *La peinture anglaise contemporaine* (Paris: Hachette, 1922)
- 'A Sketch in the Park', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 443, Saturday 25 May 1878, p. 511
- Solkin, David H., ed., *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001)
- 'The Street of Nations', *The Art Journal*, January 1878, pp. xi-xxi
- Stuart Jones, H., *Victorian Political Thought* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000)
- Sylvanus, Swanquill, 'The Ascot Cup Day', *New Sporting Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 7, July 1841, pp. 34-40
- Tabary, Louis Edouard, 'Duranty et l'Angleterre', *Revue de littérature comparée*, juillet-septembre 1955, pp. 360-4
- Taine, Hippolyte, *De l'idéal dans l'art : leçon professées à l'Ecole des Beaux-arts* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1867)
- Taine, Hippolyte, *L'idéalisme anglais. Etude sur Carlyle* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1864)
- Taylor, James, 'Business in Pictures: Representations of Railway Enterprise in the Satirical Press in Britain 1845-1870', *Past and Present*, No. 189, November 2005, pp. 111-45

- Taylor, Katherine Fischer, 'Architecture's Place in Art History: Art or Adjunct?', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 83, No. 2, June 2001, pp. 342-6
- Taylor, Roger, *Photographic Exhibitions in Britain, 1839-1865: Records for Victorian Exhibition Catalogues*, <http://peib.dmu.ac.uk/index.php> (Accessed on 24 April 2008)
- Taylor, Tom, *The Railway Station painted by W. P. Frith, Esq., R.A.* (London, 1862)
- Tidwell, Philip, 'Place, Memory and the Architectural Image', in *Archipelago: Essays on Architecture*, edited by Peter MacKeith (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2006), pp. 149-55
- Train Spotting: Images of the Railway in Art* (Nottingham: Castle Museum, 1985)
- Treuherz, Julian, *Hard Times: Social Realism in Victorian Art* (London: Lund Humphries in association with Manchester City Art Gallery, 1987)
- 'The Tramways at the Trocadéro', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, p. 436
- 'The Trocadéro Building', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 440, Saturday 4 May 1878, pp. 436-7
- Trodd, Colin, 'The Authority of Art: Cultural Criticism and the Idea of the Royal Academy in mid-Victorian Britain', *Art History*, Vol. 20, 1997, pp. 3-22
- Trotandot, John, *Roamings Abroad, Bring Recollections of a Run Through Parts of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and the Vaterland* ([Crewkerne?]: Pulman's Weekly News Office, 1878)
- Tutton, Michael, *Paddington Station, 1833-1854: A Study of the Procurement of Land for, and Construction of, the First London Terminus of the Great Western Railway* (Mold: Railway and Canal History Society, 1999)
- Tyler, Kieron, with John Brown, Terence Paul Smith and Lucy Whittingham, *The Doulton Stoneware Pothouse in Lambeth: Excavations at 9 Albert Embankment, London* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005)
- 'Under the Central Dome', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 447, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 610
- Vachon, Marius, 'Les artistes allemands à l'Exposition universelle', *Gazette des lettres, des sciences et des arts*, 2^e année, 10-16 March 1878, No 46, pp. 5-6
- Vachon, Marius, *Les peintres étrangers à l'exposition universelle de 1878* (Paris: Ludovic Baschet, 1878)
- Valentine, Helen, ed., *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria: Treasures from the Royal Academy of Arts Permanent Collection* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999)
- Van Lemmen, Hans, *Architectural Ceramics* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 2002)
- Vandières, Simon (de), *L'Exposition universelle de 1878 illustrée, suite de L'Exposition universelle illustrée de 1867, publication internationale autorisée par la Commission* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1879)

- Vann, J. Don and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, eds., *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994)
- Véret, Paul, *Questions sur les conséquences présumées de la guerre d'Orient au départ des troupes françaises pour la guerre de Crimée en 1854* (1878)
- 'Victims of the Conscription Enjoying Their Last Moments of Freedom', *The Graphic. An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper*, Vol. XVII, No. 446, Saturday 15 June 1878, p. 584
- Villemessant, H. (de), *Mémoires d'un journaliste. Troisième Série: A travers le Figaro* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1873)
- 'Visits to Doulton's, Maudslay's, and Blackfriars Station. The Society of Engineers "on the Surrey Side"', *The Builder*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1846, Saturday 22 June 1878, p. 637
- Voltaire, *Candide or the Optimist* (London: George Routledge, 1888)
- W. S., 'Art. VI. A Design for a Small Cottage Villa', *The Architectural Magazine, and Journal of improvement in architecture, building and furnishing and in the various arts and trades connected therewith*, Vol. 4, No. 45, November 1837, pp. 524-9
- Watkin, David, *English Architecture: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001; 1st edn 1979)
- Whalen, Philip, "'Insofar as the Ruby Wine Seduces Them": Cultural Strategies for Selling Wine in Inter-war Burgundy', *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2009, pp. 67-98
- Whishaw, Francis, *The Railways of Great Britain and Ireland Practically Described and Illustrated* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1840)
- White, Ann Folino, 'Performing the Promise of Plenty in the USDA's 1933-34 World's Fair Exhibits', *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1, January 2009, pp. 22-43
- White, Ralph Barton, *Prefabrication. A History of its Development in Great Britain* (London: H.M.S.O., 1965)
- Wilson-Bareau, Juliet, *Manet, Monet. La gare Saint-Lazare* (Paris and Washington: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Yale University Press, 1998)
- Wolff, Janet, 'Gender and the Haunting of Cities (or, Retirement of the Flâneur)', in *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* edited by Aruna D'Souza and Tom McDonough (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 18-31
- Wood, Christopher, *Victorian Painting* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999)
- Wood, Christopher, *Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life* (London: Faber, 1976; repr. 1990)

